What do You Mean by Love? Understanding Brand Love Experiences

Abstract

Just as there are types of interpersonal love, there might be types or experiences of brand love. This study proposes that brand love is an umbrella term for different brand love experiences and proposes a scale to differentiate among them. After a literature review and a qualitative stage, reasons to love a brand were coded based on the relationship experiences the interviewees have with their loved brands. Each of the codes were translated into sentences, and a sample of 327 brand lovers were asked to choose their degree of agreement to each of the sentences. Through factorial analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) four factors emerged, representing brand love experiences, based on the grouping of reasons to love a brand: *values, identity, emotional attachment* and *functionality*, which exhibit distinct relationships to the long-established antecedents and consequents of brand love. We add to the literature by developing a multidimensional differentiation scale based on the reasons people love a brand, to typify their experiences.

Keyword: Brand love; Brand Relationships, Scale Development, Structural Equation Modeling.

INTRODUCTION

"We are all a little weird and life's a little weird, and when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness and call it love." (Dr. Seuss – Theodor Seuss Geisel - American children's author)

Although artists, such as Dr, Seuss, find no difficulty to express their thoughts about love, academics have a hard time defining it. Love theories were mostly developed by understanding the essence and evolution of Person-to-Person Relationships (PPR), a traditional area of study among psychology scholars. As example, Sternberg (1986) explains how the presence or absence of components – Intimacy, Passion and Commitment – result in different PPR. Lee (1977) developed a taxonomy on how people differently experience romantic love, which is in accordance with Berscheid (2006), who explains that love experiences are dependent on the overall context.

The love people build towards objects is referred as Consumer-Object Relationships (COR), which was developed adapting what was already established in PPR theories. Sternberg's (1986) theory was adapted to Marketing by Shimp & Madden (1988), who revised the components to understand how people interact with brands. Also, Fournier's (1998) used PPR as metaphors to explain COR (Consumer Object Relationships) specifically to brands, in which consumers, rather than brands, have active participation, being responsible for interpreting brand messages to nurture their feelings.

Most studies developed on brand love define it as "the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (Carrol; Ahuvia, 2006), have a different focus from the traditional PPR parallel. Although theorization on PPR tend to focus on the subject point of view, brand love theories focus on the consequences (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005) of brand love, such as the benefits companies can get from it, and what causes love (Sarkar, 2011; Ahuvia, 1993). Thus, most studies use the marketers' lenses instead of the consumer perspective on that relationship.

Fewer studies have focused on the personal experience rather than the market perspective (e.g. Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Albert, Merunka &Valette-Florence, 2009). Although those researches brought into light how the consumer interacts with a loved brand and what features are related to this relationship, literature on brand love frames it as equal to all consumers, disregarding the individual experience on what brand love is. This research attempts to fill this gap, inspired on PPR research of Sternberg (1986), which proposes that love dimensions form different person-to-person relationship experiences, and Lee (1977) who found six main interpersonal love experiences. Our main objective is to investigate how the reasons consumers have to love a brand shape different brand love experiences. To answer the main objective, we attempt a) to understand the reasons consumers have to love brands; b) to understand how these dimensions form brand love experiences; c) to develop a scale to differentiate brand love experiences, and d) to verify whether brand love experiences scale is a better predictor of consequences of brand love than the brand love's unidimensional scale.

The current brand love measures focus on the strength of the relationship between consumer and the brand in a unidimensional (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006) or multidimensional (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2009) way, or already including the antecedents and consequences on a prototype (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012), all further discussed on the theoretical background. They all assume brand love as homogeneous to create a definition of what brand love is, as if all brand love experiences are the same. Instead of defining for the consumer what they should be experiencing as brand love, we brought up their different definitions of brand love to understand how heterogeneous the expression of love is. By accepting different concepts people have for the expression of love for a brand, we can understand how differently that relationship experience interacts with antecedents, consequences, personality traits, demographics and business characteristics (segments or communication styles).

THEORY

Interpersonal love and other relationships

Despite the tradition in studying love as a construct, some definitions are still controversial in the literature. There is no consensus whether love is an emotion (e.g., Buck, 1999; Sabini & Silver, 2005; Shaver et al., 1996) or not (e.g., Ekman, 1992; Ekman & Cordaro, 2011; Izard, 2007). The difficulty is based on the criteria used to define an emotion, such as specific facial expression, brief duration, unique subjective feeling or unique physiological pattern (Ekman & Cordaro, 2011) or specific behaviors related to it – like pair bounding, for example, which may also be related to friendships (not romantic love). Instead of classifying it as a specific basic emotion, several authors prefer to use concepts in which love is composite, as an emotional attitude, complex, or plot (Ekman, 1992; 1998) or emotional related experience (Izard, 1992).

In an attempt to untangle the theories and unravel its true nature, Lamy (2016) suggests that love is a mixture of drive, emotional load, and myth. The drive for loving is the person's predisposition to a love experience; The emotional load is related to the emotions aroused by the experiences of love; and, finally, the myth is related to the social understanding of what love is, its expectations and social norms. More than an individual experience, it is a shared understanding of a concept, dated and characterized by its epoch. Although this understanding emphasizes romantic love, the general concept can be considered to other love categories.

A series of studies in interpersonal relationships are focused in categorizing phenomena. The basic distinction of love in psychology is the one between *passionate* and *companionate* love. The first is shown to be marked by intense emotions, overtly sexual behaviors and to fade faster with time, while the second is more stable and with milder emotions. Beyond this definition, other theories show more detailed differences in love relationships.

The triangular theory of love is also common among the theoretical backgrounds of brand studies. Sternberg (1986) explains love as a compound formed by three dimensions – passion, intimacy and commitment – and the presence or absence of each dimension form a different PPR: *non-love*, which represents most of people's relationships, with no component of love; *liking*, referring to the level of intimacy one have with most friends; *infatuated love*, related to the instantaneous experience of love, without deeper feelings related to it; *empty love*, in the cases which the person decides to stay on a relationship although the intimacy or attraction has faded or has never existed; *romantic love*, which combines the physical attraction/interest with the intimacy the couple built; *companionate love*, in which the physical attraction has faded away, but the couple stays connected and is willing to be together; *fatuous love*, compared to fast relationships built upon enthusiasm, without the time to mature and develop intimacy; and *consummate love*, representing the relationships with all three components: decision commitment, intimacy and passion.

Lee (1977) identified six love experiences regarding romantic love: *eros*, the physical representation's pursuit of an idealization in the lover's mind; *ludus*, a permissive and pluralistic love's form in which the lovers seek for a lower degree of involvement, resulting in multiple and short-lived relationships; *storge*, in opposite to *ludus*, expects for a long-term relationship based on slowly developing of affection and gradual disclosure of the self; *mania*, an intense love style marked by jealously, preoccupation and constant affirmation of being loved; *agape*, guided by reason, it represents love in an altruistic form, without the expectation of reciprocity; and *pragma*, which considers not only the other's personality but also demographic information as religion, age, education and other social statuses are taken into consideration.

The theories of interpersonal relationships, although inconclusive about its definition, cover not only romantic love but also other relationships which are based on experiences, as in the cases of companionate love. In another hand, a more recent area of studies than the psychological studies field adapts interpersonal theories and develops its basis of knowledge to relationships for the non-human (e.g: Brown, 1987; Chapman, 2005), as explored in the next section. As we can see, an important part of psychological theories in love is dedicated to typify different types or experiences of love.

Love for the inanimate

Researchers in the design field and related areas have explored the feeling of love towards objects. Brown (1987) believes it is possible to feel love for an inanimate being, thus love does not depend on any specific characteristic to happen, so people can genuinely believe what they are feeling is actually love. Another perspective by the same author is that people may use the word love interchangeably with like, to express what they are feeling and that it would be only an expression. In the design perspective, Chapman (2005)

explains that although people may experience love for an object, it lacks reciprocity and cannot be developed as a couple, only for the individual herself.

Berscheid (2006) explains that people declare love for others in a context in which they build its concept based on a specific person, situation, culture, and it happens to encompass different attitudes, emotions, feelings, and behaviors, thus it has a different meaning in each case. That is the same perspective Lee (1977) took on his study of different love experiences, showing that even the same person may describe their love experiences differently. On the person perspective, that inanimate objects acquire life and meanings. Often, the work of Ahuvia (1993) has been used to explain the relationship between individuals with objects through the extended-self theory, which describes that brand lovers think about their loved brands as parts of their self, as an expression of their personalities, values and thoughts. For him, people don't fall in love with a brand, but for the reflection of themselves on those products and companies.

Brand love and other brand relationships

The initial theories in consumer-brand/product relationships were adaptations from PPR theories. Shimp & Madden (1988) used the same logic as Sternberg' (1986) triangular theory of love to explain consumer-object relationships. They adapted the three items to liking, yearning and decision commitment, resulting in *nonliking*, in which consumers feel nothing in particular towards a brand; *liking*, when a person has some degree of affinity to a specific brand; *infatuation*, when consumers feel the pressure to consume a brand, such as in professional environments or teenager fashion; *functionalism*, when the intended object is useful for the consumer; *inhibited desire*, when the consumer has the will to consume, but is constrict by something or someone; *utilitarian*, in the cases the consumers like the brand and consume it often, but do not have loyalty or any kind of emotional attachment to a brand; *succumbed desire,* also referring to the cases which the consumer does not prefer the brand, but without even liking the brand; and *loyalty*, when the consumer present all of the dimensions: liking, yearning and decision commitment. Although this conceptualization of different experiences was made, no tool to differentiate them were developed.

In another parallel, Fournier (1998) develops an overview on people-brand relationships, understanding its characteristics and using parallels on interpersonal relationships (e.g. arranged marriages, best friendships, kinships, etc.) as metaphors to explain how people develop different ties with brands. In her study, she changes the lenses from the brand perspective to the consumer perspective, noticing that although marketers stage the relationship as a trade, brands have more meaning to people than to the practitioners.

Brand love has been proved relevant to marketing studies in several ways. Its consequences have been explored and tested, such as positive word-of-mouth (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2014; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012); increased brand engagement (Bervist and Bech-larsen, 2010) increased purchased (Bervist & Bech-larsen, 2010); brand loyalty (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Sarkar, 2011; Batra et al., 2012); willingness to pay premium prices (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005; Sarkar, 2011); resistance to negative information (Batra et al., 2012); brand commitment (Albert & Merunka, 2013) and impulsive buying behavior (Sarkar, 2013).

The literature has also explained how brand love is preceded. Some of the studies can be more intuitive, such as good experiences with the brand (Sarkar, 2011); satisfaction with

products or services (Ahuvia, 1993; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al. ,2012); similarity to the consumer's self (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Roy et al., 2013; Bervist and Bech-larsen, 2010), and others simply logical, such as sense of community (Bervist and Bech-larsen, 2010) and brand trust (Albert and Merunka, 2013). Some brands' characteristics may also be involved at the beginning of brand love, like hedonic- (in opposition to utilitarian-) related (Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2013); and brands which present anthropomorphism (Ahuvia, 2014).

Also explored are the human personality traits and characteristics which are related to brand love, such as romantic people, which tend to develop emotional connections to engage in hedonic consumption (Roy et al., 2013); extrovertist and neuroticism, who sees in the brands romantic partners (Roy et al., 2013); and single people (Rauschnabel et al, 2013). On the other side, materialistic consumers tend to be dissatisfied with their consumption experiences and are less prone to love a brand (Roy et al., 2013).

Brand love measurements

To develop the proposed scale, we reviewed previous scales to measure the experience. Carrol and Ahuvia (2006) developed a scale to measure the strength of the relationship to verify whether brand characteristics and brand love consequences vary according to the brand love strength. Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence (2009) criticize the unidimensional model since the items and previous theory suggest multidimensionality (well-being, happiness, passion, attachment and other constructs). Their version of the brand love scale encompasses two dimensions: affection, which is related to more stable and deeper in the connection between the brand and the person; and passion, related to more intense feelings towards the brand. Also, in multidimensional perspective, Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi (2012) describe that fuzzy and uncertain concepts like love are better described by prototypes, which they developed, rather than by direct observation. For that, they consider features – characteristics, antecedents and consequences – which are often found in brand love relationships. Those features were analyzed using structural equation modelling to verify their interactions as first and higher order structural models.

Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005)´s scale measures the emotional attachment to a brand. This scale is related to the emotional loads on the phenomena (the dimensions are affection, connection and passion and the items are related to emotions). It focuses on the emotional relationship to the brand, for it does not measure brand love, but another experience related to it: an emotional attachment to a brand. Wang et al. (2004) adopted the consumer' point of view, adapting Lee's (1977) perspective on distinct love experiences to understand how the relationship between bikers and their loved products worked, resulting in the following characteristics: "an interpersonal love that is passionate, possessive and selfless in nature. Only the passion component of interpersonal love had an impact on loyalty to their bikes" (p.320).

Most of the studies tend to focus directly on the brand side, and the consequences and antecedents to brand love. Although some papers (e.g. Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence,2008; Batra, 2012) have studied the consumer side, none have studied the meaning consumers attribute to brand love.

METHOD

We used a seven-stage process to develop the Brand Love Experiences Scale (DeVellis, 2003).

Step 1 - Determining what is to be measured

We found 251 papers directly related to brand love. The systematic review of the literature was the ground to develop a semi-structured script to interview people who declared love for a brand, which allows the interviewer to transit among topics, skip unrelated subjects and deepen interesting topics (Zikmund, 1998). Although the findings from other studies emerged from our data, what became clear to us was that the majority of papers were studying brand love on a brand's interest perspective, trough antecedents and consequences of it, so we took the consumer perspective on the study to measure how different reasons to love a brand compose diverse brand love experiences. This perspective was also inspired in Lee's (1977) idea of different ways of experiencing interpersonal love, and the perception that the experiences' descriptions were also different for brand love; and in the work of Sternberg (1986), which defined experiences that mean different relationship experiences.

Step 2 - Generating an item pool

A set of in-depth interviews were performed between November/2017 and June/2018. To find participants, we used the snowballing sampling technique, in which initial respondents indicated people they knew who love brands. Only those who declared love for brands were chosen, if they end up in doubt whether they loved the brand or just liked it, they were thanked and dismissed. As the objective of this study is not to determine whether an experience is or is not love, considering the concept of different love forms, all cases of declared brand love were accepted. The brands whose respondents declared their love for were from the following sectors: fashion, food & beverages, electronics, banking, kitchen appliances, videogames, music instruments, hygiene, makeup, streaming, automobile, baby appliances and TV channels.

Participants ranged from 22 to 47 years old. Out of the 17 interviews, eight were performed face to face and nine over the phone. The interviews lasted from 40 to 105 minutes, and they were all recorded for analysis with the consent of the interviewees. After data collection, the recordings were transcribed, and the information related to the experiences were analyzed.

Step 3 – Determined the format of the measurement

For defining the measurement format, we took into consideration what previous studies used, so we could compare results and use validated methods. Considering we used the work of Carrol & Ahuvia (2006) as a reference for comparison, we choose a five-point Likert scale for measuring the degree of agreement respondents have with the items.

Step 4 - Have the initial item pool revised by experts

The data collected from the 17 interviews was coded and analyzed together to define the theoretical reasons of brand love. Based on the content, we identified different reasons people had to love brands, summing up 72 items. They were analyzed by five other scholars with diverse expertise. After the revision process we came up with 18 items for the final questionnaire.

Step 5 - Consider the inclusion of validation items

Similar scales are inserted in the same questionnaire to provide *construct validity* (DeVellis, 2003). To choose a scale, we went back to the systematic review and revised antecedents and consequences of brand love, as well as concurrent scales developed to measure it. The most cited article about the construct (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006) both presented a brand love scale (SBL - strength of brand love), which can be compared to the results of our scale for concurrent criterion validity, and collected data along with a positive Word-of-Mouth (WOM), Loyalty (LOL), Hedonic Brand (HB), Social-Expressive Brand (SEB) and Social Self (SS), which were often cited as related to brand love, presenting a good opportunity to compare results and assure predictive criterion validity. We used sentences similar to the ones verbalized by consumers in the interviews to check face validity A group of three consumers who explained their understanding of the final items to check if the intended meaning was well expressed on the sentences.

Stage 6 - Administer items to a development sample

An online questionnaire was uploaded to Qualtrics, a data collection platform. The respondents (N=327) were instructed to choose one brand they love (with the explanation that, if they declare love for the brand in any context, that is considered brand love), state the brand name and to mark their degree of agreement with the items for each theoretical dimension. The items were organized by individual scale: Strength of Brand Love (SBL), Word-of-Mouth (WOM), Loyalty (LOL), Hedonic Brand (HB), Social-Expressive Brand (SEB) and Social-Self (SS). Randomization was programmed both for the order of the items in each scale and in the order the scales would appear in the questionnaires. In the end, demographic questions, authorization to contact subjects for further steps of the research and optional contact information were collected.

Step 7 - Evaluate items

We used exploratory factor analysis to test the correlation between items to support the formation of the experiences, and confirmatory factor analysis, to confirm the relationship between items after their qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

RESULTS

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The factorial extraction suggested a total of 27 factors, with only six presenting the *eigenvalue* above 1. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin), calculated to verify the suitability of data for factorial analysis, was 0,881, which indicates the data is adequate for Factorial Analysis (Kaiser, 1974). Another metric was the Bartlett's test of sphericity, which identifies identity matrices ($p > 0,05$) in correlation matrices, which would be improper for the employed technique of analysis (Norusis, 1994), different from this study, with $p < 0,001$, being adequate for EFA. The components were divided into four factors: values, identity, emotional attachment and functionality, after running both Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The quality of the model was assessed by the factors' loadings, the AVE – Average Variance Extracted –, the composite reliabilities (ρc) and the Cronbach's Alphas (α). Figure 1 shows the model designed with the factors extracted from the EFA combined with the antecedents and consequences of brand love for further comparison in the next steps of the study, using SmartPLS3

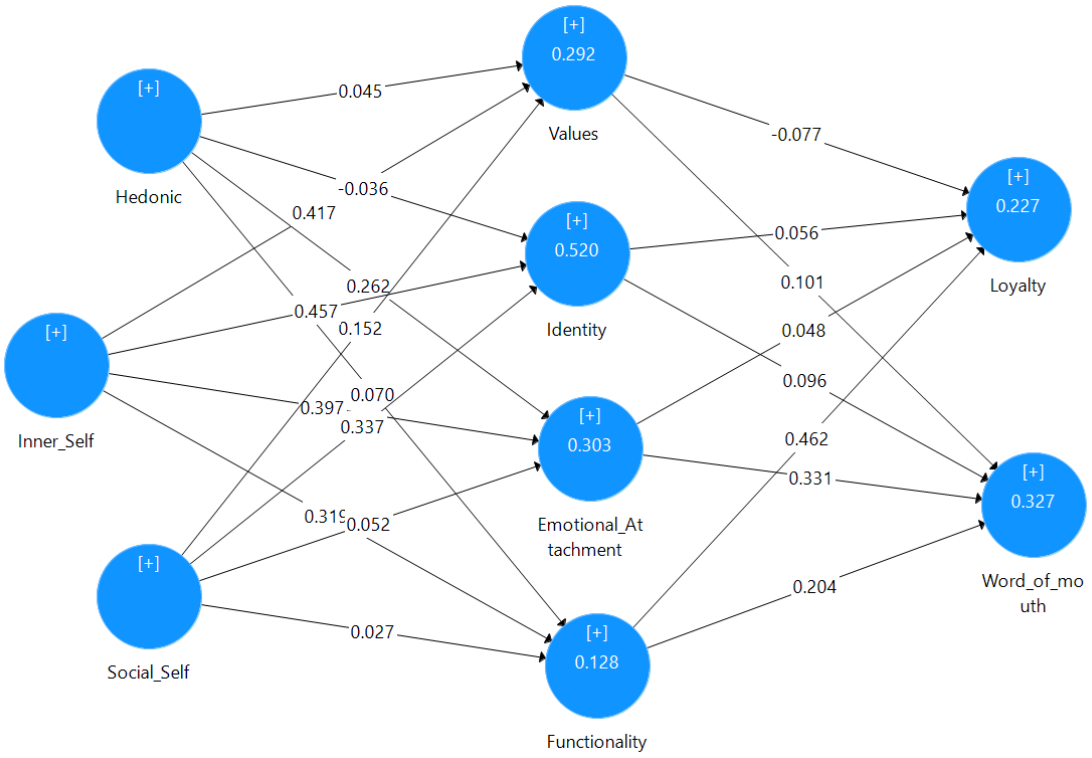


Figure 1- Brand Love Experiences' Scale Model

The loading indicate how much of an indicator is explained by the factor, being loadings below 0.4 indicated to be excluded from the scale. The loadings vary from 0.444 to 0.900. The AVE, which considers the average of the squares of all the indicators of each factor, and Composite Reliability, are calculated to assess the factor's convergent validity. There are two indicators to verify whether the factor presents convergent validity: Bollen (1989) considers AVE above 0,4 as adequate, Hair et al. (2014) indicates composite reliability (ρc) >0,7 and Kline (2011) indicates $\alpha > 0,7$ as acceptable indicators for the factors. All of our components presented VIF < 3, with $\mu = 1.585$ and the $\sigma^2 = 0,337$ for the group of indicators.

Discriminant validity refers to the capability of each dimension to be the only factor in a model to predict a construct, which should be different from the others. To assess that, we used the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compares the square roots of each construct's AVE with their correlations with the other construct. Discriminant validity was proved as the square root of each factor's AVE was higher than all the other correlations. Comparing the exploratory and the confirmatory factorial analysis, we show that most items are adequate on the developed scale, most of the indicators vouch for the validity and reliability of the developed scale. Most importantly, the dimensionality of the experience was clearly separated into five characteristics in the individual brand love experience, which will be explored in the in the next subsection.

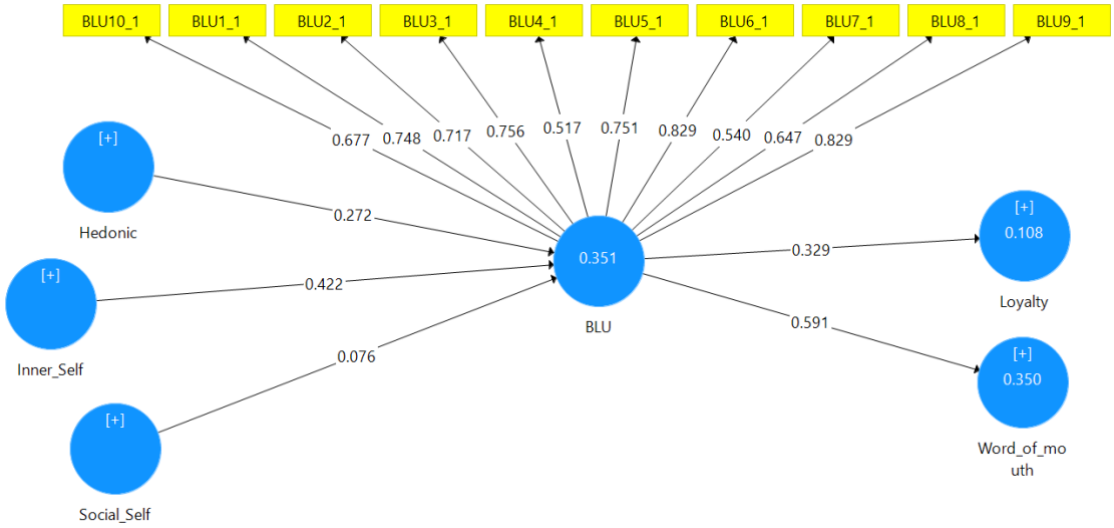


Figure 2 - Nomological Network (the model using Carrol & Ahuvia´s scale)

The last analysis made refers to the relationship Brand Love has with established antecedents (hedonic and self-expressive brands) and consequences (loyalty and word-of-mouth). To compare the results, we also collected data on another reputable brand love scale (referred as Brand Love Strength - SBL) which measures the relationship's strength (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006). Figure 2 illustrates the model using Carrol & Ahuvia's (2006) Although the original models presents Self-Expressive brands as a second order to Inner-Self and social- self, both brand love model was estimate both with and without the second order construct and for means of comparison.

To assess the relationships between constructs, we analyzed the Pearson's test (R^2), calculated by the PLS Algorithm, which analyzes the amount of explained variance of endogenous latent variables. The higher (closer to 1) the R^2, the higher the levels of predictive accuracy. For the relation between constructs, we analyzed the β (Path Coefficients), reproducing the size of the relationships by the standardized betas in regression analysis, acquired through a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples. For analyzing, the closer to 1 or to -1, the stronger the positive or negative relationship (Hair et al., 2017). Cohen's test (f^2) which measures the effect's size, measured by the blindfolding procedure and assessed considering 0.02 as small effect, 0,15 as medium effect and 0.35 as large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Discussion

Bargas-Avila & Hornbæk (2011) and Tonetto & Desmet (2016) both attest for the importance of providing information about the items developed for a study. This is not only important for our study for its replicability and to allow the readers to assess the quality of the measures, but also for its relevance in explaining how the factors were formed and why they explain different experiences of brand love. Resulting from the qualitative part of the study to generate the items, both the exploratory and confirmatory analysis showed the multidimensionality of brand love. The following subsections are devoted to explaining the underlying reasoning for each factor – *Values, Identity, Emotional Attachment and Functionality* –, and to explore their relationship with the

antecedents and consequences tested in the literature – *Word-of-Mouth, Loyalty, Hedonic Brands and Social Expressive brands.*

The main objective of this research is to show that, differently than how it has been studied, brand love is not unidimensional, it cannot be approached as a unique and homogeneous experience, but as a combination of characteristics which compose the brand love experiences. To propose another line of thought, we present the following characteristics found and confirmed in the previous steps of this study. The *Values* experience is marked mainly by the interest of the consumer on the social role of the brand, the brands` history and production processes beyond the products. The same kind of identification was found in other studies in brand love, like for Albert et al (2008), when they approach the idealization of a brand. The *identity* experience refers to a consonance between what both parts – the company and the person - believe in, in the perspective of the respondent. All the items that loaded in this subsection refer to the values a company have, to their impact in society and to the similarity between the consumer and the loved brand. Batra et al. (2012), who explains part of the experience as *Self–Brand Integration*, when the brand is congruent with the person's self. The *Emotional Attachment* dimension is marked by the presence of positive memories aroused by the brand's presence in moments of the person's life. It can be an important moment in time (e.g. a first car or a wedding), its presence in a period (e.g. the shampoo used to shower when the person was younger) or its relevance on an activity the person loves (e.g. baking). The other side of this dimension is related to the brand activities, expressed in the person's interest to understand what is behind their products and services. In general, we can say it is related to positive emotions related to the brand, either in use or in memories. This involvement with the brand has also been reported in other studies: Batra et al. (2012) refer to "things done in the past" as part of the construct, as well as to a long-term relationship as components of brand love, as well as Albert et al (2008) who approaches memories, duration and intimacy (comfortable relationship) as brand love characteristics.

Considering satisfaction with a product/service an often topic related to brand love, a similar concept is explored in a pragmatic dimension of the scale: *Functionality*. It represents the consumer belief that what the brand offers is satisfying and better than what other companies can offer, to the impact the brand has on the consumption experience. This experience`s components represent an easier life because of the brand`sproducts. Although present on the studies of antecedents (e.g.: satisfaction with products or services, Ahuvia, 1993; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al. ,2012), the conceptualizations of constructs do not consider their quality or their benefits as part of the brand love construct.

The nomological network

As built upon beforehand, most studies in brand love focus its conceptualization in the phenomena's antecedents and consequences understanding, basing such knowledge on the intensity of the relationship (e.g.: Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006) considering the brand love's strength is what causes and is caused by other constructs. Although this approach has shown to be effective in the mensuration of related constructs, our data suggests that a detailed lens on brand love studies might bring a detailed perspective on the brand love's nomological network.

Our analysis returned similar relationships between the SBL and the antecedents and consequences as the original research (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006), which indicates that the

effect estimated on both data collections should produce a similar effect on the models. Following the logic of other studies, all brand love relationships should respond in the same way to the antecedents and consequences. Batra et al. (2012) tested the difference between the use of the features of their brand love prototype and the model with brand love a unity and did not find differences, however, our results show a different scenario. There are substantial differences between Carrol & Ahuvia (2006), which measures the strength of the relationship, and the proposed scales focusing on the experience the consumer has. *Word-of-mouth*, which the literature considers a stablished consequence of brand love (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2014; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012) hold a strong bond to Carrol & Ahuvia (2006) ($\beta = 0.591$, $f^2 = 0.538$), but the only dimension which seems to vary with the consequent was *emotional attachment* ($\beta = 0.331$, $f^2 = 0.109$), while the others badly vary ($\beta < 0.204$, $f^2 < 0.05$). For Loyalty, we have a similar effect, but with another twist: not only the variability is different for each experience, but the functionality dimension presents a stronger relationship ($\beta = 0.4612$, $f^2 = 0.222$) with the construct than the strength scale ($\beta = 0.329$, $f^2 = 0.121$), while all the other experiences presented weaker relationships with loyalty ($\beta < 056$, $f^2 < 0.003$).

The antecedents of brand love were also impacted with similar effects: *Hedonic Brand* presented similar relationships between the Carrol & Ahuvia`s (2006) scale ($\beta = 0.272$, $f^2 = 0.112$) and the *Emotional Attachment* experience ($\beta = 0.240$, $f^2 = 0.092$), but the other experiences presented non-significant results in the interaction (p-value > 0.228, $\beta < 0.070$, $f^2 < 0.005$). Finally, to analyze the Self-Expressive scale we compare the results for each dimension (*Inner Self* and *Social Self*) individually. The *Inner-self* interacts with the strength of brand love (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006) ($\beta = 0.421$, $f^2 = 0.149$) and with the values ($\beta = 0.417$, $f^2 = 0.132$), Identity ($\beta = 0.457$, $f^2 = 0.234$) and emotional attachment ($\beta = 0.397$, $f^2 = 0.122$) experiences similarly, but presents a weaker interaction with the Functionality experience ($\beta = 0.319$, $f^2 = 0.063$).Finally, on the *Social-self* dimension of the *Self-Expressive* brand scale, although poorly related to the Carrol & Ahuvia Scale (2005) ($\beta = 0.076$ $f^2 = 0.005$) and to the *Values*, *Emotional Attachment* and *Functionality* experiences ($\beta < 0.152$ $f^2 < 0.018$), presented a stronger interaction with the Identity experience ($\beta = 0.337$, $f^2 = 0.131$).

FINAL REMARKS

Brand love is a complex experience and has always been a difficult one to define. Our data suggests that, although one of the most prominent brand love scales presents the capability to predict some antecedents and consequences, its strength may benefit from the nuances our study proposes. This work is not about providing a new form of measuring brand love which will substitute the others, but about creating a tool which will allow us to differentiate between the experiences consumers have when in love with a brand – either self-declared or defined by another scale.

The compared scales are not concurrent, nor equivalent. The comparison between them and all antecedents and consequences showed indications that, to assess the nomological network of the love for brands, we need to understand what love experiences we are assessing. If we consider all experiences of brand love as the same, we will never truly understand what in the relationship is correlated to the other constructs. Although what is clear are the differences caused by different types of relationship and the relationship's strength, it is important to highlight that the confrontation of the scales has also presented

similarities among dimensions, such as the effect of the inner self on the values, the involvement and the quality experiences.

The understanding of the experiences which are called love may help scholars to develop more precise theories about the impact of brand love on consumer research. By adopting the experiences perspective, the knowledge about the impact brand love has on consumption and the behaviors toward brands, products and companies might be specified, providing insights about different antecedents and consequences depending on what people mean when they say they love a brand.

Although academics have explored diverse constructs which are, in fact, related to one or another brand love experience, what this study's perspective shows is that what is believed to be relate do brand love in general, is related to one (or some) experiences of brand love. This differentiation helps to achieve the understanding of which antecedents and consequences are related positively or negatively to each experiences and which may be related to the brand love relationship strength.

That differentiation has impact on practitioners use of brand love in favor of their strategies. By understanding how consumers behave differently depending on what they call brand love, they know what to expect from a segment – consumers who share the same experience – as a consequence (e.g,: loyalty or positive word-of-mouth), as well as to define strategies to induce that experience in consumers through communication, product/service development and other marketing actions based on the known antecedents of each type of experience.

Another implication of this study relates to the use of the measurement tool to define the type of relationship consumers hold with the brand. Although it was developed on the context of brand lovers, it shows experiences of the relationship, and can guide practitioners on the reasons consumers have to interact/purchase their brands.

Limitations and future studies

Although we had the opportunity to test the relationship among the brand love experiences and some antecedents and consequences, there are still other constructs related to brand love which might be studied, generating a richer nomological network of the construct and of each different experience. Another perspective taken on the brand love studies relate to human traces related to brand love: as explored on the theoretical background, relationship statues and personality traits may be related to brand love. Just like the antecedents and consequences, those characteristics may present differences according to the brand love experience we refer to.

To improve the usability of the study, one important step would be to make the translation of the scale to English, the language of most international journals. By providing an internationalized version of the scale, we will provide fellow researchers the opportunity to embark in this new perspective of brand love and to leverage findings of their own.

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