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BRUNO DO NASCIMENTO SUTIL

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY LOVE?
UNDERSTANDING BRAND LOVE EXPERIENCES

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BRUNO DO NASCIMENTO SUTIL

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Thesis submitted in Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Master Program in
Business Administration – Marketing
Strategy at EAESP/FGV.

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Abstract

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) five factors emerged, representing brand love experiences, based on the grouping of reasons to love a brand: *Values*, *Status*, *Involvement*, *Benefits* and *Quality*, which exhibit distinct relationships to the long-established antecedents and consequents of brand love.

Keyword

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

Resumo

Este estudo propõe que amor por marcas é um termo amplo para diversas experiências de amor por marca, apresentando uma escala para diferenciar entre elas. Após uma revisão de literatura e uma etapa qualitativa, motivos para amar uma marca foram codificados das entrevistas nas quais foram abordadas as experiências de pessoas com suas marcas amadas. Cada código foi transformado em uma frase e uma amostra de 327 pessoas respondeu o seu grau de concordância com cada uma delas. Através de análise fatorial e modelagem de equações estruturais cinco fatores emergiram, representando as experiências de amor com base nos agrupamentos dos motivos para amar uma marca: Valores, Status, Envolvimento, Benefícios e Qualidade, os quais foram comparados com diferentes antecedentes e consequentes apresentados pela teoria.

Palavras-chave

Amor por Marcas, Relacionamento com Marcas, Desenvolvimento de escala, Modelagem de Equações Estruturais.

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CHAPTER 1

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)

1.1.Theme

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 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.

1.2. Objectives

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. So, the main objective of this study is:

To investigate how the reasons consumers have to love a brand shape different brand love experiences.

To answer the main objective, I attempt:

to understand the reasons consumers have to love brands;

1. to understand how these dimensions form brand love experiences;
2. to develop a scale to differentiate brand love experiences.
3. to verify whether brand love experiences scale is a better predictor of consequences of brand love than the brand love's unidimensional scale.

To achieve those objectives, I will proceed with a seven-step method (DeVellis, 2003) to develop a scale: (1) determine what is to be measured; (2) generate an item pool; (3) determine the format of the measurement; (4) have the initial item pool revised by experts; (5) consider the insertion of validation items; (6) administer items to a sample; (7) evaluate items.

1.3 Relevance

This study proposes a new lens to study brand love. It does not intend to compete with current scales of brand love, but to provide detail on the findings. 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.

The perspective of this study adds nuances to the previous ones of brand love. Instead of defining for the consumer what they should be experiencing as brand love, I 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).

This study is divided into four other chapters, besides this introduction. The *Theoretical Background* presents relevant theories in interpersonal love, consumer-object love, brand love and brand love measurements. In *Method* I provide a detailed description of the procedures to collect and analyze data. In *Results*, I compare the developed scale with the established scale of brand love developed by Carrol and Ahuvia (2006) and the interaction of both scales to the nomological network. In the *Final Remarks*, I present the main conclusions, implications for theory and practice and suggestion for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The understanding of brand love is inspired mostly in theories from psychology, generating knowledge on the consumer behavior field. This chapter encompasses both the roots of PPR and COR studies on love, where I examine the “*interpersonal love and other relationships*”, “*love for the inanimate*”, “*brand love and other relationships*” and “*brand love measurements*”.

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 bonding, 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 lovestyle marked by jealousy, 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.

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 related to 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.

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).

Besides developing diverse connections between brand love, antecedents and consequences, scholars have developed scales to measure it. The next section is dedicated to understanding those measures, their focuses and limitations.

Brand love measurements

To develop the proposed scale, I reviewed previous scales to measure the experience. Carrol and Ahuvia (2006) propose a strength scale for brand love. Their objective was to develop a scale which would measure the strength of the relationship to verify whether brand characteristics and brand love consequences vary according to the brand love strength. The items of their scale are in Table 1.

Item
This is a wonderful brand.
This brand makes me feel good.
This brand is totally awesome.
I have neutral feelings about this brand. (–)
This brand makes me very happy.
I love this brand!
I have no particular feelings about this brand.
This brand is a pure delight.
I am passionate about this brand.
I'm very attached to this brand.

Table 1- Brand Love Strength Scale Items (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006)

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.

Another multidimensional scale is Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005), which 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). This scale is methodologically strong (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2009), but 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's 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).

As seen above, 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) have studied the consumer side, none have studied the meaning consumers attribute to brand love.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

I used a seven-stage process to develop the Brand Love Experiences Scale. This Section is devoted to explain further each one of them: (1) determining what is to be measured; (2) Generating an item pool; (3) Determined the format of the measurement; (4) Have the initial item pool revised by experts; (5) consider the inclusion of validation items; (6) Administer items to a development sample; (7) Evaluate items (DeVellis, 2003).

Step 1 - Determining what is to be measured

For the first step of the study (determining what is to be measured) I started with a systematic review of articles related to brand love. With that, I could access what had already been studied, the perspectives and units of analysis of the different papers to find a gap in the theory which I will fill in. To inspire the project, I also looked into the seminal theories in interpersonal love and love for objects in other fields of study.

I used the Google Scholar through the Publish or Perish tool to access all articles written related directly to the brand love topic. To select the ones to be analyzed, I used the following criteria: 1) only papers published in English were selected; 2) titles of all articles in English were analyzed to verify whether they were directly related to the brand love construct. All articles whose main subject was not clear in the title had their abstracts analyzed. The classification resulted in 251 documents directly related to brand love. 3) a third criterion was the number of citations of the articles. Every document which was cited 20 or more times was selected for analysis. Finally, to make sure recent articles by prolific authors were included in the analysis, papers from authors who have at least five papers published on the construct were included. The authors are: A. Ahuvia, N. Albert, P. Valette-Florence, R. Batra, D. Merunka, A. Sankar, T. Langner & R. Bagozzi.

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, through antecedents and consequences of it, so I 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 20th 2017 and June 3rd 2018. To find participants, I 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 were on 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. The objective of an in-depth interviews is to understand the diverse perspectives on the theme, to create a map of the bigger picture, when analyzed along with the other interviews (Bardin, 2012). This method provided love experiences description, the emotions related to it and, most importantly, the reasons people have to love a brand. When analyzing the contents, it was clearer the possible similarities among experiences, which formed categories to be analyzed individually and related to different types of experiences.

The interview protocol was composed by five groups of questions: introduction, in which I got acquaintance to the interviewee general profiles, routine and preferences and also helped the interviewee to feel more comfortable with the conversation. Brands, in which I got the consumer opinions regarding brands importance, its role and the possibility of a brand relationship; also I got deep information about brand love, when subjects explained their trajectories with the brands they love, their perceptions about it and the feelings aroused by it. Consumption and interaction, when respondents talked about their purchase process, interaction with the brand and other consumers of it. Finally,

in a projective exercise, interviewees were asked to imagine the brand was a loved person, to describe his/her personality, their relationship and other aspects of their relationship.

After data collection, audios were transcribed, and the information related to the experiences were analyzed. To code the interviews, I started by the theories established in brand love and interpersonal love: general characteristics of the experience, story characteristics, relationship characteristics, shopping/consumption process and other specific characteristics. From that, further levels of coding were defined based on results. Special attention was given to the reasons people present to love brands. This methodology was indicated by Weston (2001).

Step 3 – Determined the format of the measurement

For defining the measurement format, I took into consideration what previous studies used, so I could compare results and use validated methods. Considering I used the work of Carrol & Ahuvia (2006) as a reference for comparison, I choose a five-point Likert scale for measuring the degree of agreement respondents have with the items. I also considered a seven-point version, but I discarded this option in the pre-test for the difficulties the respondents presented to understand when to use each point and because the original study adopted the five-points option, which would help us to make comparisons.

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, I identified different reasons people had to love brands, summing up to 72 items. They were analyzed by five other scholars with diverse expertise – emotions in consumer behavior, scale development and brand engagement – so I could have both feedback in the method and in the theory to support brand love. The feedback on each item was compared to define which items would be taken to the exploratory factorial analysis.

After considering and comparing all comments on the item pool, items which were not exactly a reason to love a brand, were redundant or were not directly related to the main construct (brand love) were dismissed. To resolve for redundancies, we considered choosing the item which presented the clearer meaning, and which were more relatable

to the brand lover (as follows on stage 5). After the revision process I came up with 34 items for the final questionnaire, as presented in Table 2:

Items - Reason to love a brand
BL01 - Gosto de saber que esta marca chama atenção das outras pessoas
BL02 - Minha relação com esta marca é só por causa dos benefícios/vantagens que ela proporciona
BL03 - Esta marca me lembra de pessoas que eu gosto
BL05 - Tenho vontade de saber mais sobre essa marca
BL06 - Esta marca representa minhas conquistas materiais
BL07 - Esta marca vai além das outras para entregar o que promete
BL08 - Me percebem como uma pessoa diferenciada por usar esta marca
BL12 - Me interesse pela história desta marca
BL15 - Quando uso a marca, chamo a atenção de muita gente
BL16 - Me sinto bem quando uso esta marca na presença de outras pessoas
BL17 - Esta marca marcou momentos positivos da minha vida
BL18 - As ações desta marca são coerentes com os valores dela
BL19 - Sinto que esta marca tem um papel social relevante
BL20 - Esta marca e eu pensamos iguais
BL21 - Gosto que as pessoas percebam que estou usando a marca
BL23 - Consumir esta marca me faz pertencer a um grupo
BL24 - Sinto que a marca se importa comigo, e com pessoas como eu
BL25 - Usar esta marca me faz sentir uma pessoa melhor para o mundo
BL26 - Minha vida ficou mais fácil depois que comecei a usar esta marca
BL27 - Me interesse pelo que está por trás da marca (como seu processo produtivo)
BL28 - O mais importante pra mim é a qualidade que esta marca oferece
BL30 - Esta marca é um sonho de consumo
BL31 - O que essa marca oferece é insubstituível
BL32 - O que esta marca faz é superior à sua concorrência
BL33 - Esta marca tem valores respeitáveis
BL34 - Esta marca tem valores similares aos meus

Table 2 - Reasons to Love a Brand

Step 5 - Consider the inclusion of validation items

Validity refers to the capability of measurement to assess the latent variable it intends to (Freitas et al., 2000). That there are four main types of validity: *face*, *content*, *criterion-related* and *construct* (DeVellis, 2003). Face validity refers to the capability of items to represent the respondents behaviors; *Content validity* concerns item sampling adequacy, which is related to the capability of items to reflect a content domain; *Criterion related validity* (also referred as predictive validity) is acquired when the items are empirically related to the phenomena, not only theoretically; In contrast, *construct*

validity relates to the adequacy of the measure with the theory. In the next subsections, I describe the procedures used to guarantee all four types of validity.

Similar scales are inserted in the same questionnaire to provide *construct validity* (DeVellis, 2003). To choose a scale, I 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 my 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.

To use those scales in the Brazilian context, I had the items translated to Portuguese, using the reversed translation methodology, seeking equivalence of measures (Douglas and Craig, 2007), which consists in asking a bilinguals' group to translate the original items to the intended language, have another group with the same skills to translate it back to the original language and have judges to determine whether the meaning was lost in translation. The original and the translated items are listed in table 3.

To verify *face validity* – the capability of items to be relatable to the intended public – I used sentences similar to the ones verbalized by consumers in the interviews. 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.

To improve the quality of the questionnaires, we inserted attention checks. Those questions demand the respondent to mark a specific point on the scale. All questionnaires which were not marked on the demanded point (e.g.: “mark 4 – agree to attest you attention”) of the scale were disregarded from the analysis.

Scale	English (Original)	Portuguese
Strength of Brand Love – SBL	This is a wonderful brand.	Esta é uma marca maravilhosa.
	This brand makes me feel good.	Esta marca faz eu me sentir bem.
	This brand is totally awesome.	Esta marca é demais.
	I have neutral feelings about this brand. (–)	Eu me sinto neutro em relação a esta marca.
	This brand makes me very happy.	Esta marca faz eu me sentir muito feliz.
	I love this brand!	Eu amo esta marca!
	I have no particular feelings about this brand. (–)	Eu não sinto nada em particular em relação a esta marca.
	This brand is a pure delight.	Esta marca é puro prazer.
	I am passionate about this brand.	Sou apaixonado(a) por esta marca.
	I'm very attached to this brand.	Eu sou muito apegado a esta marca.
Loyalty	This is the only brand of this product that I will buy.	Eu só comprarei este produto se for desta marca.
	When I go shopping, I don't even notice competing brands.	Quando faço compras, nem percebo as marcas concorrentes.
	If my store is out of this brand, I'll postpone buying or go to another store.	Se não tem esta marca na loja, eu adio minha compra ou vou em outra loja.
	I'll 'do without' rather than buy another brand.	Eu prefiro ficar sem do que comprar outra marca.
Word-of-Mouth	I have recommended this brand to lots of people.	Eu já recomendei esta marca para várias pessoas.
	I 'talk up' this brand to my friends.	Eu falo muito meus amigos sobre esta marca
	I try to spread the good-word about this brand.	Eu tento espalhar boas coisas sobre esta marca.
	I give this brand tons of positive word-of-mouth advertising	Eu faço muita propaganda boca-a-boca sobre essa marca.
Hedonic Brand	Is Functional/Is Pleasurable	é funcional/é prazeroso
	Affords Enjoyment/Performs a Task (–)	Proporciona Prazer / Realiza uma Tarefa
	Is Useful/Is Fun	É útil/ É divertida.
	Is a Sensory Experience/Does a Job (–)	É uma experiência sensorial / Atende às expectativas
	Is a Necessity/Is an Indulgence	É uma necessidade/ É uma indulgência/mimo.
	Is a 'Must' in Life/Is One of Life's 'Rewards'	É algo que se precisa ter/ É uma recompensa de vida.
Self- Expressive Brand – Inner Self	This brand symbolizes the kind of person I really am inside.	Esta marca simboliza o tipo de pessoa que realmente sou por dentro.
	This brand reflects my personality	Esta marca reflete a minha personalidade.
	This brand is an extension of my inner self.	Esta marca é uma extensão do meu eu interior.
	This brand mirrors the real me.	Esta marca reflete o meu verdadeiro 'eu'.
Self- Expressive Brand – Social Self	This brand contributes to my image.	Esta marca contribui para a minha imagem.
	This brand adds to a social 'role' I play.	Esta marca contribui para um papel social que eu desempenho.
	This brand has a positive impact on what others think of me.	Esta marca tem um impacto positivo no que os outros pensam de mim.
	This brand improves the way society views me.	Esta marca melhora o modo como a sociedade me vê.

Table 3 - Translation of Items

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. A description of the respondents is summarized below:

Information	Distribution
Age (in years)	16 to 25 (23,6%); 26 to 35 (47,3%); 36 to 45 (14,4%); 46 + (12,9); Missing Values (1,8%).
Gender	Female (52,3); Male (47,7%)
Level of education (last concluded)	Fundamental school (0,6); High school (21,4%); Graduation (39,1%); Post graduation (38,5%).
Relationship Status	Single (49,3%); In a relationship (50,7%).

Table 4 – Descriptive statistics of the respondents

Step 7 - Evaluate items

Factorial analysis was used to assess the relationship between the items. This technique is used to both explore data (when there is no theory to support the model, pointing the relationships among items) or confirm theories (either purely theoretical or based on empiric data, like exploratory factorial analysis). It analyzes the correlation between variables not directly observable to assess factors in the data (Aranha & Zambaldi, 2008). It was used on two stages of our analysis: 1) exploratory factor analysis, to test the correlation between items to support the formation of the dimensions; 2) confirmatory factor analysis, to confirm the relationship between items after their qualitative and quantitative evaluation, as explained at the beginning of this chapter.

In both cases, after mentioning the brand they would answer the questionnaire based on, the participants indicated their level of agreement with each item of the scale on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not agree, nor disagree,

4 = agree and 5= strongly agree). Principal component analysis with oblique rotation was used to determine the factors.

Reliability and validity (explored beforehand) are crucial to the development of any measure (Freitas et al., 2000). Reliability relates to the precision of the scale being developed to measure the true score of the latent variable in question. To measure it, two techniques were used in the analysis: covariation of items and alpha coefficient. When developing a multidimensional scale, each dimension can be considered a different scale with its items measuring the same characteristic of a construct. By measuring the covariation of the item related to a dimension and finding a high score, it may have two meanings: 1) they hold a causal relationship or 2) they are related to the same latent variable. Thus, to prove the reliability of the scale, we will measure the covariation of the factors found on the factorial analysis (DeVellis, 2003). The alpha coefficient is the most used measurement to determine the reliability and it “takes into account variance attributable to subjects and variance attributable to the interaction between subjects and items” (p.98. Cortina, 1993).

Schedule

The following chart shows the steps taken for the development of the study.

Stage	Period
Systematic Review	August, 2016 - May, 2017
In-Depth Interviews	November, 2017 - June, 2018
Social media data collection	July, 2018
Items generation	July, 2018 - August, 2018
Evaluation and selection of items pool	September, 2018
Data collection of quantitative stage	December, 2018 – January, 2019
Analysis of results	January, 2019
Findings’ reporting	January, 2019 – February, 2019

Table 5- Project Schedule

With the protocol for the development of this scale explained, the following chapters bring to light the results of the study. First, I explore the statistical results emerged from the data collection, followed by the interpretation of those findings, conclusions and implications they have for the academy and for the market.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes and discusses the findings of the study. It is divided in three parts: *Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)*, in which a first analysis of the relationship of the item is made, developing a dimensionality theory; *Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)*, where the original models generated o the EFA is tested; and the *Nomological Network*, in which the relationship with the related constructs and the comparison with the original scale (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006) is made.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

For this step of the project, I used IBM® SPSS® Statistics version 24. Although 34 items composed the questionnaire, not all of them were inserted in the final model. In the first attempt of the analysis, the components were pulverized into nine factors of which two factors had only one component. After qualitative analysis of the items, their commonalities and fit with the rest of the model, seven items were dropped for the final analysis for their isolation in the factors and for low commonalities. The final analysis, then, was performed with 27 items using principal component analysis and Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The factorial extraction suggested a total of 27 factors, with only six presenting the *eigenvalue* above 1, indicating that it should be an accepted factor for the analysis, that explained 57% of the group of variables' variance, as we can see in table 6.

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Cumulative Variance (%)
1	7,910	29,295	29,295
2	2,829	10,478	39,773
3	1,985	7,353	47,126
4	1,553	5,752	52,878
5	1,114	4,126	57,003

Table 6- Definition of Factors

The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin), calculated to verify the suitability of data for factorial analysis, was 0,894, 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.

Table 7 presents all items with loadings in their related factor, along with the communalities found for each component. Analyzing the communalities together, they present $\mu = 0.568$ and the $\sigma^2 = 0,067$, meaning that a good part of each variance is explained by the group of variables. The components were divided into five factors named *Values, Status, Involvement, Quality and benefits*, which will be explored further, after the exposition of both *Exploratory* and *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*.

The results of the exploratory factorial analysis are basis to develop new theories when the approach to a construct is new and the relationship among variables is to be discovered. With the information from this first step, I used the data factors extracted from data to develop my theory of relationship among variables and test our model with Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

		FACTORIAL LOADINGS				
COMMUNALITIES	ITEM	VALUES	STATUS	INVOLVEMENT	QUALITY	BENEFITS
0,679	BL34 - Esta marca tem valores similares aos meus	0,806				
0,628	BL33 - Esta marca tem valores respeitáveis	0,764				
0,642	BL20 - Esta marca e eu pensamos iguais	0,755				
0,599	BL18 - As ações desta marca são coerentes com os valores dela	0,744				
0,543	BL19 - Sinto que esta marca tem um papel social relevante	0,696				
0,528	BL27 - Me interesse pelo que está por trás da marca (como seu processo produtivo)	0,647				
0,517	BL25 - Usar esta marca me faz sentir uma pessoa melhor para o mundo	0,629				
0,480	BL24 - Sinto que a marca se importa comigo, e com pessoas como eu	0,615				
0,706	BL08 - Me percebem como uma pessoa diferenciada por usar esta marca		0,826			
0,662	BL21 - Gosto que as pessoas percebam que estou usando a marca		0,776			
0,600	BL15 - Quando uso a marca, chamo a atenção de muita gente		0,704			
0,526	BL23 - Consumir esta marca me faz pertencer a um grupo		0,643			
0,515	BL06 - Esta marca representa minhas conquistas materiais		0,614			
0,41	BL01 - Gosto de saber que esta marca chama atenção das outras pessoas		0,604			
0,601	BL11 - Esta marca mostra quem eu sou		0,535			
0,546	BL13 - Minha relação com esta marca tem a ver com hobbies/passatempos relacionadas a ela			0,712		
0,523	BL17 - Esta marca marcou momentos positivos da minha vida			0,616		
0,584	BL05 - Tenho vontade de saber mais sobre essa marca			0,543		
0,554	BL29- Sinto muito carinho por esta marca			0,503		
0,594	BL30 - Esta marca é um sonho de consumo			0,486		
0,527	BL12 - Me interesse pela história desta marca			0,414		
0,683	BL07 - Esta marca vai além das outras para entregar o que promete				0,779	
0,598	BL32 - O que esta marca faz é superior à sua concorrência				0,705	
0,568	BL31 - O que essa marca oferece é insubstituível				0,650	
0,519	BL02 - Minha relação com esta marca é só por causa dos benefícios/vantagens que ela proporciona					0,707
0,525	BL28 - O mais importante pra mim é a qualidade que esta marca oferece					0,681
0,533	BL26 - Minha vida ficou mais fácil depois que comecei a usar esta marca					0,579

Table 7 - Brand Love Experiences Items

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

This section is dedicated to testing the hypothesis generated on the exploratory factorial analysis. Here, I present the statistics related to the model designed with the factors indicated by the precedent descriptive analysis. The quality of the model was assessed by the factors' loadings, the AVE – Average Variance Extracted –, the composite reliabilities (ρ_c) 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

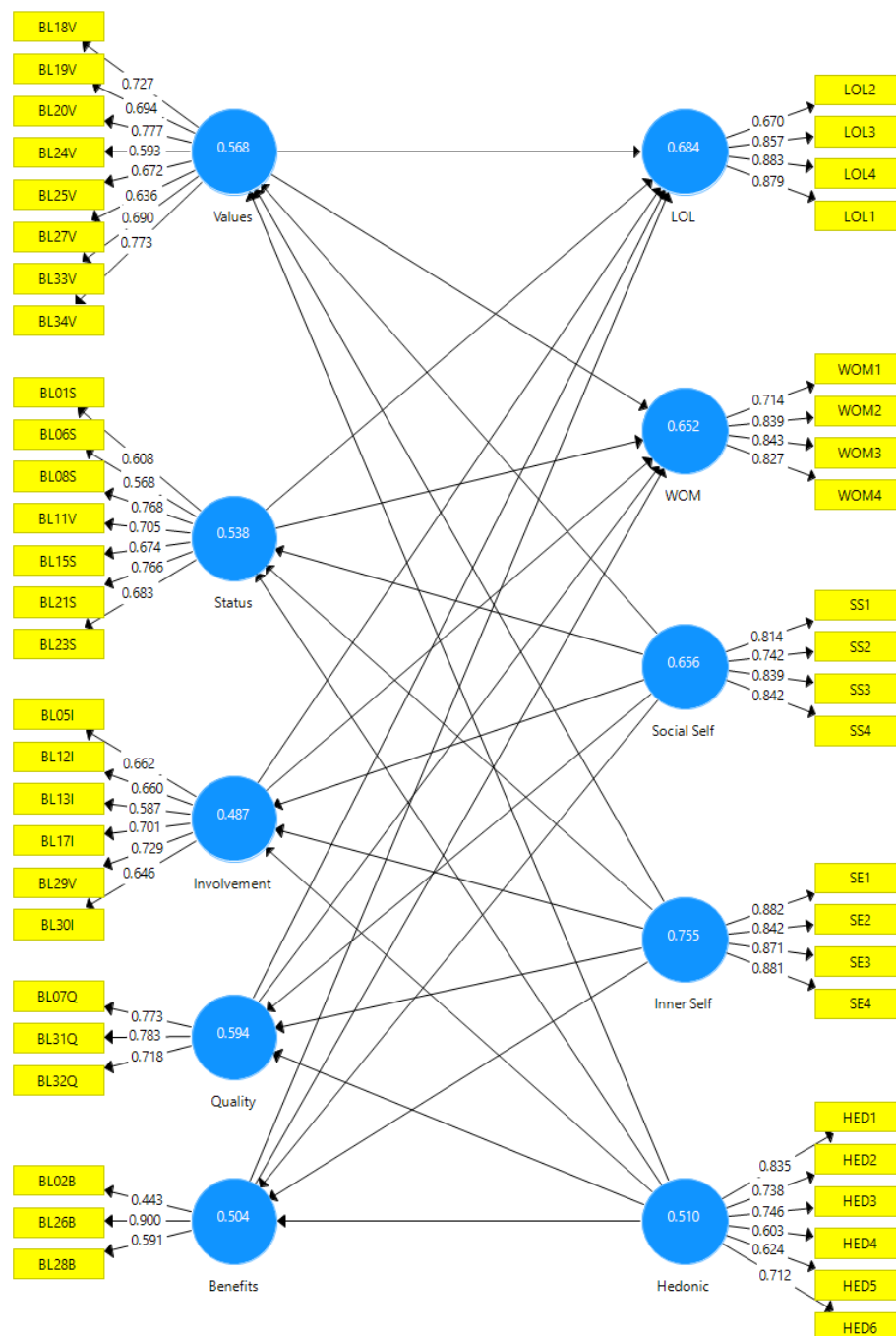


Figure 1- Brand Love Experiences' Scale Model

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, Table 8 presents the loadings and the Average Variance Extracted for each factor.

Factor	Item	Loading
Values AVE = 0.568 $\rho_c = 0.912$ $\alpha = 0.879$	BL18	0.727
	BL19	0.694
	BL20	0.777
	BL24	0.593
	BL25	0.672
	BL27	0.636
	BL33	0.690
	BL34	0.773
Status AVE = 0.538 $\rho_c = 0.890$ $\alpha = 0.839$	BL01	0.608
	BL06	0.568
	BL08	0.768
	BL11	0.705
	BL15	0.674
	BL21	0.766
	BL23	0.683
Involvement AVE= 0.487 $\rho_c = 0.850$ $\alpha = 0,778$	BL29	0.860
	BL12	0.791
	BL05	0.755
	BL17	0.685
	BL30	0.614
	BL13	0.568
Quality AVE 0,594 $\rho_c = 0.814$ $\alpha = 0,655$	BL31	0.573
	BL32	0.724
	BL07	0.772
Benefit AVE = 0,504 $\rho_c = 0.737$ $\alpha = 0,502$	BL26	0.887
	BL28	0.446
	BL02	0.443

Table 8 - BLE's Factors Statistics

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 (ρ_c) $> 0,7$ and Kline (2011) indicates $\alpha > 0,7$ as acceptable indicators for the factors. As shown in Table 8, all factors achieve the threshold for each indicator, but Quality's and Benefit's Cronbach's Alpha. Another indicator for the quality of the model is the VIF which refers to the components' collinearity. $VIF < 5$ are considered acceptable and < 3 are considered excellent. 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, I used the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compares the square roots of each construct's AVE with their correlations with the other construct. Discriminant validity is proved if the square root of each factor's AVE is higher than all the other correlations. As we can see in the table 10, the main diagonal (highlighted) represents the square roots of all the constructs and is higher than all the other correlations.

	Benefits	Involvement	Quality	Status	Values
Benefits	0.710				
Involvement	0.157	0.698			
Quality	0.312	0.435	0.771		
Status	0.180	0.542	0.320	0.734	
Values	0.264	0.570	0.355	0.422	0.753

Table 9 - Discriminant Validity

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.

Nomological Network

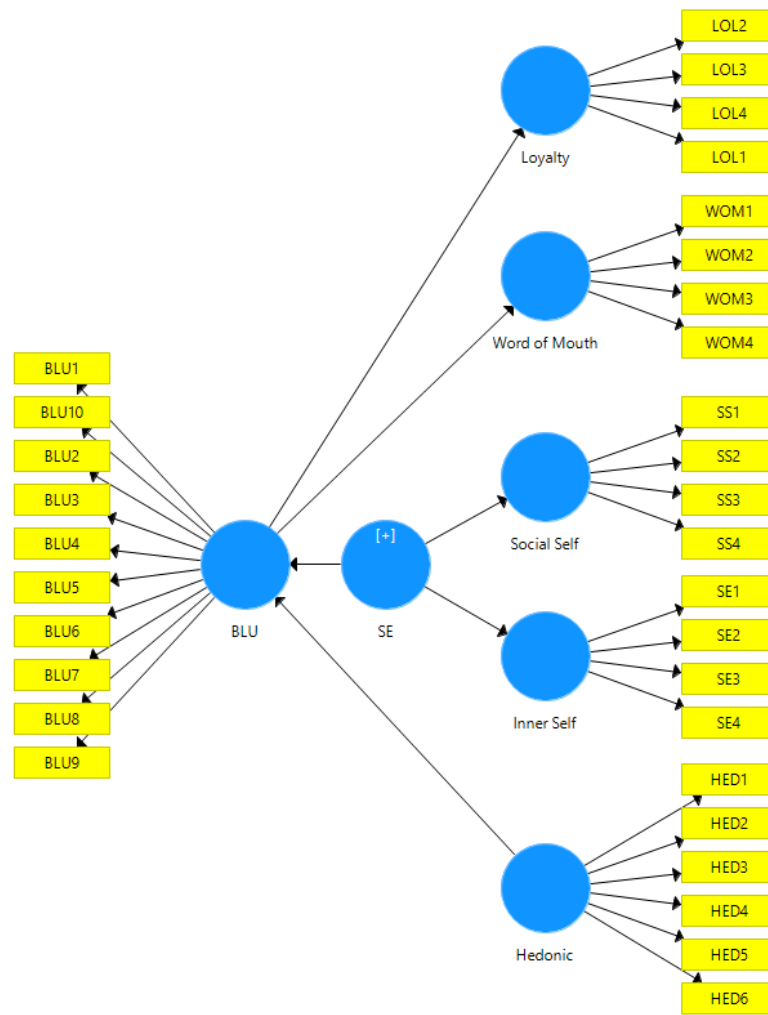


Figure 2- Brand Love strength Model

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. Table 11 presents the AVE, factor loading, Composite reliability (ρ_c) and Cronbach's Alpha (α).

Strength Brand Love (SBL)	Item	Loading
Values	SBL1	0.749
AVE = 0.503	SBL1	0.673
$\rho_c = 0.908$	SBL1	0.719
$\alpha = 0.886$	SBL1	0.757
	SBL1	0.517
	SBL1	0.752
	SBL1	0.827
	SBL1	0.541
	SBL1	0.647
	SBL10	0.827

Table 10 - BLS Statistics

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).

Table 12 presents a comparison of those statistics highlighting some relevant results. Its columns refer to the antecedents (Hedonic and Self-Expressive brands) and consequences (Word-of-Mouth and Brand Loyalty), the lines refer to the Strength Brand Love's scale (SBL) and to the dimensions of the experiential brand love scale. The blank spaces on the R^2 line are caused by the incapability of measuring this statistic other than to endogenous latent variables. In the next subsection, I discuss the findings of the study.

		Word-of-Mouth		Loyalty		Hedonic		Self Expressive (SE)		SE - Inner Self		SE - Social Self	
	SBL Model R²	0.347		0.105						0.862		0.800	
	BLE Model R²	0.331		0.216									
Indicator	R ²	B	f ²	β	f ²	β	f ²	β	f ²	β	f ²	β	f ²
SBL	0.331	0.592	0.536	0.328	0.120	0.286	0.119	0.456	0.305	0.421	0.149	0.078	0.005
Values	0.310	0.013	0.000	0,023	0.000	-0,016	0.000	0.522	0.450	0.411	0.159	0.162	0.025
Status	0.495	0.107	0.010	0.100	0.008	0.098	0.021	0.635	0.895	0.161	0.034	0.539	0.397
Involvement	0.327	0.425	0.131	-0,048	0.001	0.240	0.092	0.454	0.329	0.395	0.142	0.103	0.010
Benefit	0.074	0.081	0.008	0.047	0.002	-0,259	0.078	0.130	0.02	0.094	0.006	0.096	0.006
Quality	0.118	0.162	0.028	0.461	0.197	0.076	0.007	0.325	0.121	0.331	0.071	0.024	0.000

Table 11 - Nomological Network Statistics

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 my 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, Status, Involvement, Quality, and Benefit*–, 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 experiences

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, I present the following characteristics found and confirmed in the previous steps of this study.

The *Values* dimension is marked mainly by 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. 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; Batra et al. (2012), who explains part of the experience as *Self-Brand Integration*, when the brand is congruent with the person's self.

Status' items are related to the use of the loved brand as a symbol of social power. That may be expressed by the participation on a group/community, to the capability the brand offers to a person to call attention from other and to show their buying power or the social place they belong to. In another perspective, it could represent characteristics that people would like to have and groups they would like to belong to in their personal life. It is about feeling inspired by the brand and other people who consume it. It does not

necessarily mean that you must achieve all that the brand represents, but that you admire that context somehow and would like to be a part of it.

The *Involvement* 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. 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 two pragmatic dimensions of the scale: *Quality*, referring to the company development of products and services; and *Benefit*, related to the consumers' lives improvement. The *Quality* dimension represents the consumer belief that what the brand offers is satisfying and better than what other companies can offer. In the consumer side of the experience, *benefits* refers to the impact the brand has on the consumption experience. This factor's components represent an easier life because of the product. 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 studies 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, my data suggests that a detailed lens on brand love studies might bring a detailed perspective on the brand love's nomological network.

My 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.

Table 12 presents six measures of brand love – the relationship's strength (SBL) and five dimensions developed in this study. When comparing data in table 12, there are substantial differences between what the strength brand love scale, 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 established consequence of brand love (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2014; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012) hold a strong bond to the strength of the experience ($\beta = 0.425$, $f^2 = 0.131$), but the only dimension which seems to vary with the consequent was involvement ($\beta = 0.592$, $f^2 = 0.536$), while the others badly vary ($\beta < 0.165$, $f^2 < 0.030$). For Loyalty, we have a similar effect, but with another twist: not only the variability is different, but the quality dimension presents a stronger relationship ($\beta = 0.461$, $f^2 = 0.197$) with the construct than the strength scale ($\beta = 0.328$, $f^2 = 0.120$), while all the other dimensions presented weak relationships with loyalty ($\beta < 0.105$, $f^2 < 0.008$).

The antecedents of brand love were also impacted with similar effects: *Hedonic Brand* presented similar relationships between the strength scales ($\beta = 0.286$, $f^2 = 0.119$) and the involvement ($\beta = 0.240$, $f^2 = 0.092$), but the opposite effect happened to the *Benefits* dimension of brand love ($\beta = -0.259$, $f^2 = 0.078$), which seems adequate, considering that the Benefit items all relate to the product functional characteristics rather than its opposite: hedonic brands. Finally, the Self-Expressive scale presented more similar results between the brand love strength scale ($\beta = 0.456$, $f^2 = 0.305$) than all the other scales (values, $\beta = 0.522$, $f^2 = 0.405$; status, $\beta = 0.635$, $f^2 = 0.895$; involvement $\beta = 0.454$, $f^2 = 0.329$; and quality, $\beta = 0.325$, $f^2 = 0.121$) but *Benefits* ($\beta = 0.130$, $f^2 = 0.121$), at least when analyzed as a second order variable. When we compare the results directly, the *Inner-self* is related to SBL ($\beta = 0.421$, $f^2 = 0.149$) and to the *values* ($\beta = 0.411$, $f^2 = 0.159$), involvement ($\beta = 0.395$, $f^2 = 0.142$) and quality ($\beta = 0.331$, $f^2 = 0.071$), but have low impact on the status and benefits dimensions ($\beta < 0.165$, $f^2 < 0.035$). Finally, on the Social-self component, although the SBL was poorly related ($\beta = 0.078$, $f^2 = 0.005$) as most

components ($\beta < 0.165$ $f^2 < 0.025$), the status dimension presented high relation ($\beta = 0.539$ $f^2 = 0.397$) with the construct.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL REMARKS

Conclusion

Brand love is a complex experience and has always been a difficult one to define. Although several attempts to build its concept, and some of those very well succeeded, its definition is still advancing. My 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 my study proposes. This work is not about providing a new form of measuring brand love, 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.

Implications

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 related to 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 I 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.

Another opportunity to improve my study relates do the pragmatic dimensions of brand love – *benefits* and *quality*. Although they presented strong relationships to the constructs in the study, they are still more fragile than the other dimensions and deserve special attention on the next steps of this research. As a relevant part of the respondents offered their contact information for the continuation of the research, by assessing the degree of *benefit* or *quality* brand love respondents have I can select interviewees for a new round of qualitative data collection, looking for new information to improve the established items, develop new ones and take this scale to another quantitative data collection.

Finally, 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, I 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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