

## **A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF BRAND LOVE/HATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper proposes a conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships by identifying antecedents and outcomes for brand love/hate. Antecedents include consumer’s self-identity (CSI) (i.e., individual factor) and the corporation’s moral values (CMV) (i.e., contextual factor), respectively, as well as the interaction effect of CSI and CMV. Outcomes encompass three behavioral consequences of brand love (hate) including brand loyalty/avoidance, positive (negative) word of mouth (WOM), and brand repurchase/retaliation. Our proposed conceptual model uniquely relies on one unifying construct for brand love/hate.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Brand love and brand hate have become critical topics in the past few years among practitioners in marketing. However, the existing conceptualization remains sporadic due to the myriad theories that attempt to explicate the relationships between consumers and brands. In marketing research, this notion was initiated by Shimp and Madden (1988) based on Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of interpersonal love from psychology. The most prevalent theory to demonstrate consumers' love for brands is Sternberg's triangular theory, which maintains that different types of love are generated through a hierarchical combination of passion, intimacy, and decision/commitment. The initial and less problematic aspect is passion because it is easily transformed into consumers' allure towards brands. Intimacy, as the second element, refers to feelings and thoughts originated from the experience of closeness in loving relationships. The final aspect is decision/commitment, which is more germane to behavioral outcomes of love.

In the triangular theory of interpersonal love, Sternberg (1986) describes commitment as a perceived normative and moral obligation to maintain the relationship even in the face of a better option. Additionally, respondents may be resistant to negative information about their loved brands. Specifically, we define brand loyalty as the degree to which the consumer is committed to repurchase of the brand. Love and hate are psychologically related to one other, which may be seen in cases where loving relationships become hateful. Sternberg's conceptualization of the triangular theory of interpersonal love (1986) or hate (2003) maintains that both have analogous but opposite behavioral outcomes.

Academic research on brand love and brand hate is substantial (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005; Merunka and Florence, 2008), and various studies have attempted to determine the antecedents and consequences of brand love and brand hate. Fournier (1998) developed the notion of the consumer–brand relationship as an anthropomorphic, or human-like, concept (conceptual foundation for the dynamics of consumer–brand interactions). She explicates in her seminal paper an elaborate typology for consumer–brand relationships, paying specific attention to relationship

quality and its effects on stability. Relationship quality originates from an amalgam of love- and experience-based dimensions, including love/passion, intimacy, and interdependence. Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) extend Fournier's idea by presenting a unifying conceptual model of consumer-brand relationships that identifies the determinants of the unique relationships among consumers and brands. However, they considered brand love and brand hate as temporary emotions. In short, previous studies regarding brand love/hate have experienced three limitations.

First, they do not consider all positive and negative emotions, attitudes, and cognitive responses toward brands, and thus only focus on negative or positive dimensions. Consumers have different relationships with their brands (Fournier, 1998). Whereas some may feel love for their brands, others may be indifferent toward them, and still others may even have significantly negative attitudes toward certain brands (Khan and Lee, 2014). Consequently, a comprehensive and unifying conceptual model that considers the positive and negative side of consumer-brand relationships simultaneously is required.

Secondly, some academics apply the framework of interpersonal love or Sternberg's triangular theory (Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence, 2008; Albert and Valette-Florence, 2010; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005; Whang, Allen, Zhang, Sahoury, Kahn, and Frances Luce, 2004) and others advocate one-way (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010) or parasocial approaches (Fetscherin, 2014). As a third alternative, the grounded theory approach has been proposed to study consumer-brand relationships, emphasizing the importance of the phenomenological experience in consumer-brand relationships (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi, 2012; Madadi, Torres, Fazli-Salehi, and Zúñiga, 2021).

Therefore, in this research, brand love/hate is conceptualized based on the combination of three lenses, an approach that supports the developmental relationship from love to hate and vice versa and is contingent upon match (mismatch) effects of identity and values of consumers with the identity and values of corporations. Thus, considering only interpersonal relationships or parasocial aspects is unlikely to explain all characteristics of brand relationships, and it seems necessary to develop a construct that encompasses all positive and negative feelings towards a brand.

Third, there is developing research on brand hate (Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux, 2009; Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi, 2016), brand betrayal (Grégoire and Fisher, 2008; Grégoire et al., 2009; Reimann, MacInnis, Folkes, Uhalde, and Pol, 2018) and brand aversion (Park, Eisingerich, and Park, 2013). However, our understanding of how they relate to brand love (and more importantly, how they evolve over time) remains limited. To address this research lacuna, this paper proposes a conceptual model of consumer-brand relationships. More specifically, we identify antecedents including contextual (corporation's moral values), individual aspects (consumer's self-identity) and their interaction (corporation's moral values x consumer's self-identity), as well as consequences of brand love/hate. Figure 1 represents the nomological model of brand love/hate we developed.

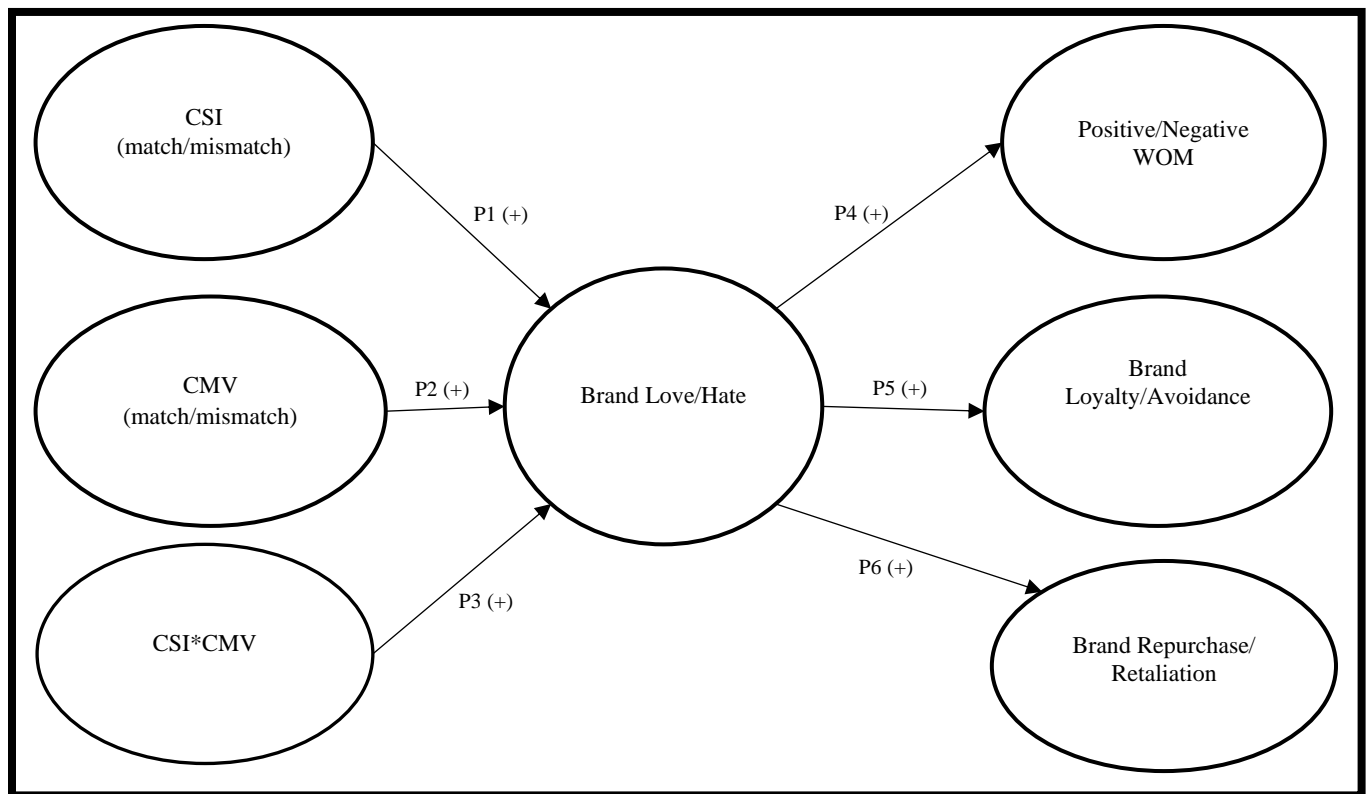
To develop a comprehensive model of brand love/hate, we review the current literature on consumer-brand relationships, exploring the theoretical background of brand love/hate. We then investigate the consequences for the brand love/hate construct that have been explored in the existing literature. Please see Table 1 for a summary of the literature.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

To understand consumer-brand relationships, it helps to uncover the psychological self as an individualized identity of every person. Its framework contains memories about one's past and

present experiences as well as future plans and goals. Our research study will use the self-concept theory to develop its theoretical view of consumer–brand relationships (Markus and Nurius, 1986). This theory explains how a person could expand the self through acting and thinking as if aspects of the other (in our case, a brand) relate partially to the person's own aspects. When this overlap is increased, people feel more positively about the relationship (Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005), and they could then develop love towards a brand (Batra et al., 2012). On the other hand, we could expand the self-concept theory to a negative realm—when less overlap between a person and their external concept exists, negative feelings could emerge (Hegner, Fetscherin, and van Delzen, 2017). Consumers' brand relationships can be negative for various reasons, including a

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**



Note: CSI = consumer’s self-identity and CMV = corporation’s moral values

brand not meeting the individual’s needs (e.g., poor-quality products), its connection with unfavorable groups (White and Dahl, 2007), and an unclear brand image that does not reflect consumers’ values, morals, and standards (Hogg, Banister, and Stephenson, 2009). In addition, a previously positive consumer–brand relationship can turn negative with anti-brand behaviors (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson, 2010) or brand enmity. Brand enmity is defined by Fournier (1998) as an “intensely involving relationship characterized by negative affect and desire to avoid or inflict pain on the other” (p. 362). The brand relationship could vacillate in the minds and hearts of consumers and go from positive to negative and vice versa (Park et al., 2013). Hence, our present research will consider all positive/negative feelings and attitudes in one unique construct.

**Table 1:** Literature Review of Brand Love/Hate

<b>Publications</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
Sternberg, 1986	Interpersonal relationship	Expanding inter-personal love/hate from psychology into the marketing literature
Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005	Interpersonal relationship (Love/hate as transient emotions)	Develops a new measure reflecting the strength of consumers' emotional attachments to brands
Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006	Interpersonal relationship	Explores consumer loyalty and positive WOM with and without brand love.
Park, Eisingerich, and Park, 2013	Interpersonal relationship (Love/hate as transient emotions)	Proposes a conceptual model of customer-brand relationships that classifies the determinants of the unique relationships among consumers and brands. However, they considered brand love and brand hate as temporary emotions.
Albert and Merunka, 2013	Interpersonal relationship	Explores the relationship between brand love, brand trust, brand identification, and brand commitment using a multi-dimensional approach.
Langner et al., 2016	Interpersonal relationship	Compares and contrasts the emotional nature of brand love and interpersonal love, as well as differentiates brand love from other similar constructs including brand liking, and interpersonal liking.
Zarantonello et al., 2016	Interpersonal relationship	Conceptualizes brand hate as a collection of negative emotions which is significantly related to different negative behavioral outcomes, including complaining, negative WOM, protest, and retaliation.
Fetscherin, 2014	Parasocial relationship	Proposes parasocial relationship theory as an alternative for testing consumer-brand relationships.
Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi, 2012	Grounded theory approach	Conceptualization of comprehensive model of brand love based on a grounded theory approach.
Bagozzi, Batra, and Ahuvia, 2017	Grounded theory approach	Develops a more practical and parsimonious brand love scale adapted from Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012).
Madadi et al., 2020	Grounded theory approach	Investigates the effect of targeted advertising on brand love with mediation effect of perceived similarity. The structural equation modeling (SEM) results also supports the efficacy targeted ads for developing brand love and increasing brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (WOM).

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT

### *Conceptualization of Brand Love/Brand Hate*

Consistent with the literature (Ahuvia, 2005), brand love encompasses a passion for, attachment to, positive evaluation of, positive emotions in response to, and assertions of love for the brand. On the other hand, Fehr and Russell (1984) categorize hate as the second most important emotion after love. In the marketing and branding literature, Zarantonello et al. (2016) provide a comprehensive review of the hate literature. The authors maintain that hate is comprised of primary and secondary emotions and specifically examine which emotions consumers have when they develop brand hate. As such, conceptualizing brand love relationships follows the idea that consumers will have a positive relationship toward a brand when that brand is compatible with their feelings, desires, and goals. On the other hand, this relationship could be negative if the person concludes that a brand is not compatible or perceives it as a threat. To summarize the conceptualization of brand love/hate, we categorize all frameworks into three main frameworks.

First, interpersonal relationships come from the triangular theory of interpersonal love, which incorporates intimacy, dreams, pleasure, memories, unicity, affection, and passion, whereas brand hate is conceptualized as the most intense negative emotion that consumers may feel towards brands (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Yet the limitation is that consumers tend to speak loosely when using the word love or hate in reference to commercial products. As such, many instances of brand love will not be fully analogous to the stronger forms of interpersonal love/hate (Ahuvia, 1993; 2005b; Oliver, 1999; Shimp and Madden, 1988).

Secondly, parasocial relationships entail a one-sided form of relationship in which one party holds unreciprocated emotions towards the other party in a relationship dyad (Fetscherin, 2014). The term parasocial relationship was established by Perse and Rubin (1989) and originated from parasocial interaction (Horton and Richard, 1956). Moreover, cognitive psychology supports this notion and maintains that the brain processes brand versus interpersonal relationships separately (Yoon, Gutchess, Feinberg, and Polk, 2006).

Third, the grounded theory approach has been proposed to study brand love, emphasizing the importance of the phenomenological experience in consumer–brand relationships (Batra et al., 2012). To enrich the literature with a third theoretical framework, Batra et al. (2012) suggest a grounded theory approach to examine consumer–brand relationships that is based on how consumers develop their relationships with brands on a phenomenological level. Batra et al. (2012) encourage scholars to consider a broader scope of analysis to move beyond the narrow lens suggested by interpersonal theories.

Parasocial framework considers brand love and brand hate to be opposite extremes of the brand relationship. In contrast, the experiential and triangular framework maintains that the change from one end to the other is also possible over time (Palusuk, Koles, and Hasan, 2019). In this paper, we conceptualize brand love/hate as an amalgam of all existing theories. We also advocate the process of transforming love to hate and vice versa is based on the match/mismatch of the identity and values of consumers with the identity and values of the company.

Finally, the current research conceptualizes the brand love/hate concept as an inconstant phenomenon, subsequently confining our understanding of the evolution and developmental essence of consumer–brand relationships. Only the study by Langner, Bruns, Fischer, and Rossiter (2016) has addressed consumer–brand relationships from a developmental perspective.

### *Individual Factor: Consumer's Self-Identity*

Self-congruity refers to “the match between consumers’ self-identity and a brand’s identity” (Sirgy, Lee, Johar, and Tidwell, 2008, p. 109). According to Mazodier and Merunka (2012), consumers are inclined to evaluate brands in terms of the fit between their own identity and their symbolic values. Brands that enable consumers to act on behalf of their actual or ideal identity result in stronger emotional and cognitive bonding with that brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

Consumer self-identity relates mostly to the match-up between an individual’s identity and a brand. Self-congruity research has definitively recognized a positive relationship between congruity (incongruity) with a brand and building a positive (negative) relationship with that brand (Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, Huber, Huber, and Lee, 2006). Khan and Lee (2014, p. 330) state that “consumers have the tendency to buy those brands with images congruent to their self-concepts or those that will give desired meaning to their lives”. Conversely, Zarantonello et al. (2016) classify the incongruity between a brand and consumers’ identity as a caste system and identify it as a possible antecedent for brand hate, with Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) identifying congruity with a brand as an antecedent of brand love. Hence, congruity (incongruity) between brand meanings and the consumer’s sense of self could lead to a positive (negative) relationship with the brand.

Individuals deliberately avoid brands that are against their personal identities, personalities, or cultural values (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Escalas and Bettman, 2005). According to the literature, the desired (undesired) self (Ogilvie, 1987) is the psychological construct that is most related to brand love (hate). As Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009, p. 174) argue, “dis-identification theory suggests that people may develop their self-concept by dis-identifying with brands that are perceived to be inconsistent with their own image”.

Park et al. (2013) refer to the idea of individual congruity (incongruity) with a brand as enriching (impoverishing) the self and self-identity. They maintain that the critical aspect of the “enriching-the-self” aspect is to please the spiritual self by symbolically representing one's past, present, or ideal future self internally and/or externally (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Escalas and Bettman, 2005). In brief, when a brand fits internally with the self or expresses externally an individual’s desired self and strengthens cultural values, expectations, and personality, that brand gives symbolic pleasure - it enriches the self and leads to a positive brand relationship. However, when a brand does not match a consumer’s desired values, it strongly opposes that individual’s identity and leads to adverse reactions (Johnson et al., 2011). This leads to our first proposition.

**Proposition 1:** *The match (mismatch) between consumer’s self-identity and the corporation has a positive effect on brand love (hate).*

### *Contextual Factor: Corporation’s Ethical Values*

Many marketers have conducted analyses of distinct corporate ethical codes that mirror their core values and shape corporate image (Tran, Nguyen, Melewar, and Bodoh, 2015). These codes are developed by the top managers, but those values are usually consistent irrespective of a change of leaders. In reality, marketers tend to simultaneously align the distinct corporate values of their organizations with consumers’ values. They are not limited, however, to consumers’ values, but encompass multidimensional associations of other stakeholders’ values.

Corporate internal values, as projected through corporate actions, may influence consumer perceptions about the company. Similarities and differences in perceptions influence consumer

relationships dramatically (Zarantonello et al., 2016). As such, different environmental factors such as legal, social, or moral corporate actions could lead to negative (positive) brand relationships (Zarantonello et al., 2016). The literature shows that unethical (ethical) company actions, such as deceptive (genuine) communication, lead to negative (positive) feelings toward the brand. We label these factors as ethical values that encompass all societal or ethical factors related to a company. In contrast to the other two determinants, this one involves company-related reasons such as marketing strategy, store environment, the entire industry, employees and CEOs, and any ethical issues that could affect consumer–brand relationships (Lee et al., 2009b). Thus, we derive our second proposition:

**Proposition 2:** *The match (mismatch) between the corporation’s moral values and the consumer has a positive effect on brand love (hate).*

#### *Interaction Effect of Consumer’s Self-Identity and Corporation’s Ethical Values*

The more that consumers perceive congruence between themselves and the brand’s identity, the more likely they are to develop a deep relationship with the brand. As a result, appropriate alignment between consumer identity and brand identity is deemed to be vital for developing deep positive relationships (Lin, 2010). Consumers decrypt the codes that they receive from a brand in order to find a match (mismatch) condition between their identity and values with a company’s values and brand identity (Huang, Mitchell, and Rosenaum-Elliott, 2012). Consumers are more likely to prefer brands with identities and values similar to their own and often choose brands because they view them as extended parts of themselves (Huang, Mitchell, and Rosenaum-Elliott, 2012). The higher the fit between a consumer’s identity and a brand’s identity, the higher the consumer’s tendency is to choose the brand (Lin, 2010). Therefore, it may be appropriate for marketers to examine the interaction effect of a consumer’s identity and corporate values on the consumer–brand relationship to create a marketing roadmap.

The question arises as to whether consumers’ brand love (hate) is most strongly shaped by the match (mismatch) effects of the self-identity of consumers with the brand identity and corporate values. More specifically, when consumers encounter some level of contradictory and non-homogeneous signals between corporate values, brand identity, and their identity, it results in the question of which has a stronger influence on shaping the consumer–brand relationships (Banerjee, 2016). Accordingly, marketers may feel pressure to manage the interrelationships among the brand’s identity, the corporate values of the brand’s maker, and the identity of the target consumer so that the requisite alignment can be maintained (Banerjee, 2016).

Thus, it is important for researchers to investigate the interaction effects between corporate values, the consumer’s identity, and the brand’s identity. Otherwise, the absence of congruence between the corporate values, the identity of the brand, and the consumers’ identities can make consumers confused and increase the complexity of their decision-making process. We suggest that the match-up effect among the self-identity of the consumer and corporate personality exert influence on consumer brand love/hate (Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono, 2004). Accordingly, we propose:

**Proposition 3:** *There is a significant interaction effect between a consumer’s self-identity and the corporation’s moral values on brand love/hate.*

### *Behavioral Outcomes: Positive (Negative) Word of Mouth*

The extent to which a person speaks or writes about a brand is referred to as word of mouth (WOM), which could be negative or positive (Bonifield and Cole, 2007). Positive (negative) WOM (Ahuvia, 2006) is generally considered as pro-brand (anti-brand) behavior where the level of intensity is moderate to high. Therefore, marketers must pay close attention to these behaviors due to the intense effects they could have on their brands (Zhang, 2017). In this regard, consumers talk to each other to share their ideas, feelings, and attitudes toward external concepts and endeavor to emulate each other in a social learning paradigm (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

WOM is the process that allows consumers to share information and opinions for or against specific products, brands, and services with other buyers (Hawkins et al., 2004). WOM has emerged recently in the literature on relationship marketing as a powerful response that consumers can show toward a brand (e.g., Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

In its broadest meaning, WOM communication entails any information about a target object (e.g., company or brand) spread from one individual to another via some communication medium (Brown, Barry, Dacin, and Gunst, 2005). More specifically, Harrison-Walker (2001) defined WOM as “informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization or a service” (p. 63). In this study, we want to examine the effect of brand love (brand hate) on positive (negative) WOM.

Generally, if consumers feel they love (hate) a brand, that in turn may translate into positive (negative) WOM to friends and relatives. Previous studies have failed to link brand love/hate and WOM. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, and Vohs (2001) assert that people are more likely to spread negative experiences with others than positive ones. Accordingly, managers must be more careful about the consequences of brand hate and negative WOM than positive WOM. Consumers share negative ideas because they want to alert others about their negative experience with a specific brand (Singh, Rothschild, and Churchill, 1988).

Previous studies categorize two types of negative WOM (Nyer and Gopinath, 2005). First, “private complaining” is defined as consumers sharing negative ideas about the brands with their close relatives and friends. Secondly, sharing online posts on blogs, websites, or social media is defined as “public complaining” (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). In our current model, we use one construct to measure positive/negative WOM without distinguishing between private and public. Positive (negative) brand relationship, specifically brand love (hate), is conceived to be a relevant driver for positive (negative) WOM (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Therefore, we propose:

**Proposition 4:** *Brand love (hate) has a positive impact on positive (negative) WOM.*

### *Brand Loyalty/Avoidance*

In comparison with other behaviors, brand avoidance/loyalty is less intense. In this circumstance, consumers engage in avoidance (loyalty) behavior without direct and noticeable actions (Hegner et al., 2017). Scholars in the brand research literature (Lee et al., 2009) have studied brand avoidance broadly as a consequence of brand hate. Hence, Zarantonello et al. (2016) divide brand hate behavior into two categories: passive and active.

Passive behavior is defined as the desire for avoidance, which is non-confrontational and associated with a consumer’s requirement to escape their relationship with a firm. This is usually



expressed as patronage reduction or cessation. Therefore, in avoidance behavior, consumers primarily endeavor to escape and forget about the specific brand. Brand loyalty, on the other hand, is the attachment or deep commitment to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Consumers become loyal when they have a positive perception of a brand. Previous studies suggest that high levels of positive associations and brand love can enhance brand loyalty (Keller and Lehmann, 2003). Consequently, having a long history with a brand was a result of brand love. This common history can provide the loved brand an important place in the consumer's mind and heart (Park et al., 2013). Because past behavior is often a good predictor of future behavior (Guadagni and Little, 1983), this implies higher loyalty to loved brands (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005). Previous studies show a positive relationship between brand love (hate) and loyalty (avoidance) as a behavioral consequence toward the brand. Thus, we propose the following:

**Proposition 5:** *Brand love (hate) has a positive impact on brand loyalty (avoidance).*

#### *Brand Repurchase/Retaliation*

Brand repurchase (retaliation) is characterized as the most intense behavioral consequence of brand love (hate). Consumers show their desire (enmity) towards brands overtly. These intense types of behavioral outcomes are direct actions toward the brand. Based on previous literature, repurchase (retaliation) is conceived as a consequence of brand love (hate) (Zhang, 2017; Batra et al., 2013). In line with previous studies, we show the positive relationship between brand love (hate) with repurchase (retaliation). From a managerial point of view, Batra et al. (2013) demonstrate that brand love has the potential to be an important construct for improving consumer-brand relationships and could convince consumers to be loyal, have the willingness to engage in positive WOM, and have more favorable repurchase intentions. Conversely, retaliation is classified as direct actions, such as having harsh objections with a brand's employees, stealing from the brand, or damaging the brand's assets. Based on Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009), we regard brand retaliation as a consequence of brand hate.

According to Sternberg (2003), hate causes people to retaliate for whatever they assume the brand has done. Based on equity theory, the main objective of brand retaliation is to punish or cause harm to brands (Bechwati and Morrin, 2003; Grégoire et al., 2009; Marticotte, Arcand, and Baudry, 2016). In addition, Zarantonello et al. (2016) show that consumers' protests and complaining are coping strategies and outcomes of brand hate. Therefore, "punishment" behavior toward the brand is a result of brand hate (Funches, Markley, and Davis, 2009) and we propose the following:

**Proposition 6:** *Brand love (hate) has a positive impact on brand repurchase (retaliation).*

## **DISCUSSION**

This paper proposes a conceptual model of consumer-brand relationships by specifically suggesting one unifying construct for brand love/hate. This model entails match (mismatch) effects of the self-identity of consumers with brand and corporate values on behavioral outcomes (i.e., favorable and unfavorable) through the mediation effect of brand love/hate. Indeed, consumers are likely to develop a feeling of love (hate) when they can have faith in the brand (Albert and Merunka, 2013). Subsequently, that feeling of love enhances the brand. Comprehending the

drivers that contribute to a deep brand relationship is vital because it is a key factor of brand success (Buil, Martínez, and De Chernatony, 2013).

The antecedents include contextual factors (corporate values), consumer factors (self-identity), and the interaction effects of those, whereas the outcomes are loyalty/avoidance, positive/negative WOM, and repurchase/retaliation. This conceptual model is invaluable for marketers because it provides a tool for managing marketing messages and effectively developing and promoting strategies that result in brand love. Of course, the benefits marketers are seeking are the resulting loyalty, positive WOM, and repurchases. Furthermore, marketers can rely on this model to develop marketing strategies that prevent brand hate in order to avert the negative consequences of avoidance, negative WOM, and retaliation. In line with previous studies (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), our contributions highlight the need of consumers to feel psychologically close to a brand in order for them to develop positive consumer–brand relationships.

### **THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

From a theoretical standpoint, we advocate for a dynamic view of consumer–brand relationships that incorporates the three main theoretical lenses - namely interpersonal, parasocial, and experiential lenses. Most importantly, we advocate a developmental approach to brand love/hate depending on match-up effects of self-identity of consumers with the brand and corporate values. We argue that brand love/hate should not be conceptualized as static but rather as continually evolving, encompassing each brand-related experience that may likely change the future path of the consumer–brand relationship.

This paper makes two important contributions to the consumer–brand relationships literature. First, it provides a framework on the positive direct effect of matching consumers' identity with the brand identity on consumer–brand relationships. Secondly, it investigates the interaction effects of consumer's self-identity and the corporation's moral values on brand love/hate. Knowing how brand love evolves over time enables the determination of elements that help as opposed to hindering the positive evolution of consumer love towards a particular brand.

### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

We propose that consumers' favorable behaviors towards brands are influenced by the match between consumers' identity, brand identity, and corporate values. Additionally, interaction effects among the self-identity of consumers and corporate values are important in shaping deep relationships. This suggests that consumers do not consider brands as merely an entity when developing a brand relationship. This conceptual model provides new insights for practitioners into the relationships among consumers and brands.

The proposed conceptual model of this study may also instruct brand marketers about the extent of the effects that consumers' identity and corporate values have on consumer–brand relationships. The findings of this study suggest a proper alignment among consumers' identity, brand identity, and corporate values. Therefore, it requires more care regarding the matching of brand identity and corporate values with the self-identity of consumers so that all may be integrated correctly. In the long run, brands that maintain an appropriate level of integration of the consumers' identity and brand identity can obtain favorable behavioral outcomes.

These positive outcomes should influence practitioners and marketers to create closer and more trustworthy relationships with consumers to increase brand love by delivering corporate brand values or the brand's personality in corporate communications to increase the match between

the brands and consumers. Supporting activities that increase loyalty among consumers, such as the creation of a brand community, also has a positive effect on brand love. As a result, well-known brands (e.g., Apple) should consider that brand love is the most important factor resulting in brand loyalty. Hence, companies must identify and satisfy consumers' needs to gain their trust and the resulting love and loyalty.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In conclusion, regarding ongoing debates in marketing, our proposed conceptual model for brand love/hate substantively enriches the brand love literature. By conceptualizing brand love/hate in a developmental perspective and transferable scenario based on self-brand congruency of consumers' identity with the brand and corporate values, we have addressed a significant amount of untapped potential and limitations that exist in this realm, with future potential benefits for academics and practitioners alike. However, many questions remain unanswered and, as with all research, this study consists of some limitations.

First, future research involving the collection of data should test the proposed relationships among constructs. Future research could also investigate other antecedents of brand love/hate to understand the developmental process of consumer–brand relationships fully. In this context, a research question is: What are the other antecedents for brand love/hate? To answer this question, a qualitative approach could identify other factors that enhance consumer–brand relationships.

Secondly, future research should also investigate the moderators of brand love/hate more fully. In terms of moderators, scholars underscore the importance of demographics (e.g. income, age, gender), cultural phenomenon (Roy et al., 2016), the extent of consumer engagement with products (Kaufmann, Loureiro, and Manarioti, 2016), product involvement (Kaufmann et al., 2016), brand types (e.g. luxury vs. non-luxury brands) (Hegner, Fenko, and Teravest, 2017), and various types of retail stores (Roy et al., 2016), with additional work required to investigate their effects on consumer–brand relationships.

Third, previous research based on a snapshot view of brand love/hate investigated the effects of consumer–brand relationships on behavioral outcomes, but it remains unclear whether the impact is similar after adopting a developmental perspective.

Fourth, future studies should explore other factors that result in brand love and brand trust. For instance, consumer characteristics (e.g., personality) also play a role in developing brand love/hate.

Finally, future research should test the applicability of the nomological model in other countries and cultures.

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