YOUR BRAND HERE

THE
APPLICABILITY
OF THE
THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR
ON
BRAND LOVE & BRAND FORGIVENESS

MASTER THESIS REPORT COMMUNICATION STUDIES
ANNEMIEK TER AVEST

"Are Lovers More Forgiving? The Applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior on Brand Love and Brand Forgiveness."

A master thesis report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science, Communication Studies.

Department of Communication Science,
University of Twente, Enschede

Author
Annemiek ter Avest S1181866

Graduation Committee
Dr. S.M. Hegner
Dr. A. Fenko

November 2013

ABSTRACT

Brand love is one of the latest developments within the field of marketing and can be considered as the highest aim of brand management. Various studies demonstrate that consumers can actually experience a feeling of love for their brand (Albert et al., 2008a/2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), but only Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) have yet managed to create a definition of brand love: "brand love is the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a person has for a particular trade name".

An important consequence of brand love is brand forgiveness. Brand forgiveness indicates the consumers' willingness to forgive a brand failures. Research shows that the quality of a consumer–brand relationship has a significant effect on the consumers' willingness to forgive mistakes made by the brand (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel, 2004). However, brand forgiveness is quite an unknown phenomenon. Therefore, the present study contributes to a further understanding of brand love by focusing on the subject of brand forgiveness, and examines the influence of brand love on brand forgiveness.

The aim of the present study is to explore the relationship between brand love and its antecedents with brand forgiveness as a consequence. The model that is conceptualized for this study, is based on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's intention to perform a given behavior. Thus, for this research, brand love is applied as a behavioral intention and brand forgiveness is applied as a behavioral outcome. Furthermore, perceived behavioral control is divided into the propensity to anthropomorphize as an internal control factor and the affordability of the brand as an difficulty factor. In addition, the degree of involvement is applied as a moderator.

To examine the proposed model, a questionnaire is developed and conducted. The questionnaire measured the seven independent variables: brand love, attitude towards brand love, subjective norms about brand love, propensity to anthropomorphize brands, affordability of the brand, brand forgiveness, and degree of involvement. 274 complete questionnaires are collected and analyzed. Correlation analysis and linear regression analysis are calculated.

Results demonstrate that the respondents' attitudes have strongest causal relationship with brand love. It was found that low involved respondents and high involved respondents are contrary with regard to subjective norms and the propensity to anthropomorphize as predictors for brand love: high involved respondents show a high score on subjective norms but a low score on the propensity to anthropomorphize, whereas the low involved respondents show a

low score on subjective norms but a high score on the propensity to anthropomorphize. Furthermore, it appears that there is not a causal relationship between brand love and the affordability of the brand.

Concluded is that the Theory of Planned Behavior is a proper framework for building on to more clarification about brand love and brand forgiveness. Furthermore, it is also concluded that brand love will ensure a greater willingness to forgive a brand failures.

DUTCH ABSTRACT

Brand love is één van de nieuwste ontwikkelingen op het gebied van relatie marketing en kan beschouwd worden als het hoogst haalbare doel van brand management. Verschillende onderzoeken tonen aan dat consumenten daadwerkelijk een gevoel van liefde kunnen ervaren voor een merk (Albert et al., 2008a/2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), maar alleen Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) zijn tot nu toe de enige onderzoekers die brand love hebben weten te definiëren: "brand love is de mate van hartstochtelijke emotionele gehechtheid die een persoon heeft voor een bepaalde merknaam", kortgezegd: brand love is de liefde voor een merknaam.

Een belangrijk gevolg van brand love is merkvergeving. Merkvergeving geeft de bereidheid aan van een consument om een merk te vergeven wanneer deze faalt. Onderzoek toont aan dat de kwaliteit van een consument-merk relatie een significant effect heeft op de merkvergeving van een consument. Echter, merkvergeving is nog een relatief onbekend begrip. Daarom draagt dit onderzoek bij aan een beter inzicht van brand love door zich te focussen op merkvergeving, en onderzoekt het de relatie tussen brand love en merkvergeving.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om de relatie tussen brand love en haar antecedenten met merkvergeving als gevolg te ontdekken en te onderzoeken. Het model dat is ontworpen voor dit onderzoek is gebaseerd op het model van the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Volgens deze theorie beïnvloeden een persoon's houding, subjectieve norm en de waargenomen houding de intentie om een bepaald gedrag uit te voeren. Voor dit onderzoek is brand love toegepast als gedragsintentie en merkvergeving als gedrag. Verder is de waargenomen houding opgesplitst in de neiging om te vermenselijken als een interne gedragsbeheersing en de betaalbaarheid van een merk als een externe moeilijkheidsfactor. Bovendien is de mate van betrokkenheid toegepast als een moderator in het model.

Om het model te testen is een vragenlijst ontwikkeld en afgenomen. De vragenlijst meet de zeven onafhankelijke variabelen uit het model: brand love, houding, subjectieve norm, neiging tot vermenselijken, betaalbaarheid van een merk, merkvergeving en de mate van betrokkenheid. 274 compleet ingevulde vragenlijsten zijn verzameld en geanalyseerd. Correlatie analyse en linear regressie analyse zijn berekend.

Resultaten laten zien dat de houding van de respondenten de sterkste causale relatie heeft met brand love. Ook is gevonden dat laag betrokken respondenten en hoog betrokken respondenten het tegenovergestelde scoren met betrekking tot subjectieve normen en de neiging tot vermenselijken: hoog betrokken respondenten laten een hoge score zien op subjectieve normen

maar een lage score op de neiging tot vermenselijken, terwijl de laag betrokken respondenten een lage score op subjectieve normen scoren maar een hoge score op de neiging tot vermenselijken. Verder blijkt dat er geen causale relatie is tussen brand love en de betaalbaarheid van een merk.

Het kan geconcludeerd worden dat de Theory of Planned Behavior is een geschikt model om meer duidelijkheid te verkrijgen over brand love en merkvergeving. Het kan ook geconcludeerd worden dat brand love zal zorgen voor een grotere bereidheid van merkvergeving.

Steekwoorden: brand love, brand forgiveness, theory of planned behaviour, anthropomorphism, CBR, relationship marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

Whereas the focus in previously conducted consumer behavior and marketing studies pointed towards the consumers' interactions with products and brands as a series of exchanges, nowadays this transactional view has been replaced by a relational view. This stream of research, also known as consumer-brand relationship (CBR) marketing, have mostly been supported by Fournier (1998). She identifies six possible consumer-brand relationships: 1 love and passion; 2 self-connection; 3 commitment; 4 inter-dependence; 5 intimacy; and 6 brand partner quality. The CBR 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 towards it (Fournier, 1998). Consumers-brand relationships appear to be the final phase of brand responses (Franzen, 1999; Keller, 2001).

Since Shimp and Madden (1988) first introduced brand love as CBR marketing construct, it has been a major field of interest for marketing scholars. Various studies demonstrate that consumers can actually experience a feeling of love for their brand (Albert et al., 2008a/2013; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). However, only Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) have yet managed to create a definition of brand love. They state: "brand love is the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a person has for a particular trade name". Brand love differs from other types of consumer-brand relationships since consumers only have a strong emotional attachment with a few brands (Fournier, 1998).

Basically, the concept of a consumers' love for a brand can be considered as the highest level of satisfaction that brands want to achieve. Albert et al (2013) argue that the brand love relationship is deep and enduring (beyond simple affect), such that the loved brand is considered irreplaceable. Furthermore, several other positive outcomes for brand love have been demonstrated, such as positive word of mouth and brand loyalty (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005), and increased willingness to pay a price premium (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005). One important outcome is the consumers' forgiveness of brand failures (Bauer, Heinrich, and Albrecht, 2009). Relationship strength and commitment have been connected to more positive and forgiving reactions after brand failure.

Despite the growing interest in the field of brand love, previous conducted studies have mainly focused on defining brand love (e.g. Shimp and Madden, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2008a) and conceptualizing a measure of the brand love construct (e.g. Albert et al., 2008b; Batra et al., 2012). Very little research is done on focusing brand love

in relation to the side of consumer. It is unknown what consumers, for example, might think of the feeling of love for a certain brand, or whether they care about what other people think of their love for a brand, or are able to love a brand. This could possibly affect brand love and its consequences. The present study examines these influences.

The present study applies brand love as a behavioral intention to discover the relationships between the influences attitude, subjective norms, propensity to anthropomorphize, and affordability of the brand on brand love, and the relationship between brand love and brand forgiveness, with brand forgiveness as a behavioral outcome. Also the degree of involvement is applied as a moderator.

A well-established model for explaining and predicting behaviors, is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's intention to perform a given behavior. This study conceptualized and examined a model, based on the framework of TPB. The concept of brand love is integrated as behavioral intention, and the three antecedents attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are attached to brand love. Furthermore, the concept of brand forgiveness is inserted as behavioral consequence. Important to point out is that this study divided perceived behavioral control into an internal control factor (the propensity to anthropomorphize) and external difficulty factor (affordability of the brand). Furthermore, the degree of involvement is considered as a moderator of brand love, thus this is also incorporated in the proposed model.

This research attempts to contribute to the current literature about brand love and brand forgiveness and hopefully give more clarification of the influence of the consumers' side on brand love and forgiveness. More precisely, the main objective of this study is to conceptualize the consumers' brand love and forgiveness by drawing on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior. This theory will bring relevant insights for the construct of brand love, since it will give a clear image of the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on brand love.

In current literature, no studies or examples can be found of the application of TPB on interpersonal relationships or CBR marketing. Also, in order to enhance the importance of consumers' brand love to marketers, a marketing-related variable is integrated in the proposed model, namely brand forgiveness. This construct is considered as the behavioral consequence. With framing the construct of brand love as a behavioral intention, and brand forgiveness as a behavioral outcome, hopefully a new contribution to the literature is achieved.

Despite the fact that the knowledge about brand love is academically interesting, its managerial appositeness will depend on the identification of actionable consequence of brand love. This study attempts to add to the understanding of the managerial potential of brand love by proposing and testing one actionable outcome of brand love: brand forgiveness.

In order to conduct this study properly, the following research question is developed and researched:

RQ: *To what extent are attitude, subjective norms, propensity to anthropomorphize, and the affordability of the brand applicable on brand love and does brand love lead to brand forgiveness?*

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

Hinde (1976) states that "relationships are a sequence of interactions between parties where the probable course of future interactions between is significantly different from that of stranger" (Hinde, 1976). In extension of this, consumer interactions with brands could also be characterized as relational.

Whereas the focus in previously conducted marketing studies pointed towards the consumers' interactions with products and brands as a series of exchanges, nowadays this transactional view has been replaced by a relational view.

Various studies demonstrate that consumers not only differ in how they perceive and evaluate brands, but also in how they relate to brands (Fournier, 1998; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; as stated in Aggarwall, 2004). Consumer-brand relationships (CBR) are in literature frequently compared to interpersonal relationships, which was first introduced by Fournier (1998) as a metaphor to amplify the understanding of the relationship between consumers and brands. She proposed a brand relationship quality scale comprising six facets: 1 love and passion; 2 self-connection; 3 commitment; 4 inter-dependence; 5 intimacy; and 6 brand partner quality.

2.2 BRAND LOVE

A rising topic of interest, and highest aim in CBR marketing, is the consumers' love for a brand. Shimp and Madden (1988) were pioneers with introducing brand love as a concept. They proposed a conceptual model of "consumer-object relationships" (objects can be brands), which is very similar to the structure of interpersonal love – Triangular Love Theory - as established by Sternberg (1986). The components of consumer-object relationship (Shimp and Madden, 1988) are liking, yearning, and decision/commitment. These components correspond to the components of the Triangular Love Theory (Sternberg, 1986), which are intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Liking refers to the intimate feelings for a brand. Yearning refers to the passion for a brand which takes the form of different types of arousal. Decision refers to the individual's recognition of the liking and yearning for the brand in short-term. Commitment refers to the individual's repeat purchase of the same brand over a longer period of time in future. According to Shimp and Madden (1988), the presence of all three components contribute to loyalty towards products, brands, stores, advertisements, and so on.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) have examined the concept of brand love without referring to an interpersonal theory of love. Instead, they argue 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, which is based on the love prototype as conceptualized by Ahuvia (2005). Despite the several conceptualizations of brand love, so far, these authors have been the only ones that have composed a definition for brand love. They define love for a brand as "the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a person has for a particular trade name" (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). Furthermore, they explicitly argue that brand love is conceptually different from brand loyalty since brand love appears not to include commitment, whereas brand loyalty includes commitment (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004).

Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence (2008a) also rely their conceptualization of brand love on interpersonal relationships. Albert et al. (2008b) have examined the underlying dimensions of brand love and proposed a valid scale composed of 22 items and 7 first order dimensions: Uniqueness, Pleasure, Intimacy, Idealization, Duration, Dream and Memories. The seven factors offer a second order solution with two factors labelled Passion and Affection, which is consistent with the most recent findings on interpersonal love in social psychology and neuroscience. It is for these reasons that the current study used this scale to measure the consumers' love for a brand.

The most recent literature on this topic, stems from Ahuvia, Bagozzi, and Battra (2013), who argue that, based on a series of multi-method studies, brand love is a type of consumer–brand relationship typified by the following: Positive attitude valence, positive emotional connection, self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, and attitude strength.

Various studies demonstrate that the consumers' feeling of love towards a brand brings with it many rewards for the brand's company. According to Albert et al. (2013), brand love has been demonstrated to be associated with positive word of mouth and brand loyalty (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005), increased willingness to pay a price premium (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005), and forgiveness of brand failures (Bauer et al., 2009). Furthermore, Albert et al. (2013) argue that the loved brand is considered irreplaceable, and 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. Also Batra et al. (2012) found four managerial outcomes for brand love: repurchase intention, positive word of mouth, questioning negative information, loyal relationship with brand.

Fournier (1998) also points out the importance of love in consumers' relationships with brands. Moreover, Fournier and Mick (1999, p. 11) argue that "satisfaction-as-love probably constitutes

the most intense and profound satisfaction of all." Brand love can thus be considered as an ultimate level of satisfaction that brands want to achieve.

Overall, brand love can be considered as the highest aim of CBR but seems to represent a complex phenomenon. Consumers' love for a brand cannot be viewed as a behavior. Instead it represents a feeling and there have been a discussion whether this is feeling is a love emotion or love relationship. The current study adapts the feeling of love as a (interpersonal) relationship, following the direction of Fournier (1988) and Albert et al. (2008a-b; 2013).

2.3 Brand Forgiveness

The previous paragraph emphasized the importance of brand love in consumer-brand relationship and brand management. Similar to a person in a interpersonal relationship, a brand can make a mistake and are able to (accidently) fail. It is possible that consumers might feel betrayed by a brand, or will not be able to forgive a brand's mistake. It is important to know if and when consumers are willing to forgive their beloved brand. For this study, brand forgiveness is applied as the behavioral consequence of brand love.

According to the American Psychological Association (2006), "forgiveness is the renunciation or cessation of resentment, indignation, or anger as a result of perceived offense, disagreement, or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution." Furthermore, The Oxford English Dictionary defines forgiveness as "to grant free pardon and to give up all claim on account of an offence or debt".

Image is now everything. If a product fails, it's the brand that fails. Haig (2003, p.3) writes that "consumers make buying decisions based around the perception of the brand rather than the reality of the product and while this means brands can become more valuable than their physical assets, it also means they can lose this value overnight. After all, perception is a fragile thing." Thus, when a company fails, consumers blame the brand instead of the product.

In extension of this, it is important to know that when a brand failures, whether the consumers are able to forgive a brand or not. Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel (2004) empirically show that the quality of a consumer–brand relationship has a significant effect on the consumers' willingness to forgive mistakes made by the brand. Also Cheng (2012) claims that relationship strength and commitment have been connected to more positive and forgiving reactions after brand failure. In fact, failures can have significant implications for overall brand evaluations and relationship strength (Aaker et al., 2004). Furthermore, Cheng (2012) states "literature converges on the notion that consumers with stronger (versus weaker) brand relationships are relatively "insulated" from the impact of negative brand information and are more forgiving, benevolent,

and "immune" to brand failure" (Ahluwalia and Gurhan-Canli, 2000; Ahluwalia et al., 2001; Chandler and Schwarz, 2010; Swaminanthan et al, 2007; and Tax et al., 1998; as cited in Cheng, 2012)

In context of consumers' brand love, it can be argued that a love relationship with a brand leads to a consumer's higher willingness to forgive mistakes made by the brand. According to Kevin Roberts, Saatchi and Saatchi's worldwide chief executive officer, successful brands don't have 'trademarks'. Instead, they have 'lovemarks'. In building a consumer-brand relationship, companies are also creating an emotional attachment that often has little to do with the quality of the product. Thus, for brands, it is important to create a feeling of love, in order to be successful. As a result, it is more likely that consumers are more willing to forgive a brand failures.

2.4 The Theory of Planned Behavior

When thinking of brand love as a feeling and brand forgiveness as a behavioral consequence of brand love, the link can be made to the Theory of Planned Behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and has been one of the most influential theories in explaining and predicting behavior. It offers a comprehensive yet parsimonious psychological theory that identifies a causal structure for explaining a wide range of human behavior (Morris et al., 2005). According to the theory, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's intention to perform a given behavior. Intentions are claimed to be the precursors of behavior. In figure 1, the model of TPB is shown.
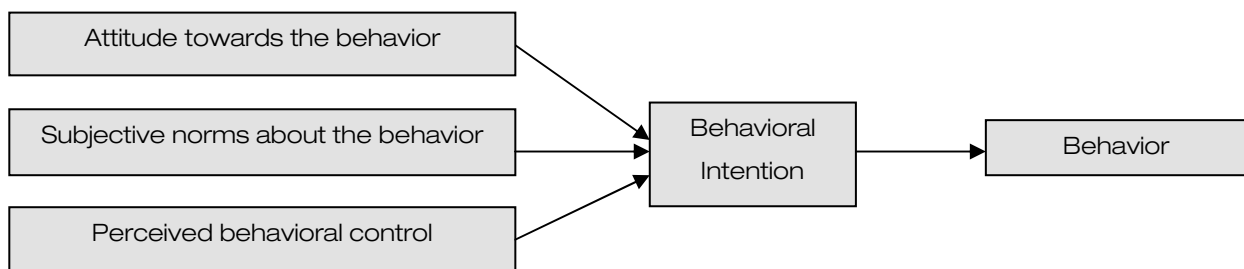
Figure 1. *The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).*

2.5 Brand Love as Behavioral Intention and brand forgiveness as behavioral outcome

The most central factor in the framework of TPB is the individual's intention to perform a given behavior. Even though it seems there is not a perfect relationship between behavioral intention and actual behavior, intentions can be used as a proximal measure of behavior; they are considered indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are

planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. Ajzen (1991) gives the general rule that the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance.

The current study adapts the concept of brand love as behavioral intention. It is argued that brand love can be viewed as the feeling of love towards a brand, and is considered is the highest aim of CBR marketing. The feeling of love will likely create a behavioral intention and thus create a certain behavior. Thus, will brand love create the expected behavior? Since behavioral intentions are considered as motivational factors that capture how hard people are willing to try to perform a behavior (Ajzen 1991), it is suggested that brand love will be examined as a behavioral intention.

The actual behavior is the behavior as a result of the behavioral intention, a behavior that we can experience and likely will be noticed. In the current study, the actual behavior will be examined as a behavioral consequence of brand love. As mentioned before, various outcomes of brand love have been showed in literature and for this study, brand forgiveness is applied. As aforementioned, Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel (2004) empirically show that the quality of a consumer–brand relationship has a significant effect on the consumers' willingness to forgive mistakes made by the brand, and Cheng (2012) claims that relationship strength and commitment have been connected to more positive and forgiving reactions after brand failure. In context of a consumer–brand love relationship, it can be inferred that a love relationship with a brand leads to a consumer's higher willingness to forgive mistakes made by the brand. It is for this reason that in this study, brand forgiveness will be examined as positive behavioral consequence of brand love.

TPB suggests that behavioral intention is the most influential predictor of behavior; after all, a person does what he/she intends to do (Ajzen, 1991). For this research, it is hypothesized that brand love is the behavioral intention of the forgiveness of a brand failure, which is applied as the actual behavior. If the consumer loves a brand, then it is also expected that the consumer is more willing to forgive mistakes made by the brand.

H1:	Brand love positively influences brand forgiveness.

2.6 Attitude towards Brand Love

According to Simons (1976, p. 80), an attitude is a "relatively enduring predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably towards something". People have attitudes toward people, places, events, products and brands, policies, ideas, and so on (O'Keefe, 1990). In order to understand the influence of attitudes on the behavioral intention in this study, a distinction has

to be made between two types of attitude. The first type are general, superficial attitudes – as stated by Abelson (1988) as "conviction". The second type are attitudes as overall evaluations of the behavior by the individual, which is the type of attitude applied in the conceptual model.

As mentioned before, Ahuvia et al. (2013) argue that brand love is characterized by different dimensions, including positive attitude valence (the consumer evaluates the love object positively) and attitude strength (the consumer has a high degree of certainty in, and confidence about, his opinions regarding the love object). Furthermore, attitude has long been shown to influence behavioral intentions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). It is for these reasons that for this research, it is hypothesized that a favorable attitude is likely to encourage consumers to feel love for a brand.

> H2:   There is a positive causal relationship between attitude and brand love.

2.7 Subjective norms about Brand Love

Subjective norms refer to the social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior. It consists of a person's beliefs about whether others who are important think he/she should engage in the behavior. It is a person's own estimate of the social pressure to perform or not perform the particular behavior. Subjective norms are assumed to have two components which work in interaction: beliefs about how other people, who may be in some way important to the person, would like them to behave, and the positive or negative judgments about each belief.

When applying this to the current research, subjective norms reflects consumer perceptions of whether the feeling of love for a brand is accepted, encouraged, and implemented by the consumer's circle of influence. It is expected that people will tend to care what other people think about their love for a brand and will let this influence it. Thus, it is expected that there is a positive causal relationship between subjective norm and brand love.

> H3:   There is a positive causal relationship between subjective norms and brand love.

2.8 Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is the individual's perception of the extent to which performance of the behavior is easy or difficult (Ajzen, 1991). It has two aspects: how much a person has control over the behavior and how confident a person feels about being able to perform or not

perform the behavior. It is determined by control beliefs about the power of both situational and internal factors to inhibit or facilitate the performing of the behavior.

Judgments of perceived behavioral control are influenced by beliefs concerning whether one has access to the necessary resources and opportunities to perform the behavior successfully, weighted by the perceived power of each factor to facilitate or inhibit behavior (Ajzen, 1988, 1991). Sparks et al. (1997) have pointed out that perceived behavioral control reflects both inner control factors (e.g., information, personal deficiencies, skills, abilities, emotions) and external perceived difficulty factors (e.g., opportunities, dependence on others, income). People who perceive that they have access to the necessary resources and that that there are the opportunities (or lack of obstacles) to perform the behavior are likely to have a high degree of perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; as stated in Conner and Armitage, 2006). When applying this to current study, behavioral control is measured in two ways: the propensity to anthropomorphize as inner control factor and the affordability of the brand as an external difficulty factor.

The propensity to anthropomorphize

For over a thousand years, scholars from various disciplines have long noted that people tend to see nonhuman things as humanlike (Epley et al., 2007). According to Epley et al. (2007), imbuing the imagined or real behavior of nonhuman agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, and emotions is the essence of anthropomorphism. Guthri (1993) argues that anthropomorphizing is "seeing the human in nonhuman forms and events, pervades human judgment." In extension of this, Puzakova et al. (2009) defines anthropomorphized brands as "brands perceived by consumers as actual human beings with various emotional states, mind, soul, and conscious behaviors that can act as prominent members of social ties." Simply stated, individuals discover and see the attribution of human characteristics or behavior to objects, a god, animals, or nature. People not only see the human in nature, but, perhaps more relevant to marketers, in products and brands as well. People form relationships with brands (Aaker et al., 2004; Fournier, 1998), and tend to consider it as a person. The propensity for consumers to perceive brands as actual human beings has significant implications in the area of branding.

Fournier (1998) offers an overview of anthropomorphism in connection to the formation of relationships between consumers and brands. It appears that anthropomorphism is an important factor in the conceptualization and validation of the brand-relationship concept. Thus, not only can anthropomorphism can be viewed as giving humanlike aspects to a brand, it can also be viewed as having an actual relationship with a brand like having a relationship with a person.

As mentioned before, brand love is a major construct in the brand-relationship concept. In extension of the argued reason that anthropomorphism is an important factor in the conceptualization and validation of the brand-relationship concept, it is presumed that this is also applicable for brand love. Expected is that the propensity to anthropomorphize influences the feeling of love towards a brand.

H4a:	There is a positive causal relationship between the propensity to anthropomorphize and brand love.

AFFORDABILITY OF THE BRAND

As aforementioned, perceived behavioral control reflects, besides inner control factors, also external perceived difficulty factors. An important part of this is money. For this research, more specifically: the affordability of the brand. However, there is a lack of how affordability might be defined and measured, and not much literature can be found on this topic. For this research, the important question regarding affordability of the brand and brand love is: are consumers actually able and willing to love a brand, even if they cannot afford it? And what is the influence of the affordability of the brand on brand love? It is expected that a reasonable affordability of the brand causes a higher degree of brand love.

H4b:	There is a positive causal relationship between the affordability of the brand and brand love.

2.9   INVOLVEMENT AS A MODERATOR

In order to clarify the concept of involvement, Zaichkowsky (1985) defines involvement as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). Zaichkowsky (1985) suggests that a person can be involved with different objects which leads to different responses. For the current research, it concerns the involvement with products and brands, which has been hypothesized to lead to a greater perception of attribute difference, perception of greater product importance, and greater commitment to brand choice (Howard and Sheth, 1969). Perhaps the most clearest definition comes from Hupfer and Gardner (1971). They define involvement as a "general level of interest in or concern about an issue without reference to a specific position".

The degree of involvement can be connected to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). ELM posits two possible routes, or methods, of influence: central route and peripheral route. Central-route processes require the audience to think more and peripheral-route processes do not involve elaboration through cognitive processing. It is argued that high involved consumers actually think more about their love for a brand and thus follow the central-route process, whereas low involved consumers just buy the products they need of

the brands they casually like and thus follow the peripheral-route process. The following hypotheses are developed to measure the degree of involvement as a moderator for the antecedents on brand love.

First, it is hypothesized that attitude plays a higher role for high involved respondents. This is expected because consumers who love a brand will likely think about the brand and thus follow the central route. In extension of this, it is expected that a favorable attitude is likely to encourage consumers to feel love for a brand.

H5a: Attitude plays a higher role for high involved respondents towards brand love

Second, since it is argued that high involved consumers follow the central route, it is hypothesized that subjective norms play a smaller role for high involved respondents towards brand love. It is expected that high involved consumers tend to care less about what other people think of them or their love for a brand.

H5b: Subjective norms play a smaller role for high involved respondents towards brand love

Third, it is argued that high involved respondents follow the central route, and tend to think about the process, in this case their (beloved) brand. According to Hart et al. (2013) and Miesler et al. (2011), anthropomorphism takes place automatically and non-consciously. Thus, the contrary is expected when being conscious about the anthropomorphism, the propensity to anthropomorphize will be reduced. lit is hypothesized that when a person is high involved, the less this person will anthropomorphize.

H5c: Propensity to anthropomorphize plays a smaller role for high involved respondents towards brand love

Fourth, it is argued that the affordability of the brand plays a smaller role for high involved respondents towards brand love. This can be argued with the fact that if a person loves a brand, this person is most likely willing to pay a premium price for the product, compared to a low involved consumer.

H5d: Affordability of the brand plays a smaller role for high involved respondents towards brand love

2.10 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Summarized, the main aim of this study is to examine brand love and brand forgiveness with the framework of TPB (Ajzen, 1991), to study whether attitude, subjective norms, the propensity to anthropomorphize, and the affordability of the brand have a positive influence on brand love, and in extension of this, to examine whether brand love is an actual behavioral intention for brand forgiveness. Furthermore, the degree of involvement is considered as a moderator of the four antecedents on brand love.

The following theoretical framework (Figure 2) has been developed based on the given hypotheses:
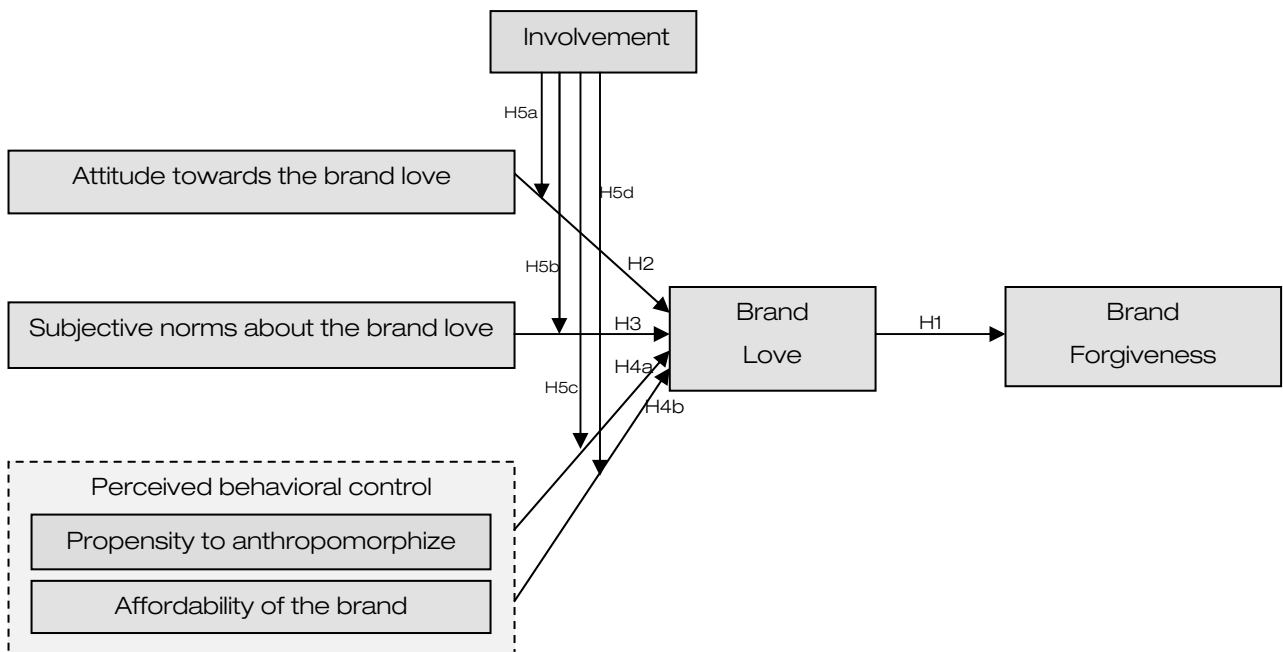

Figure 2. *Conceptualized model, based on TPB.*

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 MEASUREMENT

To measure all the variables of the proposed model, a questionnaire is developed, which can be found in Appendix I (English version) and II (Dutch version). Respondents for this study are recruited through an online survey. First, the respondents are asked to fill in their favorite fashion brand. Respondents do not actually have to own this fashion brand, but have to be somewhat familiar with it in order to fill in the questionnaire correctly. Respondents then completed the questionnaire with reference to the brand they identified. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 statistical software is used for statistical analysis to calculate several analyses (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL).

The construct of brand love is measured according the scale developed by Albert et al. (2008b), which consist of twenty-two items, incorporating a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 = totally disagree and 7 = totally agree. These twenty-two questions measure the seven dimensions of brand love, Uniqueness, Pleasure, Intimacy, Idealization, Duration, Dream and Memories, which furthermore represent two factors, Passion and Affection. Examples of these items are: 'This brand is unique', 'I am always happy to use this brand', 'I have a warm and comfortable relationship with this brand', and 'I idealize this brand'.

The next fifteen items can be segmented according the model of Theory of Planned Behavior. Both attitude and subjective norm are designed using the "Constructing Questionnaires Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior"-manual (Francis et al, 2004).

First, attitude is measured with one statement with four bipolar items. The statement reads as follows: 'The love I feel for brand X, is to me..'. Examples of the bipolar items are 'bad – good' and 'not enjoyable – enjoyable'.

Subjective norm is measured with five items, incorporating a 7-point Likert scale. An example item is 'people that are important to me, support my love for brand X'.

The propensity to anthropomorphize as internal factor of perceived behavioral control is measured based on a modified five item version of the IDAQ scale (Waytz et al., 2010), incorporating a 7-point Likert scale. Examples of questions that are asked, are 'To what extent do you think brand X has a free will?' and 'To what extent do you think brand X has a consciousness?'

Furthermore, the affordability of the brand as an external factor of perceived behavioral control consists of four items with a 7-point Likert scale. Examples of items that are asked for are 'I cannot afford buying this brand', 'This brand is very expensive', and 'I can easily afford this brand'.

As for the forgiveness of brand failures, questions were based on a model which was based on the study of Bauer et al. (2009). This model argues that forgiveness consists of four incentives. The questionnaire stated that the respondent had to imagine that his/her favorite brand fails, for example because the quality of the product is disappointing or the customer care has a poor service. Then, the four incentives of the model were measured with a 7-point Likert scale. Examples of these items were 'to what extent are you willing to defend brand X?' or 'to what extent are you willing to repurchase brand X?'.

The Personal Involvement Inventory (Zaichkowsky, 1985) was applied for measuring the degree of involvement and it consists of one statement with five bipolar items. The statement reads as follows: 'In general, clothes and clothing brands are to me..' and an example of the bipolar item is 'interesting – boring'.

Finally, four questions are asked to generate demographic information about the respondents, such as age, gender, marital status, and education level.

Questionnaires are conducted during a time collapse of ten days, from September 10th 2013 till September 20th 2012 by using Qualtrics Survey Software. A total of 662 surveys are collected. After removing the incomplete or otherwise unusable questionnaires, the remaining 274 questionnaires were used for further analyses. The 274 respondents reported on 114 unique brands. An overview of the reported brands can be found in Appendix III.

3.2 RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Participants (N=274) are aged between 16 and 70 (*M* = 35.31) and included 88 male (32.1%) respondents and 186 female (67.9%) respondents. 61 respondents (22.3%) are single, widow/widower, divorced and 213 respondents (77.7%) are in a relationship, married, living together, (registered) partners. Furthermore, the education level of the sample group is quite high (e.g. 43.4% HBO and 24.5% WO). In table 1 an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample can be found.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics of the sample

Variable	% (Frequency)	Mean (SD)
Age		35.31 (13.65)
Gender		
Male	32.1% (88)	
Female	67.9% (186)	
Marital status		
single, widow/widower, divorced	22.3% (61)	
in a relationship, married, living together, (registered) partners	77.7% (213)	
Education Level		
VMBO	0.7% (2)	
HAVO	6.9% (19)	
VWO/gymnasium/atheneum	5.8% (16)	
Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs	16.8% (46)	
Hoger beroepsonderwijs	43.4% (119)	
Wetenschappelijk onderwijs	24.5% (67)	
Anders	1.8% (5)	

3.3 Inter-item Reliability

To examine the internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha (α) is calculated. The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's Alpha (α) of $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ is regarded as acceptable, a score of $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ is considered good and a $\alpha \geq 0.9$ is considered excellent (Kline, 2000).

Table 2 shows the results for the ideal variable compositions. A total of five items that damaged the reliability were removed to increase the internal consistency. An overview of the deleted Cronbach's Alpha can be found in Appendix IV. All constructs surpassed the recommended value of $\alpha > .70$, except for the section 'duration' of the brand love construct – this section scores $\alpha = .576$. However, the total score of Cronbach's Alpha (α) of the brand love construct is $\alpha = .901$ and when 'duration' is deleted the total will be $\alpha = .905$. Since this difference is so small, it is decided 'duration' will remain in this research. It is also important to consider that when this section will be deleted, the construct is not corresponding anymore to the original concept from Albert el al. (2008b). Either way, overall internal consistency can be assumed.

Table 2. Number of items, variable mean, standard deviation, and reliability of variables.

Variable	Items	Mean	SD	α
Brand Love	20	3.52	0.84	.901
Uniqueness	2	4.49	1.35	.703
Pleasure	4	5.27	0.98	.815
Intimacy	3	3.85	1.35	.859
Idealization	3	2.27	1.10	.758
Duration	3	3.99	1.18	.576
Memories	2	2.22	1.50	.936
Dream	3	1.88	1.11	.870
Attitude	4	4.67	0.75	.779
Subjective Norm	4	2.28	1.11	.780
Propensity to Anthropomorphize	4	3.19	1.59	.916
Affordability of the Brand	4	4.76	1.38	.860
Brand Forgiveness	3	4.35	1.13	.739
Involvement	5	4.25	1.45	.902

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. First, a correlation analysis is performed to test for correlation coefficients between the different variables as presented in the model. Next, a linear regression analyses is performed to test for causal relationships between the depended and independent variables. Furthermore, since the degree of involvement is hypothesized as a moderator, the median for low and high involved respondents is calculated and applied for the linear regression analysis.

4.1 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 3 demonstrates the correlation between the different variables as stated in the model, known as Pearson's correlation coefficient. A coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship, a coefficient of -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship, a coefficient of 0 indicates no linear relationship at all.

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficient.

	Brand Love	Attitude	Subjective Norm	Anthropo-morphism	Affordability	Brand Forgiveness
Attitude	.48**					
Subjective Norm	.39**	.21**				
Anthropomorphism	.41**	.29**	.20**			
Affordability	-.07	.08	.04	-.04		
Brand Forgiveness	.37**	.29**	.26**	.23**	.16**	
Involvement	.30**	.28**	.15*	.09	-.05	.09

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (1-tailed)

Attitude appears to be positively related to brand love the strongest ($r = .48^{**}$), followed by the propensity to anthropomorphize ($r = .41^{**}$). Affordability of the brand appears to be negatively related to brand love ($r = -.07$) but seems not significant. Furthermore, as expected, brand love appears to be positively related to brand forgiveness ($r = .37^{**}$). Also important to point out is that involvement appears to be positively related to brand love ($r = .30^{**}$).

However, considerable caution must be taken since correlation coefficients give no actual indication of the direction of the causality. Further analyses will give more clearness.

4.2 LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Linear regression is applied to adapt the proposed model to the observed data set. An overview of the variables and their corresponding predictors, coefficients, and significance are shown in table 4a to 4d. The adjusted R^2 provides a measure of how well the observed outcomes are replicated by the model and explains the proportion of total variation of outcomes explained by the model.

It should be pointed out that table 4a shows the results of the variable 'brand forgiveness' and table 4b shows the results of the variable 'brand love' with attitude, subjective norm, propensity to anthropomorphize, the affordability of the brand as predictors. Furthermore, table 4c and table 4d also show the results of the variable 'brand love' with the four predictors, however, with low and high involvement as a moderator.

Table 4a. Coefficients of the variable predicted to influence 'brand forgiveness'

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R	R²(ΔR²)
(Constant)	2.60	0.28		9.38	.37	.13 (.13)**
Brand Love	0.50	0.08	.37**	6.47		

Note. * indicates a significance at the 0.01 level, and ** a significance at the 0.001 level.

Table 4b. Coefficients of the variables predicted to influence 'brand love'

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R	R²(ΔR²)
(Constant)	0.91	0.28		3.22	.64	.40 (.39) **
Attitude	0.36	0.06	.32**	6.19		
Subjective Norm	0.19	0.04	.25**	5.16		
Anthropomorphism	0.13	0.03	.25**	4.97		
Affordability	-0.06	0.03	-.09	-1.90		

Note. * indicates a significance at the 0.01 level, and ** a significance at the 0.001 level.

Table 4c. Coefficients of the variables predicted to influence 'brand love' with low involvement

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R	R²(ΔR²)
(Constant)	0.94	0.40		2.35	.62	.39 (.37) **
Attitude	0.39	0.09	.34**	4.59		
Subjective Norm	0.13	0.05	.17*	2.36		
Anthropomorphism	0.18	0.04	.34**	4.71		
Affordability	-0.05	0.04	-.09	-1.27		

Note. * indicates a significance at the 0.05 level, and ** a significance at the 0.001 level.

Table 4d. Coefficients of the variables predicted to influence 'brand love' with high involvement

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R	R²(ΔR²)
(Constant)	1.41	0.40		3.53	.59	.35 (33) **
Attitude	0.36	0.08	.34**	4.65		
Subjective Norm	0.25	0.05	.35**	4.90		
Anthropomorphism	0.08	0.04	.17*	2.32		
Affordability	-0.06	0.04	-.10	-1.40		

Note. * indicates a significance at the 0.05 level, and ** a significance at the 0.001 level.

Table 4a to 4d show that out of the total 13 analyzed predictors, 8 tested as highly significant (p < 0.001), 2 are proper significant (p < 0.05), and 3 predictors seem not significant (p > 0.01).

As expected, the variable 'brand love' appears to be a strong predictor for the variable 'brand forgiveness' (β = .34**). It was found that 13% of the variance of 'brand forgiveness' could be explained by the predictor 'brand love'.

For the variable 'brand love', attitude appears to be the strongest significant predictor (β = .32**), followed by subjective norms and the propensity to anthropomorphize (both β = .25**). The affordability of the brand appears to be a negative predictor for 'brand love' (β = -.09), however, this result is not significant. It was found that 39% of the variance of 'brand love' could be explained by these aforementioned predictors.

Furthermore, involvement has been introduced in the model as a moderator for brand love on the four predictors. A distinction is made between low involved respondents and high involved respondents (Median = 4,4). When looking at the variable 'brand love' with low involved respondents, the variable 'attitude' and 'anthropomorphism' are equally the strongest predictor (β = .34**). In the case of 'brand love' with high involved respondents, the variable 'subjective norm' is the strongest predictor (β = .35**), followed by 'attitude' (β = .34**). It was found that 37% of the variance of 'brand love' with low involved respondents could be explained by the 5 predictors 'attitude', 'subjective norm', 'anthropomorphism', 'affordability', and 33% of the variance of 'brand love' for high involved respondents.

In order to give a clear view of the results on 'brand love', table 5 shows a short summary of the given β between low and high involved respondents and the scores without the moderator 'involvement'.

Tabel 5. Results of low and high involved respondents on 'brand love' (β)

	Overall (β)	Low involved (β)	High involved (β)
Attitude	.32**	.34**	.34**
Subjective Norms	.25**	.17*	.35**
Anthropomorphism	.25**	.34**	.17*
Affordability	-.09	-.09	-.10

Note. * indicates a significance at the 0.05 level, and ** a significance at the 0.001 level.

The attitude towards brand love appear to be the same for the low involved respondents and the high involved respondents (β = .34**). However, there seems to be a clear difference between low and high involved respondents for the subjective norms and the propensity to anthropomorphize: low involved respondents have a weak subjective norm (β = .17*) and a strong propensity to anthropomorphize (β = .34**), while the high involved respondents have a stronger subjective norm (β = .35**) and a weaker propensity to anthropomorphize (β = .17*). According those results, low and high involved respondents score the contrary of each other, and seem to have a influence on brand love.

Table 6 demonstrates an overview of the hypotheses that were formulated to be able to answer the research questions.

Table 6. Overview of the hypotheses and their corresponding results

Hypothesis	Variable Relation	Result
H1	Brand Love -> Brand Forgiveness	Supported
H2	Attitude -> Brand Love	Supported
H3	Subjective norm -> Brand Love	Supported
H4a	Anthropomorphism -> Brand Love	Supported
H4b	Affordability -> Brand Love	Rejected
H5a	High Involvement -> High Attitude	Supported
H5b	High Involvement -> Low Subjective Norms	Rejected
H5c	High Involvement -> Low Propensity to Anthropomorphize	Supported
H5d	High Involvement -> Low Affordability of the Brand	Rejected

4.3 CONCEPTUALIZED MODEL WITH RESULTS

Figure 3a and 3b show the proposed model as presented in Figure 2, with the addition of the coefficients of determination values that resulted from the linear regression analyses. For figure 3b, it should be pointed out that red represents the low involved respondents, and blue represents the high involved respondents.
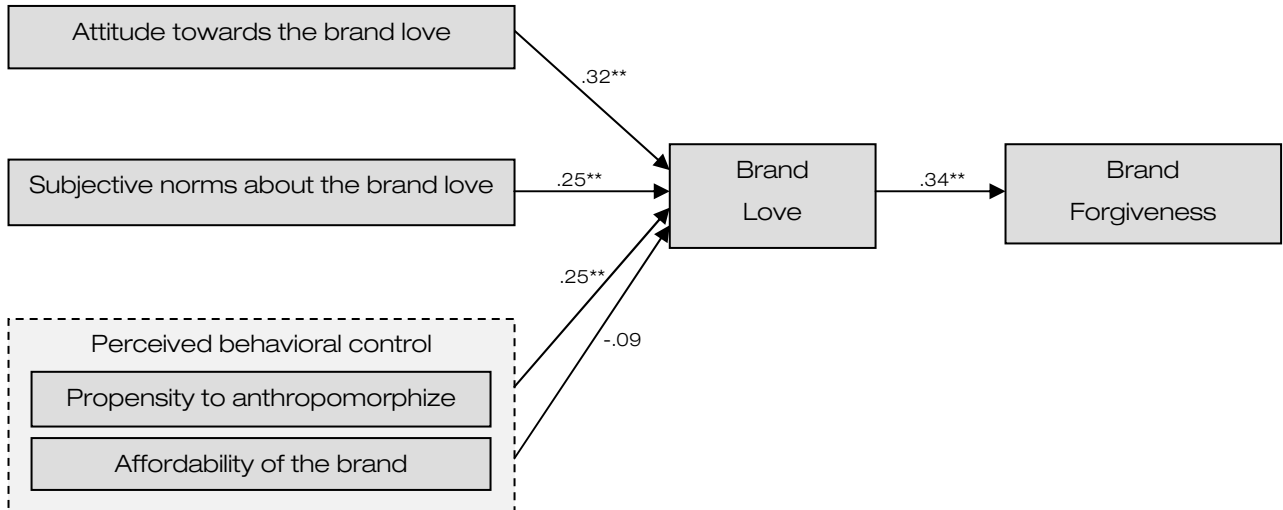
*Figure 3a. Results for the linear regression analyses on brand forgiveness and brand love. * indicates a significance at the 0.001 level, ** a significance at the 0.01 level . A dashed line represents an insignificant link.*
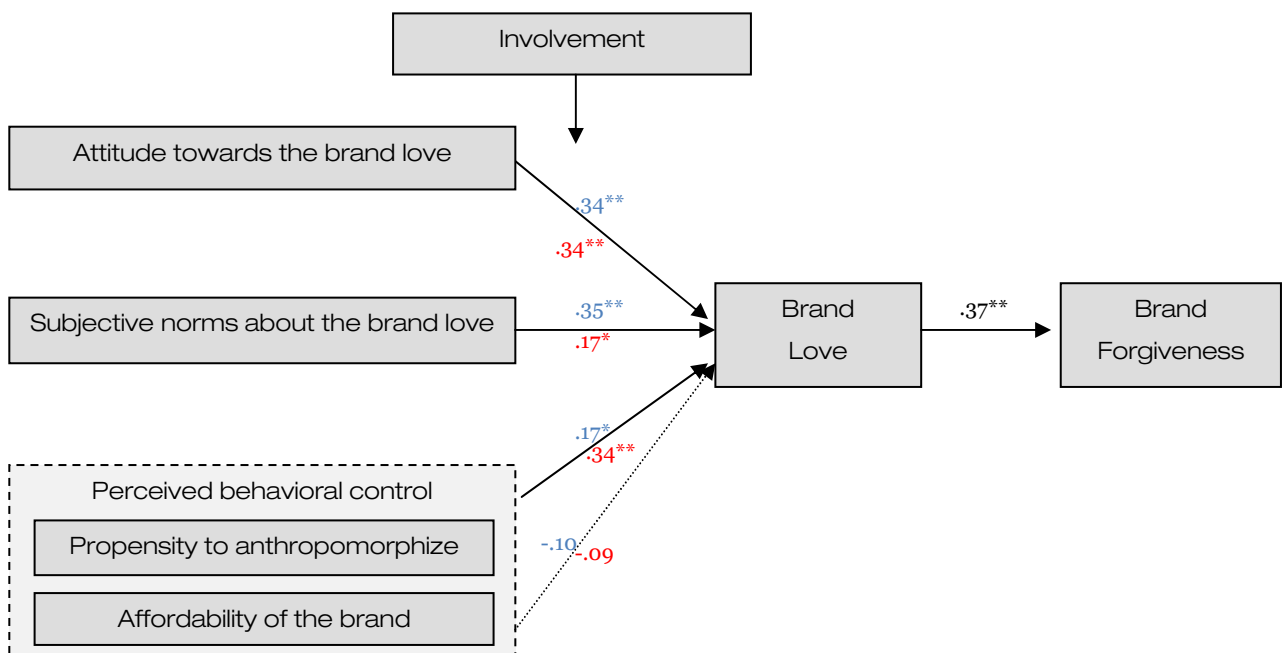

*Figure 3b. Results for the linear regression analyses on brand love with the low and high involved results. * indicates a significance at the 0.001 level, ** a significance at the 0.05 level . A dashed line represents an insignificant link.*

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

It is of great importance for companies to see and comprehend that the influence of relationship marketing plays a major role in consumers' brand selection and brand loyalty. In extension of this, several studies confirm the importance of brand love. Brand love can be considered as the highest aim of CBR since various researches confirm positive outcomes and consequences for brand love, such as positive word of mouth, brand loyalty, willingness to pay a price premium, brand forgiveness, repurchase intention, and questioning negative information. Despite the fact that it is a rising topic, many studies primarily focus on the construct of brand love.

The present study contributes to a further understanding of the concept of brand love by examining attitude, subjective norm, propensity to anthropomorphize, and the affordability of the brand on brand love as behavioral intention with brand forgiveness as behavioral outcome, based on the framework of Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Furthermore, involvement serves as a moderator on the components for brand love. Therefore, the following research questions was developed:

RQ1:   *To what extent are attitude, subjective norm, propensity to anthropomorphize, and the affordability of the brand applicable on brand love and does brand love lead to brand forgiveness?*

A total of nine hypotheses were proposed and tested. The results of this study revealed a strong positive causal relationship between brand love and brand forgiveness. Also attitude appears to be strong significant predictor for brand love. Furthermore, this study found an interesting result regarding the degree of involvement and subjective norm and the propensity to anthropomorphize: high involved respondents showed a high score on subjective norms but a low score on the propensity to anthropomorphize, whereas the low involved respondents showed a low score on subjective norms but a high score on the propensity to anthropomorphize. Furthermore, it appears that there is not a causal positive relationship between the affordability of the brand and brand love. The next paragraph will discuss these findings.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

As expected, brand love showed a strong causal relationship with brand forgiveness. This can be explained by linking back on the study by Bauer et al. (2009). Results of this study show that consumers turn a blind eye to the loved brand when the brand "pulls a boner". It can be concluded that, in order to create a consumers' willingness to forgive a brand failures, a consumers' feeling of love towards a brand should primarily be created.

Attitude towards brand love appears to be the strongest significant predictor for brand love. Subjective norms and the propensity of anthropomorphize both appear the same significant predictor for brand love. However, the affordability of the brand appears to be a negative predictor for brand love, though this relationship is not significant.

Furthermore, a distinction is made for low and high involved respondents and interesting results have emerged. First, results show the same score on attitude towards brand love for both low and high involved consumers. However, the results on subjective norms and the propensity to anthropomorphize between these two groups are remarkable. On the one hand, the strongest significant predictor for brand love with low involved respondents is the propensity to anthropomorphize, and subjective norms appears to be a weaker significant predictor for brand love for this category of involvement. On the other hand, the results of the high involved respondents show the contrary: subjective norms appears to be a strong significant predictor for brand love, and the propensity to anthropomorphize appears to be a weaker significant predictor for brand love.

This surprising result might be explained by using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), which is a dual process theory of how attitudes are formed and changed. According to this model, people use mental processes of motivation and reasoning (or a lack therof) to accept or reject messages. ELM posits two possible routes, or methods, of influence: central-route and peripheral route. Central-route processes require the audience to think more and peripheral-route processes do not involve elaboration through cognitive processing. It is argued that high involved consumers actually think more about their love for a brand, thus follow the central route, and therefore are less likely to anthropomorphize brands and care more about what their social environment think of their love for a brand, whereas low involved consumers just buy the products they need of the brands they casually like, thus follow the peripheral route, and therefore are more likely to anthropomorphize brands and care less about what their social environment thinks.

Noteworthy, the affordability of the brand appears to have a negative causal relationship with brand love, though this relationship seems not significant. Even though it was hypothesized

that it would have a positive causal relationship with brand love, the negative relationship can be explained by the fact that expensive brands can possibly create a feeling of luxury, which could result in a greater feeling of love towards a brand, in contrast to cheaper brands, which just satisfy the need of having clothes for a functional matter. However, it seems more likely that there is just no causal relationship between the affordability of the brand and brand love, and it can be assumed that whether a brand is affordable or not has presumably nothing to do with the love for that brand.

Summarized, it can be concluded that the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) actually serves as a proper framework to provide more clearness about brand love. The elements attitude, subjective norm, and propensity to anthropomorphize appear to be significant predictors of brand love and the level of involvement appears to act as an interesting moderator for the aforementioned elements. As expected, brand love appears to have a positive causal relationship with brand forgiveness. This fills in the aim of this study, as expressed in the research question: "*To what extent are attitude, subjective norm, propensity to anthropomorphize, and the affordability of the brand applicable on brand love and does brand love lead to brand forgiveness?*"

Important to point out is that the sample group of this study contains only Dutch respondents. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005), which describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, it can be argued that this could have influenced the results. For example, one of Hofstede's dimensions is labeled 'uncertainty avoidance'. The Dutch culture scores quite high on this dimension and thus exhibits a preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Besides, the Netherlands scores quite low on the 'masculinity-femininity' dimension, which results in a feminine culture. One of the consequences of this is the way brands are used. In countries that score high in masculinity, brands often serve as a sign of status confirmation, and the contrary is the case in feminine cultures (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Basically, Dutch consumers want to fit in more, and do not like to show off with a brand as a sign of status. When extending this to the current research, it can be argued that Dutch consumers have a high preference for avoiding uncertainty by showing off with brands. Dutch people apply the sentence "just act normal" to many things, thus this could have influenced the results of this study, especially the scores on subjective norms about brand love, and should be taken into account.

Other social influences have to be taken into account as well. Socio-economic characteristics, reference groups, and family influences of the respondent are important factors that create the results. Particularly economic characteristics have to be considered as an important factor, since brands can be expensive. Of course, it can be argued that the affordability of the brand is measured for this research. However, the income of the respondent could have a large share in the results of this study. Even though the income of the respondents is not asked for, it is safe to assume that the level of income differs between respondents. Respondents with a lower level of income will probably buy more budget-friendly products, whereas the respondents with a higher level of income can permit more expensive brands. It is unknown whether the feeling of love differ for the level of income and the price of brands. Furthermore, important to consider is Warde (1997) who argues that "consumers are re-grouping into specialized communities or neo-tribes, where members share values, lifestyles or self-images rather than demographic traits". (Warde, 1997; as cited in Weatherell et al., 2003, p. 2). It is interesting to consider applying this to the concept of brand love and should be taken into account in future research.

5.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

As the results of this research demonstrate, a feeling of love will create a greater feeling of forgivingness with brand failures. The findings of the present study provide guidelines for brand managers in order to create a consumers' feeling of love towards their brands.

First, the present study show that the attitude has a strong causal relationship with brand love. As love is considered as the highest aim in creating strong consumer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998), it is important for brand managers to focus on the consumers' attitude in order to create a feeling of love. Second, results demonstrate that the subjective norms about the feeling of love towards a brand has a significant causal relationship. Thus, it is important to create a feeling that loving a specific brand is accepted, or even popular at the moment. Third, the propensity to anthropomorphize appears to have a significant causal relationship with brand love. Therefore, in order to create a feeling of love, it is import that consumers will be stimulated in their propensity to anthropomorphize the brand. Furthermore, it appears that the affordability of the brand has a negative relationship with brand love, however, this relationship appears to be negative. This means that the affordability did not influenced the feeling of love for a brand. Thus, brand managers do not have consider the affordability when focusing on their relationship marketing. The most noteworthy result emerged from the contrary results on low and high involved consumers. Brand managers should consider their audience and target group and need to know the product category they are in, and based on this focus their marketing strategy in the right direction.

Furthermore, Sarkar (2011) argues that, in order to develop a lovable brand, brand managers must focus on some brand specific and individual specific variables while formulating the marketing strategies, such as the product type and the target group. Sarkar (2011) states that brand advertisements should contain much romantic themes in order to evoke a feeling a love towards a brand. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) demonstrate that the degree of perceived hedonism in a product category has significant positive impact on love for a brand in that product category. This basically means that consumers might feel a higher degree of brand love for a higher hedonic product category compared to a lesser hedonically perceived product category. Thus, in order to modify this negative impact of lower perceived product category hedonism on brand love, it is recommended that brand advertisements implemented in low hedonic product categories should especially contain romantic themes.

Fournier (1998) argues that a brand should possess multiple qualities of a human being, in order to serve as a viable relationship partner. Puzakova (2009) states that the fact that consumers form strong relationships with brands suggests that individuals perceive these brands as complete humans. Several implications of anthropomorphism into a branding strategy are possible. A simple implication is the use of 'facial expressions' in product design or logo's. Furthermore, the employment of a spokesperson for a brand is also recommended. Steve Jobs for Apple was, for example, a famous 'face of a brand'. But also Ronald McDonald is well-known, or Doutzen Kroes for L'Oreal. The process of anthropomorphism can also be used as Nikon does, by using the term: I AM. With this sentence, Nikon creates the thought that a Nikon camera actually is a person.

An important part in the modern world we are currently living in, is social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) state that "Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". Social media can be implemented into a marketing strategy. Social media marketing (SMM) applies social media platforms in order to positively influence consumers toward a website, company, brand, product, service, or a person. In most cases, the end goal of social media marketing is a "conversion," such as the purchase of a product, subscription to a newsletter, registration in an online community, or some other desirable consumer action (Barker et al., 2012). Besides, with using social media platforms, a feeling of communication is created, and a relationship can easily be created. Since the construct of brand love is an important aspect of CBR, it is recommended to utilize the social media platforms. With using social media channels in a right manner, a relationship with the consumer might be created. Furthermore, it is argued that it might be even possible that the propensity to anthropomorphize is stimulated, since the consumer can have the feeling that

he/she communicates with an actual person, while in fact the social media platform represents the brand.

5.4 Limitations and Further Directions

Despite the (notable) results that have emerged, this study has several limitations that should be taken into account. Furthermore, directions for future research are given.

The most obvious and probably the biggest limitation was the number of respondents. From the 662 questionnaires that were initially started, only 274 questionnaires could be used for analyses. The remaining 388 had to be removed due to incompleteness. Even though the number of 274 complete questionnaires are sufficient for this research, it would have been better to have more respondents. The main suggestion for future research would be primarily to conduct this study and apply this framework on a larger sample group. It is suggested to not only increase the number of respondents, but also cover a larger variety of cultures. Since the results of this research could have been influenced by these factors, this limitation would be covered.

Also, a different limitation was the fact that this study only included fashion brands. The results on brand love and brand forgiveness might be different if another product category is chosen. Further research should examine this difference.

A further limitation of this research is the skewed distribution with gender and marital status. The sample group of this study had more than a double amount of females than males. This could have influenced the results, since the questionnaire was based on a favorite fashion brand. It is highly possible that females tend to care more about fashion and fashion brands then males, even though this might be a generalization. Furthermore, the sample group of this study included more than three times more non-singles than singles. This is a bit unfortunate, since this could have influenced the results. It would have been interesting to build further on the research of Rauschnabel et al. (2013). These authors suggest that relationship status and gender does play a role for the degree of loving a brand. Even though there is no doubt about the results of the study of Rauschnabel et al. (2013), the current study cannot confirm these findings.

The final limitation was the degree of failure. It has not been pointed out properly enough to what extent brand love still leads to brand forgiveness. There is a difference between, for example, a poor customer service or, for example, the use of child labor with the production. One might wonder: Is there a limit of forgiveness? And what is the role of brand love in this case? Future research should examine to what extent the type and degree of brand failure

influences the degree of brand forgiveness, and when a consumer still loves a brand or for example stops loving a brand.

Also more knowledge about the propensity to anthropomorphize brands is required in order to apply it properly to marketing strategies. Much research is conducted already, however, it is unclear whether the propensity to anthropomorphize brands is the same for all consumers. What kind of personality traits do influence the propensity to anthropomorphize? Does age and/or gender play a role? And how does this affect brand love? Further research should give more clarification about these questions.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With conducting this research and writing this report, my master course Communication Science is coming to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people that were important to me during this course and the time of my graduation thesis.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Sabrina Hegner. Thank you so much for all your time and your excellent guidance during this period. Your enthusiasm and support have inspired me to write this thesis. Of course also thanks to my second supervisor Anna Fenko. Thank you for your time and your valuable feedback.

I would also like to thank my parents: thank you so much for all the encouragement to take this step and get my masters degree. I could not have done it without your support.

Ruud, thank you for being there for me and giving me mental support and encouragement. You were there for me to calm me down when I was stressing out, or encourage me to work harder when I needed to.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my brother and sister-in-law, sister, and friends for their unconditional support and encouragement, and their infinite willingness to listen to my findings, stories, and twaddles.

REFERENCES

Aaker, J. L., Fournier, S., and Brasel, S. A. (2004). When Good Brands Do Bad. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*(6), 1–16.

Abelson, R. P. (1988). Conviction. *American Psychologist, 43*(4), 267-275.

Aggarwal, P. (2004). The Effects of Brand Relationship Norms on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*(1), 87-101

Ahuvia, A. C. (2005). The love prototype revisited: A qualitative exploration of contemporary folk psychology. Working paper.

Ahuvia, A., Bagozzi, R. P., Batra, R. (2013). Psychometrics vs C-OAR-SE Measures of Brand Love:. A Reply To Rossiter. *Springer Science+Business Media New York*. DOI 10.1007/s11002-013-9251-4

Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* 50, 179-211.

Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

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: Concept and Measurement. *Advances in Consumer Research, 36*, 300-307

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

American Psychological Association (2006). *Forgiveness: A Sampling of Research Results*.

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

Bauer, H., Heinrich, D., and Albrecht, C. M. (2009). "All You Need Is Love: Assessing Consumers' Brand Love. *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association*

Summer Educators Conference, eds. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 252-253.

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

Cheng, S. Y. Y., White, T. B., and Chaplin, L. N. (2012). The Effects of Self-Brand Connections on Responses to Brand Failure: A New Look at the Consumer-Brand Relationship. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 22,* 280-288.

Conner, M. and Armitage, C. J. (1998). Extending the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28(15), 1429-1464.

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

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

Fournier, S., and Mick, D. S. (1999). Rediscovering Satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing, 63,* 5-23.

Francis, J. J., Eccles, M. P., Johnston, M., Walker, A., Grimschaw, J., Foy, R., Kaner, E. F. S., Smith, L., Bonetti, D. *Constructing Questionnaires Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior: A Manual for Health Services Researchers*.

Franzen, G. (1999). *Brands and advertising: How advertising effectiveness influences brand equity*. Oxfordshire, United Kingdom: Admap Publication.

Haig, M. (2003). *Brand Failures*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Hart, P. M., Jones, S. R., and Royne, M. B. (2013). The human lens: How anthropomorphic reasoning varies by product complexity and enhances personal value. *Journal of Marketing Management,* (ahead-of-print), 1-17

Hinde, R. A. (1976). *Man, 11* (1), 1.

Hofstede, G. H., and Hofstede, G. J. (2005). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. Revised and expanded, 2nd Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill

Howard, J. A., and Sheth, J. N. (1969). *The Theory of Buyer Behavior*. New York: John Wiley.

Hupfer, N., and Gardner, D. (1971). Differential Involvement With Products and Issues: An Exploratory Study. *Proceedings: Association for Consumer Research,* ed. David M. Gardner, College Park, MD: Association for Consumer Research, 262-269.

Kaplan, A. M. and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons, 53,* 59-68.

Keller, K. L. (2001). *Building customer-based brand equity: A blueprint for creating strong brands.* Cambridge: Marketing Science Institute.

Miesler, L., Leder, H., and Herrmann, A. (2011). Isn't it cute: An evolutionary perspective of baby-schema effects in visual product designs. *International Journal of Design, 5*(3), 17-30

Morris, M. G., Venkatesh, V., Ackerman, P. (2005). Gender and Age Differences in Employee Decisions About New Technology: An Extension to the Theory of Planned Behavior. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 52*(1), 69-84.

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

O'Keefe, D. J. (1990). *Persuasion: Theory and Research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Petty, R., and Cacioppo, T. (1986). *From communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Puzakova, M., Kwak, H., and Rocereto, J. (2009). Pushing The Envelope of Brand And Personality: Antecedents And Moderators of Anthropomorphized Brands. *Advances in Consumer Research 36,* 413–419.

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 EMAC2013. Istanbul, Turkey

Roberts, K. (2004). *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands.* New York: Power House Book.

Sarkar, A. (2011). Romancing With a Brand: A Conceptual Analysis of Romantic Consumer-Brand Relationship. *Management and Marketing, Challenges for the Knowledge Society, 6*(1), 79-94

Simons, H. W. (1976). *Persuasion: Understanding, Practice, And Analysis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

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.

Sparks, P., Guthrie, C. A., and Shepherd, R. (1997). The Dimensional Structure of The Perceived Behavioural Construct. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 27*(5), 418–438.

Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A Triangular Theory of Love. *Psychological Review, 93*(2), 119-135.

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

Warde, A. (1997). *Consumption, Food, and Taste. Sage Publications, London.* WCED (1987), Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report), Oxford: Oxford University Press

Waytz, A., Cacioppo, J., and Epley, N. (2010). Who Sees Human? The Importance And Stability of Individual Difference in Anthropomorphism. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5,* 219–232.

Weatherell, C., Tregear, A., Allinson, J. (2003). In search of the Concerned Consumer: UK Public Perceptions of Food, Farming, and Buying Local. *Journal of Rural Studies, 19*(2), 233-244.

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985). Measuring the Involvement Construct. *Journal of Consumer Research, 12*, 341-352.

APPENDIX I – QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH

What is your favorite fashion brand? You don't actually have to own this brand, but in order to fill in this questionnaire properly, it is important that you are (somewhat) familiar with it.

Next, several statements will follow about brand X. With these statements, you can indicate how much you agree with it and to what extent the statements are applicable to you. It is important that you remember that there is no right or wrong; your feelings and opinion matters.

	Totally disagree	Disagreed	A bit disagreed	Neutral	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
This brand is special	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
This brand is unique	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
By buying this brand, I take pleasure	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Discovering new products from this brand is a pure pleasure	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I take a real pleasure in using this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I am always happy to use this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I have a warm and comfortable relationship with this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I feel emotionally close to this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I value this brand greatly in my life	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
There is something almost ' magical' about my relationship with this brand.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I idealize this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
(I feel that) this brand has accompanied me for many years	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I have been using this brand for a long time	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I have not changed brand since long	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
This brand reminds me someone important to me	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
This brand reminds me memories, moments of my past (childhood, adolescence, a meeting)	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I associate this brand with some important events of my life	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
This brand corresponds to an ideal for me	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I dream about that brand since long	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
This brand is a childhood dream	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I dream (or have dreamt) to posses this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

The love I feel for brand X, is to me:

Bad	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Good
Interesting	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Uninteresting
Fun	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	No fun
Unattractive	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Attractive
Rewarding	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Punishing
Desirable	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Undesirable

With the next items, you can indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
People who are important to me think that I should love brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
People who influence my buying behaviour think that I should love brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Society thinks I should love brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
People that are important to me, think it is ok that I love brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Friends and family support me in my love for brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

The next items will ask you to what extent you agree or disagree with the questions. There is no right or wrong. To what extent do you think:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Brand X has intentions?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Brand X has a free will?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Brand X experiences emotions?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Brand X has a consciousness?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Brand X has a mind of its own?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

The next items ask about the affordability of brand X

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
I cannot afford buying brand X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Brand X is very expensive	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I would not consider buying this brand because its high price	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
I can easily afford this brand	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Imagine a scenario where brand X disappoints you, for example because of the quality of the product of brand X is disappointing or the customer care of brand X has a poor service. To what extent are you:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Willing to defend brand X?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Wiling to seek revenge on brand X?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Willing to consume brand X in the future?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Willing to repurchase brand X in the future?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

In general, fashion and fashion brands are to me ..

Relevant	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Irrelevant
Boring	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Interesting
Important	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Unimportant
Valuable	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Worthless
Fascinating	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Mundane

What is your age?

_____

What is your gender?

o   Male
o   Female

What is your marital status?

o   Single, widow/widower, divorced
o   In a relationship, married, living together, (administrated) partnership

What is your highest (finished) level of education?

o   VMBO
o   HAVO
o   VWO/gymnasium/atheneum
o   LBO
o   MBO
o   HBO
o   WO
o   Anders

APPENDIX II – QUESTIONNAIRE DUTCH

Wat is je favoriete kledingmerk? Je hoeft dit merk niet perse te bezitten, maar voor deze vragenlijst is het wel belangrijk dat je er (enigszins) bekend mee bent.

Hieronder volgen enkele stellingen over merk X. Bij deze stellingen kun je aangeven hoeveel jij het er mee eens bent en in hoeverre deze stellingen van toepassing zijn op jou. Belangrijk is dat je onthoudt dat er geen goed of fout is; het gaat hier om jouw gevoel en jouw mening.

	Hele maal mee onee ns	Mee onee ns	Enig szins mee onee ns	Neut raal	Enig szins mee eens	Mee eens	Hele maal mee eens
Dit merk is speciaal voor mij	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk is uniek	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik beleef plezier met het kopen van dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Het ontdekken van nieuwe pruducten geeft mij genoegen	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik beleef plezier wanneer ik dit merk draag	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik voel me gelukkig wanneer ik dit merk draag	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik ervaar een warme en aangename relatie met dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik voel me emotioneel dicht bij dit merk staan	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik waardeer dit merk zeer in mijn leven	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Er is bijna iets 'magisch' aan de relatie die ik heb met dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Er is voor mij niets belangrijkers dan de relatie die ik heb met dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik idealiseer dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Voor mijn gevoel heeft dit merk mij al veel jaren vergezeld	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik draag dit merk al langere tijd	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik ben niet van merk gewisseld sinds lange tijd	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk herinnert me aan iemand die belangrijk voor mij is	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk herinnert me aan belangrijke momenten in mijn leven	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik associeer dit merk met belangrijke gebeurtenissen in mijn leven	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk komt overeen met mijn idealen	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik droom al lang over dit merk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk is als een jeugddroom	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik droom ervan (of heb er van gedroomd) om dit merk te bezitten	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

De liefde die ik voor merk X voel, is voor mij:

Slecht	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Goed
Interessant	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Oninteressant
Leuk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Niet leuk
Onaantrekkelijk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Aantrekkelijk
Belonend	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Niet lonend
Wenselijk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Niet wenselijk

Bij de volgende stellingen kun je aangeven in hoeverre jij het met de stellingen eens bent.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik van merk X moet houden	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
De mensen die mijn koopgedrag beïnvloeden, vinden dat ik van merk X moet houden	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
De maatschappij verwacht van mij dat ik van merk X houd	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden het prima dat ik van merk X houd	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Vrienden en familie steunen mij in mijn liefde voor merk X	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Bij de volgende items wordt je gevraagd om aan te geven in welke mate je het met de vragen eens bent. Er is dus geen juist of onjuist. Tot op welke hoogte denk je dat:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
merk X intenties kan hebben?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
merk X een eigen wil heeft?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
merk X emoties ervaart?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
merk X een bewustzijn heeft?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
merk X eigen gedachten heeft?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

De volgende stellingen vragen om je mening over de betaalbaarheid van merk X.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik kan dit merk (eigenlijk) niet betalen	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Dit merk is erg duur	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik zou dit merk niet kopen omdat het te duur is	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Ik kan dit merk makkelijk betalen	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Stel je een scenario voor dat merk X je teleurstelt. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld komen doordat de kwaliteit van het product van merk X niet goed is of doordat de klantenservice je niet goed helpt. Tot op welke hoogte zou je:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
bereid zijn om merk X te verdedigen?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
bereid zijn om wraak te nemen op merk X?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
bereid zijn om merk X in de toekomst nog steeds te gebruiken?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
bereid zijn om merk X in de toekomst opnieuw aan te schaffen?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

In het algemeen zijn kleding en kledingmerken voor mij ..

Relevant	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Irrelevant
Saai	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Interessant
Belangrijk	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Onbelangrijk
Betekenisvol	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Betekenisloos
Fascinerend	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Niet fascinerend

Wat is je leeftijd?

_____

Wat is je geslacht?

o   Man
o   Vrouw

Wat is je burgerlijke staat?

o   Alleenstaand, weduwe/weduwnaar, gescheiden
o   In een relatie, gehuwd, samenwonend, (geregistreerd) partnerschap

Wat is je hoogst (afgeronde) opleiding?

o   VMBO
o   HAVO
o   VWO/gymnasium/atheneum
o   LBO
o   MBO
o   HBO
o   WO
o   Anders

Appendix III – Fashion Brands

Brand name	Frequency	Brand name	Frequency
10 days	1	Massimo Dutti	1
Abercrombie and Fitch	1	McGregor	3
Adidas	7	Mexx	1
Agu	1	Mint and Berry	2
American Apparel	1	Miss Etam	2
Angels	1	Mödstrom	1
Armani	1	Monki	3
Arrow	1	Mooia	1
Asos	1	Mud Jeans	1
ATO	1	New Look	1
Avelon	1	Nike	6
Bandolera	1	No Mans Land	1
Bellerose	1	Nü	1
Bench	1	Nudie	2
Billabong	1	Nümph	1
Boss Orange	1	Object	2
Brax	1	Only	6
Cambio	1	Pall Mall	5
Carhartt	6	Pepe Jeans	1
Cecil	3	Pierre Cardin	2
Chanel	1	PME	1
Cheap Monday	3	Primark	1
Container	1	Pull and Bear	1
Converse	1	Ralph Lauren	1
Cora Kemperman	2	Replay	1
Craft	1	River Woods	1
DEPT	5	Royal Chicks	1
Desigual	2	Sumuji	1
Dickies	1	Sandwich	7
Didi	1	Sarah Pacini	1
Diesel	2	Scotch and Soda	3
Esprit	17	Second female	1
Expresso	2	Silver Creek	1
Floris van Bommel	1	Sissy Boy	1
Forever21	2	State of Art	2
G-star	6	Steps	2
Gaastra	2	Street One	1
Gant	3	Sugarhill boutique	1
Gardeur	1	Suit Supply	1
Geisha	1	Summum	1
Gerry Weber	2	Superdry	1
Gsus	1	Supertrash	2
HandM	21	Tommy Hilfiger	8
Hugo Boss	4	Topshop	1
Human Nature	3	Urban Outfitters	1
Isabel Marant	1	Vanilia	3
Jack and Jones	6	Vans	4
Jack Wolfskin	1	Vero Moda	6
Jackpot	1	Vila	3
Jacob Cohën Jeans	1	Warehouse	1
Jessica (CandA)	1	WE	2
Juicy Couture	1	Wrangler	2
Junk de Luxe	1	Zara	12
Kuyichi	1		
L.O.G.G.	1		
l'Argentina	1		
Levi's	6		
LIV	1		
Mac Jeans	1		
Maison Scotch	6		
Mango	5		

Appendix IV – deleted cronbach's alpha

Deleted item 1: BrandLove16 – This brand reminds me someone important to me

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.880	3

Table 1.1. Reliability Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Dit merk herinnert me aan iemand die belangrijk voor mij is	4,44	8,965	,638	,936
Dit merk herinnert me aan belangrijke momenten in mijn leven	4,07	6,765	,844	,758
Ik associeer dit merk met belangrijke gebeurtenissen in mijn leven	4,18	7,256	,838	,766

Table 1.2. Item-Total Statistics

Deleted item 2: BrandLove19 - This brand corresponds to an ideal for me

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.816	4

Table 2.1. Reliability Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Dit merk komt overeen met mijn idealen	5,64	10,995	,470	,870
Ik droom al lang over dit merk	6,65	11,101	,780	,709
Dit merk is als een jeugddroom	6,78	11,800	,732	,736
Ik droom ervan (of heb ervan gedroomd) om dit merk te bezitten	6,54	10,916	,652	,760

Table 2.2. Item-Total Statistics

Deleted item 3: SubjectiveNorm4 – People that are important to me, think it is ok that I love brand X

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.765	5

Table 3.1. Reliability Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik van merk X moet houden	11,61	20,958	,643	,694
De mensen die mijn koopgedrag beïnvloeden, vinden dat ik van merk X moet houden	11,38	19,922	,618	,694
De maatschappij verwacht van mij dat ik van merk X houd	11,61	22,114	,517	,730
Mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden het prima dat ik van merk X houd	9,12	19,711	,413	,780
Vrienden en familie steunen mij in mijn liefde voor merk X	10,19	18,948	,560	,714

Table 3.2. Item-Total Statistics

Deleted item 4: Anthropomorphism1 – To what extent do you think brand X has intentions?

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.896	5

Table 4.1. Reliability Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
het merk intenties kan hebben?	12,74	40,412	,534	,916
het merk een eigen wil heeft?	12,94	34,220	,786	,863
het merk emoties ervaart?	13,67	36,090	,809	,859
het merk een bewustzijn heeft?	13,62	34,669	,815	,856
het merk eigen gedachten heeft?	13,62	35,248	,785	,863

Table 4.2. Item-Total Statistics

Deleted item 5: Brand forgiveness2 – To what extent are you willing to seek revenge on brand X

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
,554	4

Table 5.1. Reliability Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
bereid zijn om merk X te verdedigen?	15,49	8,500	,214	,598
bereid zijn om wraak te nemen op merk X?	13,05	11,584	-,047	,739
bereid zijn om merk X in de toekomst nog steeds te gebruiken?	14,02	6,450	,656	,187
bereid zijn om merk X in de toekomst opnieuw aan te schaffen?	13,92	6,465	,693	,163

Table 5.2. Item-Total Statistics