

## Brand Attachment Vs. Brand Love: To What Extent are they Identical?

Dwi Martiyanti<sup>1✉</sup>, Basu Swastha Dharmmesta<sup>2</sup>, Sahid Susilo Nugroho<sup>2</sup>, Bayu Aji Aritejo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Economics and Business, Department of Management, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia and Department of Management, Mulawarman University, Samarinda, Indonesia.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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### Abstract

Brand attachment and brand love is important marketing concepts in developing a strong relationship of brand. Nevertheless, up to now the boundaries of these two concepts are still blurred. This research seeks to study the two constructs of brand attachment and brand love at the conceptual, definition and operational dimensions. The study was carried out by in-depth examination of articles related to brand attachment and brand love. Each of these constructs is defined and presented in relation to theoretical concepts, operational dimension and measurement patterns that have been used in empirical research. In the end, this review reveals that although there are similarities between brand attachment and brand love, they are different. This difference is viewed from the concepts, measurement dimension and intensity between the two. Brand attachment and brand love are two constructs that have emotional content and influence the behavior to maintain the relationship with a brand. However, brand attachment is "more self-focused" relative to the thoughts and feelings of a particular object; whereas brand love is "more brand-focused" which includes cognitive consistency, power of great positive attitude, more frequent thoughts and conversations about the object of attitude.

## Keterlekatan Merek Vs. Brand Love: Sejauh Mana Mereka Identik?

### Abstrak

Keterlekatan merek dan kecintaan merek merupakan konsep pemasaran yang penting dalam mengembangkan hubungan merek yang kuat. Meskipun demikian, hingga saat ini batasan kedua konsep tersebut masih terbatas. Penelitian ini berupaya melakukan studi terhadap dua konstruk keterlekatan merek dan kecintaan merek pada tataran konseptual, definisi dan dimensi operasional. Penelitian dilakukan dengan pemeriksaan secara mendalam pada artikel-artikel yang berkaitan dengan keterlekatan merek dan kecintaan merek. Masing-masing konstruksi ini didefinisikan dan disajikan dalam kaitannya dengan konsep teoritis, dimensi operasional, dan pola pengukuran yang telah digunakan dalam penelitian empiris. Pada akhirnya, ulasan ini mengungkapkan bahwa meskipun terdapat kesamaan antara keterlekatan merek dan kecintaan merek, namun keduanya berbeda. Perbedaan tersebut dilihat dari konsep, dimensi pengukuran dan intensitas antara keduanya. Keterlekatan merek dan kecintaan merek adalah dua konstruk yang memiliki kandungan emosional dan mempengaruhi perilaku untuk menjaga hubungan dengan merek. Namun, keterlekatan merek lebih berfokus pada diri yang bersifat relatif berdasarkan pikiran dan perasaan terhadap objek tertentu sedangkan cinta merek lebih berfokus pada merek yang mencakup konsistensi kognitif, kekuatan sikap positif yang besar, pemikiran dan percakapan yang lebih sering tentang objek sikap.

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## INTRODUCTION

The research on marketing recently has paid greater attention in studying the emotional aspect of consumer-brand relationship. Brand has been considered to be meaningful and significant in fulfilling the psychological, utilitarian, hedonic, social, symbolic, or even spiritual goals. When the brands are self-relevant, improve goal fulfillment (Park & MacInnis, 2018), and can provide intrinsic rewards (Batra et al., 2012) the consumers will be emotionally connected to the brands. Brands that enable to evoke strong and positive emotions can motivate consumers not only to make repeat purchases but also increase psychological and affective commitment (Park & MacInnis, 2018) through advocacy behaviors and engagement in the brand community (Brodie et al., 2013).

Some studies show emotional aspects such as brand attachment (Thomson et al., 2005; Park, 2010, 2013) and brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Albert et al., 2009; Batra et al., 2012) as important concept in developing the strong brand relationship. Those constructs describe the level of connection and intensity of brand-consumer relationship that can influence commitment (Thomson et al., 2005), long-term relationship (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006), and behaviors that can increase the profitability of the brand (Park et al., 2010).

A large number of research studies on brand love and brand attachment in marketing literature have been produced. However, some research (Suarez, 2019 and Palusuk et al., 2019) suggested that boundaries between the two constructs are still blurred and relatively difficult to decipher until today. Moussa (2015) argued that they had similarity because of reflecting the emotional bond and sharing the same innate theoretical assumption. Despite this, some researchers (such as Albert et al., 2008, 2009; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2011; and Loureiro et al., 2012) consider that the two constructs are different. Suarez, (2019) suggested that those two constructs are different constructs in term of meaning, dimensions and items in defining them.

The emergence of two emotionally charged constructs of brand namely brand attachment and brand love has recently attracted some researchers. Critiques on concept of brand-consumer relationship in marketing literature mainly brand attachment and brand love (Albert et al., 2008; Moussa, 2015; Palusuk et al., 2019 and Suarez, 2019) highlight the importance of establishing the boundary between brand attachment and brand love. The conceptual boundary is needed because those different terms have been viewed by some researchers as the same constructs (as in Thomson et al., 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Belaid & Behi, 2011; and Moussa, 2015). The main confusion between the two constructs came from the development of attachment scales related to love constructs such as passion and affection (eg. Thomson et al., 2005) and the use of attachment as measurement scale of brand love (eg. Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Moreover, terminological confusion arose because the concepts of brand attachment and brand love was explained using the similar theory and had overlaps on the impact of positive relationship on brands. Using the same theory, several researchers have used the theory of self-expansion in understanding brand attachment by Park et al. (2010) and brand love by Ahuvia (2005). Both researches have assumption that brand attachment and brand love are cognitive and affective constructs that can motivate consumers to maintain close relationships. Another theory namely Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1958) is used to understand brand attachment (Thomson et al., 2005 and Silva, 2018) and brand love (Bagozzi et al., 2014). Gumparthy & Patra (2019) exposed that Attachment Theory was relevant to be used in the research related to cognitive and affective responses of consumers to a brand such as brand love and brand attachment. Therefore, further explanation and boundary on both constructs are required for deep understanding. Following the suggestion of Park et al. (2013) and Suarez (2019), this research analyzes similarities and differences between constructs of love and attachment to a

brand. To achieve this goal, we used dominant academic databases including Scopus, Emerald, EBSCOS, and Science Direct to identify articles on brand love and brand attachment. A comparison of the two constructs will be presented. Furthermore, the comparison is made at the level of conceptual, definition, and operational dimension.

## METHOD

This research aimed to understand two constructs of brand attachment and brand love at the conceptual, definitional and operational dimensions. This research explored academic databases such as Emerald, EBSCO and Science Direct to achieve this goal. This paper discusses literature associated with brand attachment and brand love from 1970 to early 2021. Articles identification used “keywords”, namely the attachment, brand attachment and emotional attachment, for articles regarding brand attachment. Meanwhile, articles regarding brand love used keywords of love, brand love and romantic brand love. These keywords had the subject limit “management, business, social and psychology”. From 142 articles of the two topics, there were approximately 86 studies identifiable according to the criteria for the final analysis. Articles used did not include textbooks, conference papers, dissertations and reports. Before identification, all were on excel sheets to ensure the relevance of articles to the research topic and remove several not corresponding and found to be irrelevant to the research objectives, such as attachment style (Mende and Bolton, 2011), romantic love (Hazan and Shaver, 1987) and others. Then, the corresponding articles were analyzed related to the research objectives.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Brand Attachment**

The conceptualization of attachment stems from a psychological concept that has been explored in Bowlby’s research (1979, 1980) in the context of primary caregiver-infant

relationships. Bowlby showed that attachment is an emotion-laden target specific bond between infant and primary caregiver (Thomson et al., 2005). The attachment of infants to the primary caregiver (mother/caregiver) is obtained from the results of evolution through interactions (Park et al., 2006). The previous research by Hazan and Zeifman (1999) suggested that attachment formation takes place through a series of phases starting from physical closeness, cognitive awareness, perception and emotion in the context of relationships. When the attachment gets stronger, someone will have the desire to maintain closeness, be motivated to learn about the environment, seek security when there is a threat and experience emotional distress when facing separation.

Specifically, Park et al. (2006) revealed that this attachment serves basic human needs to secure a protection from physical and psychological threats that can influence relationship behaviors in the future. In marketing research, the literature shows that the attachment can go beyond the context of people’s relationships. The basic conceptual characteristics and behavioural effects of attachment are assumed to have similarities with attachment to an object. Several studies (Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2006; 2010) showed that consumers could develop attachment to objects or brands.

Several previous studies refer to material ownership (Belk, 1988) regarding to the emergence of the concept of brand attachment. The object has become a part of the self and has symbolic meaning which comes from personal history so that it evokes emotions. This idea of material possession has provided an interesting idea of attachment in the relationship of individuals and material objects (Schultz et al., 1989). Schultz et al. (1989) defined attachment as a construct in the consumer behavior. Attachment is a level of linkage felt by someone towards a particular object. The attachment is multidimensional related to possession of material objects. When the object becomes more favorite than the others, it becomes part of the self and consumers tend to attach to this object.

The attachment appears from the previous experience with the object and has a relative strength based on thoughts, feelings and behaviors towards a certain object. Attachment represents something that the individual feels towards the object in question. When the object is considered to be part of the self, the attachment will be stronger (Schultz et al., 1989).

Furthermore, Lacoueilhe (2000) began to define and develop and also validate the measurement of the brand attachment. Lacoueilhe (2000) assumed that attachment is an emotional predisposition or psychological link. Attachment is a psychological variable that refers to a long-lasting and irreversible affective reaction (separation is painful) and expresses psychological closeness to the Lacoueilhe brand (2000). Using the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979), Thomson et al. (2005) conceptualized that consumers also developed a strong emotional attachment to the brand. Attachment is defined as the specific emotion-laden target specific bond between a person and a specific object (Thomson et al., 2005) which varies in strength. When consumers have stronger attachment to the brand, they will maintain closeness with the object.

Extending the concept related to those constructs, Park et al. (2006) developed brand attachment that had affective and cognitive based on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979). Park et al. (2006) conceptualized the relationship-based attachment construct. Individual will develop attachment to brands like infants and their mothers to activate oneself (functional), self-gratification (experience) and self-enrichment (symbolic). The bonds originate from a rich and accessible network of memories that engages thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand's relationship with oneself. Personalized experiences and autobiographical memories of a highly self-relevant brand create an emotional bond. Brand attachment does not only include emotional strength but also cognitive strength that connect a brand with the self. Brand attachment includes two important elements, namely (1) the relationship between

brand and self, and (2) the cognitive and emotional bonds that affect readiness to allocate resources to the brand.

Supporting the previous study, Park et al. (2010) suggested that attachment has motivated consumers to develop themselves or incorporate the brand into themselves so that consumers who attached to the brand would invest their resources in order to maintain the relationship with the brand. They will use their resources that include (1) social resources, such as maintaining the brand and degrading the alternatives, (2) financial resources, such as willingness to pay a higher price for the brand; and (3) time resources, such as involvement in the brand community and brand promotion through social media. Therefore, the conceptualization of brand attachment includes:

There is a bond that connects the brand with oneself (Schultz et al., 1989; Lacoueilhe, 2000; Thomson et al., 2005; Mikulincer & Shaver 2005; Park et al., 2010). The strength felt is relatively based on thoughts, feelings and behaviors towards specific objects (Schultz et al., 1989) or varies (Thomson et al., 2005). Develop over time through experiences (Schultz et al., 1989; Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010). Use resources to maintain the relationship with the brand (Thomson et al., 2005 and Park et al., 2006, 2010).

Thus, this study argues according to Park et al. (2010) that brand attachment is the strength of the bond which connects the brand with oneself. Attachment comes from previous interactions or experiences with the brand that involve thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand-self relationship. This attachment is relatively based on thoughts, feelings and behaviors towards objects that can influence consumers to maintain relationships with brands.

### **Brand Attachment Measurement**

Measurement model of brand attachment originated from Lacoueilhe's (2000) research that was developed from an individual-object relationship framework (Belk, 1988; Ball & Tasaki, 1992) as in Table 1. Lacoueilhe, (2000)



developed uni-dimensional measurement model that focused on affective factor because of psychological closeness to the long-lasting and irreversible brand. This measurement model consisted of five-item scale, namely affection, pleasure, connection, attraction, and comfort in owning the brand. The scale has been developed from three sources of information (i.e. literature review, interview and projective testing) and had satisfactory psychometric quality from a standard measurement perspective. However, the measurement scale faces methodological limitations regarding the scale measure and its one-dimensional character. The item ignores antecedents or consequences of attachment that should be able to use in order to understand the basics of affective relationships from various aspects and avoid dissociating various concepts discussed as in the multidimensional approach. In addition, the operational approach used in item creation only uses interpretive lines and item refinement by experts.

feelings or specific emotional factors on the brand. The individual will maintain closeness to the object as the attachment gets stronger. The strong attachment is associated with stronger feelings of affection (affectionate, loved, peaceful, friendly), connection (attached, bonded, connected) and passion (passionate, delighted, captivated). However, this multidimensional measure has been debated by some researchers (Park et al., 2010; Albert et al., 2009; Bergkvist & Larsen, 2010 and Sarkar et al., 2012) because of the similarities in the use of love item which is a dimension of interpersonal theory in measuring brand love.

Despite being multidimensional, Park et al. (2006) revealed that the measurement of Thomson et al. (2005) only reflected the affect component of brand self-connection so that the measurement only represented a part of the brand attachment factor. Park et al. (2006) proposed not only the brand-self relationship but also the automaticity of thoughts. The two

**Table 1.** Research on Brand Attachment Measurement

Author	Dimension	Scale	Context	Product category
Lacoeuilhe (2000)	Uni- dimension (5 items)	-	France	Pantyhose, feminine deodorant, and laundry detergent
Thomson et al. (2005)	Multi- dimension: affection, passion and connection	Seven-point		
Park et al. (2010)	Bi-dimension: brand self-connections and prominence (4 items)	Ten-point scale	Europe	Quaker Oats Oatmeal, Apple iPod and local university, Apple iPod, Nike and retail bank costumers
Shimul et al. (2019)	Uni- dimensional (seven items)	Seven-point Likert scale	Europe	Luxury brand products and Non-luxury brand products.

Source: data processed 2021

Furthermore, Thomson et al. (2005) and Park (2006; 2010) developed a scale of attachment with a multidimensional approach. Thomson et al. (2005) developed a scale of attachment based on emotional closeness with the brand. It consisted of three first-order factors which were labelled affection, passion and connection. Thomson et al. (2005) showed that attachment varied in strength associated with

dimensions are considered to be able more to describe and represent the state of mind when consumers are very attached to the brand rather than using just one. Supporting the previous study, Park et al. (2010) re-developed measure scales which included brand-self cognitions, thoughts, and autobiographical memories that were more than emotions. Attachment includes brand-self connection (part of who you are and

personally connected) and prominence (automatic thoughts/feelings and thoughts/feelings come naturally). Consumers will categorize the brand as part of themselves and will make the brand as top of mind from positive feelings and memories when consumers attach to the brand.

The measurement of brand attachment in marketing literature is divided into two approaches, namely affective approach and cognitive-affective approach. These approaches stemmed from two different conceptualizations of research that have operationalized the scale for measuring brand attachment. The affective or emotional approach seeks to measure attachment by focusing on the affective or emotional components (eg. Lacoeyuilhe, 2000; Thomson et al., 2005; Shimul et al., 2019), meanwhile the cognitive-affective approach measures the brand attachment through cognitive and affective components (Park et al., 2006; 2010).

### **Affective Approach**

Studies included in this group used the theoretical assumption that consumers emotionally attached to the objects of consumption. The strength of the relationship between consumer-brand is determined by the emotional component that can reflect the strength of consumers' attachment to the brand. Lacoeyuilhe (2000) used emotional criteria or overall affective reactions in the operationalisation of measurement scale of brand attachment such as affection, pleasure, connection, attraction, and comfort in owning the brand. The results of the study obtained five items which have been verified by using validity (discriminant and convergent) and reliability tests. Furthermore, the measurement of brand attachment has been adopted by several researchers (such as Belaid and Behi, 2011; Ammari et al., 2016; and Nashtae et al., 2017) in various contexts.

Belaid & Behi (2011) and Nashtae et al. (2017) used this measurement in the context of a product/brand. Belaid & Behi (2011) measured the attachment to utilitarian products in Tunisia by using four items which were measured using a Likert scale. The results show that one

item needs to be deleted because it does not fit the context of the product. Meanwhile, Nashtae et al. (2017) still adopted five items by using a Likert scale. The results show that all items are valid and reliable in measuring attachment to durable goods and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). Furthermore, Ammari et al. (2016) used this measurement in the context of service in Tunisia. Like Belaid & Behi (2011), they also used four measurement items that were adapted to the research context. All items were measured by using a Likert scale and the results indicated that four items had good internal consistency.

Supporting the affective approach, Thomson et al. (2005) also identified a series of emotional items that reflected the strength of brand attachment. Using the premise that consumers could articulate the characteristic of emotional brand attachment, the study produced 10 items that reflected three factors labeled Affection, Passion, and Connection. The measurement of emotional attachment has been adopted by some researchers as in Table 2. Research have been conducted in various contexts such brands/companies, service and mobile app context. In the context of products/brands, most research was carried out on products/brands that have been purchased or owned by respondents, brands that have been used continuously and were non-switching for a long time. Meanwhile, in the context of service, the research was conducted on favorite services that have been used by respondents. In the mobile app context, it was conducted on mobile app used by respondents.

All items in each study were measured by using a Likert scale with a different number of items (brand attachment from Thomson et al., 2005) which were adapted according to each research context. Malar et al. (2011) adopted six items of attachment to various familiar brands in several industries. Meanwhile, Zhou et al. (2012) adopted the whole items from Thomson et al. (2005), which were 10 items in the context of brand community in China. Other researchers who used 10 items were Tran et al. (2021) in the mobile app context. Moreover, Dwivedi (2018)

**Table 2.** The Use of Scale Measurement of Brand Attachment Thomson et al. (2005)

Authors	Context	Country	Number of Items
Malar et al. (2011)	Fast moving consumer goods, durable consumer goods, service and retailing	-	Six items
Zhou et al. (2012)	Brand community	China	Ten items
Loureiro et al. (2012)	Car	Portugal	Three items
Hwang & Kandampully 2012	luxury fashion brand		Three items
Aboulnsr & Tran (2019)	New products and well-known brand for technological	US	Five items
Dwivedi et al. (2018)	Brand in social media	Australia	Seven items
Torres et al. (2020)	Airline travel sector	USA.	Nine items
Ramirez (2019)	Service (leisure activity, hotel, restaurant, retail, travel, bank, movie theatre)	Peru	Nine items
Ghorbanzadeh & Rahegh 2020	Smartphone and apparel.	Iran	Five items
Tran et al. 2021	Mobile app context	-	Ten items

Source: data processed 2021

adopted seven items of brand attachment frequently used by Australian consumers on social media. Ramirez & Merunka (2019) adopted nine items of attachment to several local brands in different services categories. Other researchers who used nine items were Torres et al. (2020) who measured the attachment to airline travel sector in the USA. Aboulnsr and Tran et al. (2019) adopted five items of attachment to the new products and well-known brand for technological advances in the US. Other researchers using five items were Ghorbanzadeh and Rahegh (2020) who measured the attachment to smartphone and apparel brands in Iran. Hwang & Kandampully (2012) adopted three items of attachment to luxury fashion brands and other researchers who used three items were Loureiro et al. (2012). However, brand attachment measurement used by Loureiro et al. (2012) was combined with other measurement items (Chang & Chieng, 2006) apart from measurement from Thomson et al. (2005).

Another affective approach was developed by Shimul et al. (2019) in measuring attachment to luxury brands. The emotion, exclusivity and symbolic values of luxury became the basis for Shimul et al. (2019) to operationalizing the measurement scale of brand attachment. The rese-

arch is conducted in the luxury brand context. Questionnaire items are emotional and measured using a Likert scale. The results show that the use of the luxury brand attachment scale is able to provide a better measure and understanding of consumer attachment to luxury brands compared to brand attachment in general.

### Cognitive-affective Approach

The study from previous group ignored the cognitive dimension of BA construct. Park et al. (2010) suggested that the strength of a relationship between consumer and brand was not limited only on the feelings but also the brand-related thoughts and memories originating from rich memory networks or mental representations. Park et al. (2010) used cognitive and affective components as general starting point for measuring brand attachment. Park et al. (2010) developed and validated the more parsimony measure of brand attachment, tested the based assumption and showed that the measure indicated brand attachment. Park et al. (2010) measured the brand attachment by observing the consumers' responses towards 10-item scale on three different brands, namely Quaker Oats Meal, Apple iPod and a local university by using 10-point Likert type

scale. The analysis result reduced 10 items into 4 items that are more parsimony and fit to the marketing practice. In the next Park et al. (2010) study, two-dimensional measurement (brand self-connection and prominence) of BA was tested by different variables, brands and respondents. The results indicated that four items that represented brand self-connection and prominence had a good internal consistency.

Several researchers also used the measurement items developed by Park et al. (2010) in their research nowadays as in Table 3. Park et al. (2010) measurement items have been used in the context of brands/companies (such as fashion, cars, riding events, apparel, bikes etc.) and service. The research was conducted to the respondents who already used the brands or became old costumers and had repeat purchases. Items have been adopted as a whole, such as 10 items from the sample study of Park et al. (2010), four items used by Park et al. (2010) in the results of their final studies and in combination with other researchers. All items were measured by using a Likert scale.

**Brand Love**

The initial conceptualization of love in

et al., 2004) used the theory of interpersonal love applied to consumer situations. Meanwhile, other researchers used the grounded theory (Batra et al., 2012) and parasocial (Fetscherin, 2014). The construct of feelings of love in the marketing literature was introduced by Shimp & Maden (1988) from the relationship between consumers and objects of consumption (products, brands, shops, etc.) by using Sternberg’s (1986) theory of interpersonal love. Although the consumer-object relationship is qualitatively different from the person-to-person relationship, there are many similarities to all relationships between the consumer and the object of consumption (such as product, brand, store, commercial etc.). Three components of love in the context of consumption which are longing, likes and decisions/commitments determine the nature of consumer’s relationship with an object. Ahuvia (2005) also studied the concept of love in various objects of consumption. Ahuvia proposed that the consumer also felt love for an object other than people such as pets, computers, paintings, old cars and so on. Agreeing with Shimp & Maden (1988), in his subsequent research Ahuvia (2005) argued

**Table 3.** The Use of Scale Measurement of Brand Attachment Park et al. (2010)

Authors	Context	Country	Number of Items
Yen et al. (2018)	Service (travel agency)	Taiwan	Ten items
Cheng et al. (2016)	Service (Hotel)	Taiwan	Ten items
Kauffman et al. (2016)	luxury fashion brand	Brazil	Ten items
Chu et al. (2016)	Brand in twitter	US	Ten items
Wu et al. (2017)	Product and service	China	Five items
Japutra (2018)	Some product categories	UK	Four items
Lim et al. (2019)	branded apparel	Malaysia	Six items
Kumar and Nayak (2019) a	Brand community	India	Four items
Kumar and Nayak (2019) b	Brand community	India	Four items
Rajaobelina et al. (2020)	m-banking app	Canada	Four items

Source: data processed (2021)

the marketing literature review has been studied by several researchers (Shimp & Maden, 1988; Whang et al., 2004) through the consumer’s relationship with an object. Most researchers (Shimp & Maden, 1988; Whang

et al., 2004) used the theory of interpersonal love applied to consumer situations. Meanwhile, other researchers used the grounded theory (Batra et al., 2012) and parasocial (Fetscherin, 2014). The construct of feelings of love in the marketing literature was introduced by Shimp & Maden (1988) from the relationship between consumers and objects of consumption (products, brands, shops, etc.) by using Sternberg’s (1986) theory of interpersonal love. Although the consumer-object relationship is qualitatively different from the person-to-person relationship, there are many similarities to all relationships between the consumer and the object of consumption (such as product, brand, store, commercial etc.). Three components of love in the context of consumption which are longing, likes and decisions/commitments determine the nature of consumer’s relationship with an object. Ahuvia (2005) also studied the concept of love in various objects of consumption. Ahuvia proposed that the consumer also felt love for an object other than people such as pets, computers, paintings, old cars and so on. Agreeing with Shimp & Maden (1988), in his subsequent research Ahuvia (2005) argued



(2004) showed a romantic relationship between consumers and products. Bikers' love for motorbikes is like a form of interpersonal love.

Furthermore, Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) introduced brand love as a new marketing construct that had a very strong affective or emotional focus on the brand. Brand love is the passionate and emotional feeling of a particular trade name. Brand love involves the integration of the brand into self and consumer satisfaction which is the result of a long-term relationship with the brand. However, brand love cannot fully fit into the form of interpersonal love due to the looser use of the word love in commercial products. Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen (2010) and Batra et al. (2012) stated explicitly that brand love was different from interpersonal love. Brand love and interpersonal love had different characteristics (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010 and Batra et al., 2012). Brand love is unidirectional while interpersonal love is two-way. The element of sexual intimacy (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) and altruistic from consumers on brands and emotional feelings from brands to consumers could not be found in brand love (Batra et al., 2012).

Batra et al. (2012) revealed that brand love represented a high-level construct driven by emotional relationship and an overall positive attitude towards brands. Brand love was not just an emotion of love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) that was short-term and episodic but a relationship that could last decades involving affective, cognitive and behavioral experiences (Batra et al., 2012). Love for brands that is not completely irrational also gets support from Sarkar, (2014) and Langner et al. (2015). Consumers will conduct a cognitive evaluation on a brand (Sarkar, 2014) and are more often driven by rational profit (Langner et al., 2015). However, brand love plays an important role in maintaining the consumer relationship with brands. As stated in previous research, brand love can influence consumers to speak positively to other consumers (Batra et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013), commitment,

willingness to pay premium prices (Albert & Merunka, 2013), brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2012 and Algharabat, 2017) and customer engagement (Prentice et al., 2019).

Therefore, conceptualization of brand love has been studied by several researchers using different theoretical basis such as theory of interpersonal love (2008; Whang et al., 2004; Albert et al., Sarkar et al., 2012; Rossiter et al., 2012), parasocial (Fetscherin, 2014) and the grounded theory approach (Batra et al., 2012). Brand love has become an important topic of marketing but there are just a few agreements on brand love (Albert et al., 2008). Based on the literature conducted, brand love includes:

The long-term relationship with the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2009; Sarkar et al., 2012; Batra et al., 2012).

Involving emotional and rational relationships (Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar, 2014; Langner et al., 2015).

Having affective and cognitive consistency (Fournier, 1998; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), a certainty, more frequent thinking and discussion on the object of attitude (Batra et al., 2012).

Predicting the behaviors of brand in the future such as speaking positively to other consumers (Batra et al., 2012, Albert & Merunka, 2013), commitment, willingness to pay premium prices (Albert & Merunka, 2013), brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2012 and Algharabat, 2017) and customer engagement (Prentice et al., 2019).

From our literature review based on Table 4, we assume that love includes emotional and rational relationships from a long-term relationship with the brand. Brand love arises from a long history with brands involving affective, cognitive and behavior (Fournier, 1998; Batra et al., 2012). Thus, supporting Batra et al. (2012), brand love is a high-level construct driven by emotional relationships and overall positive attitudes towards brands.

#### **Brand Love Measurement**

Construct of love already started from the

**Table 4.** Dimensions and Operationalization of Brand Love

Author	Dimension	Scale	Context	Product category
Carroll & Ahuvia (2006)	Uni-dimensional	Five-point Likert type scale	-	Consumer package goods
Albert et al. (2008)	Multidimensional: Passion • Duration of the relationship, Self-congruity, Dreams, Memories, Pleasure, Attraction, Uniqueness, Beauty, Trust, Declaration of affect	-	Consumers in France and U.S.	Shoes, car, lingerie, wristwatch, perfume, food, etc
Albert et al. (2009)	Multidimensional: - Passion: Duration, Dream, Memories, Intimacy, Uniqueness. - Affection: Idealization, Pleasure	Ten-point Likert type scale		Clothes, perfume, grocery, car, cosmetics, etc
Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen (2010)	Uni-dimensional Two items: - expressed love - sense of loss in case of unavailability.		Australia	The brand of an iconic product category owned by consumers.
Sarkar (2011)	Bi-dimensional: Passion and Intimacy	Five-point Likert type scale	undergraduate student in Indian universities	Product category that consumers remember
Rossiter (2012)	Using C-OAR-SE based measure	Five categories of representative answers “hate”, “dislike”, “neutral”, “liking”, and “love”.	German	Laundry detergent, coffee, and computers, fashion clothing category
Fetscherin (2014)	Interpersonal love (Hendrick & Hendrick 1986; Lee 1977) Parasocial love (Perse & Rubin 1989)	Five-point Likert type scale	USA and Japan	Car

Bagozzi et al. (2017)	Multidimensional: Self-brand integration, Passion-driven behaviors, Positive emotional connection, Long-term relationship, Anticipated separation distress Attitude valence	Seven-point Likert type scale.	USA	Popular clothing brand
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Source: data processed (2021)

research on the consumer relationship with the object in Shimp & Maden's (1988) research. Shimp & Maden (1988) adapted the theory of interpersonal love (Sternberg, 1986) person-to-person to define the characteristic of consumer relationship with the objects of consumption. Three components of love adopted by Sternberg (1986) which are intimacy, passion and decision/commitment become longing, like and decision/commitment. However, the research was still conceptual, so that the development and empirical test related to the construct validity is still proposed for further research. Continuing to measure love in products, Whang et al. (2004) developed a multidimensional measurement of love that was adapted directly from the interpersonal love style (Lee's, 1977), namely passionate (Eros), possessive (Mania), and selfless (Agape).

Furthermore, several researchers started to specifically develop measurements for brands as shown in Table 4. Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) developed quantitatively uni-dimensional measure on love construct of the consumer who was satisfied with a particular brand. The measurement model focuses on the affective components that consist of passion, attachment, positive evaluation, positive emotions and declaration of love. The construct test has fulfilled good discriminant validity, but the use of uni-dimension becomes a limitation when it is associated with the use of multidimensional interpersonal love literature (Albert et al., 2009; Sarkar et al., 2012). Additionally, the measurement overlaps with the attachment construct. This is because Thomson et al. (2005) use love in the attachment dimension, while Carroll and

Ahuvia (2006) use attachment in the brand love dimension.

Overcome any overlaps with other constructs, Albert et al. (2009) developed the feeling measurement of brand love by using the qualitative and quantitative approach to explore the concept of love. Albert et al. (2008) stated eleven dimensions that described the feeling of brand love and a special kind of relationship they have with the brands they like. Those eleven dimensions include cognitive and affective components that comprise passion, duration of the relationship, self-congruity, dreams, memories, pleasure, attraction, uniqueness, beauty, trust and declaration of affect. Meanwhile for attachment, Albert et al. (2008) did not keep it as component of brand love. Moreover, Albert et al. (2009) also redeveloped the measurement scale of brand love based on the integration of various theories of interpersonal (the Passionate Love Scale, Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; the Triangular Theory Love Scale, Sternberg, 1986; and the Romantic Love Scale Rubin, 1970) and the result of his study exploration. Consumers' real feelings of love for some brands are measured through 22 items and seven dimensions namely Uniqueness, Pleasure, Intimacy, Idealization, Duration, Dream and Memories. The seven factors offer a second order solution with two factors labelled Passion and Affection.

Several other researchers (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen 2010; Sarkar et al. 2012; Rossiter et al. 2012) focused on developing a measurement scale for brand love romantic to overcome overlaps with other constructs based on the theory of interpersonal love. Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen (2010) developed the measurement of

brand love through two items namely expressed love which included in passionate love scales (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) and feeling of loss from passionate or romantic love (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; Rubin, 1970) to overcome any overlap with emotional attachment. However, as well as Carroll & Ahuvia's (2006) measurement, Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen's (2010) measurement was also uni-dimensional. Considering the lack of theory and methodology in the conceptualization of brand love, Sarkar et al. (2012) redeveloped the concept and measured consumer's feeling of love to a brand based on Sternberg (1986) Triangular Theory. Sarkar et al. (2012) re-conceptualized the brand love romantic based on interpersonal emotions and consumption. The romantic brand love is a multidimensional construct measured from two factors namely intimacy and passion. However, Rossiter et al. (2012) stated that the use of verb "love" on person-to-person could not be directly applied to an object like brand. The verb "love" has various meanings when it is used for different objects. Rossiter et al. (2012) developed a new construct measure of brand love with C-OAR-SE based. The measure of answer category is determined to define feelings from hatred to love so that the product (choices from respondents) is differentiated according to the quadrant of the answer category. Another researcher Fetscherin (2014) used items from the love attitude scale by Hendrick & Hendrick (1986).

The use of interpersonal love theory in the research of brand love is already a standard, but the emotional traits equality of interpersonal love and brand love is still a debate (Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2015). Brand love has different characteristic from interpersonal love so that the researchers need to be discreet in transferring directly the theory and scale of interpersonal love to brand love (Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2015). However, Batra et al. (2012) argued that the researchers were still allowed to use the theory of interpersonal love as a source of hypothesis or supporting evidence in examining the consumer-brand relationship. Through qualitative study, Batra et al.

(2012) revealed elements of brand love prototype that produced seven core elements namely self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence (strength), and anticipated separation distress. Meanwhile, another researcher Fetscherin (2014) developed another measurement adopted from parasocial love scale (Perse & Rubin, 1989) as comparison of interpersonal love scale (Hendrick & Hendrick 1986; Lee 1977).

Furthermore, Bagozzi et al. (2017) redeveloped the scale that was parsimony and has been validated from the development of Batra et al. (2012) measurement scale which was only conceptual. The measurement scale of brand love is multidimensional that consists of three multi-level versions which are 26, 13 and 6 items. The differences of those three versions are based on two things that are the number of variances explained by each measure and the sub-dimensions in brand love. As well as the research of Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) and Batra et al. (2012), this study put the dimension of emotional attachment in the measurement scale of brand love.

Based on literature review, it can be revealed that the theory of interpersonal love is already used as basis to develop the measurement scale of brand love that is multidimensional (Whang et al., 2004; Albert, 2008, 2009; Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar et al., 2012; Bagozzi et al., 2017). Furthermore, there was attachment dimension that has been used by researchers in measuring brand love (such as Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Bagozzi et al., 2017). That overlapped when the love item has also been used by previous researchers (i.e. Thomson et al., 2005) in measuring brand attachment. Nevertheless, several researchers (Albert et al., 2008, 2009; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) previously have conducted another review to examine the scale item of brand love and distinguish it from other constructs. Albert et al. (2008) conducted a review related to measuring brand love. Meanwhile, other researchers separated love and attachment items and did



not use attachment as a measure of brand love (Albert et al., 2009; Bergkvist & Bech-larsen, 2010; Loureiro et al., 2012).

The conceptualization of the use of measuring brand love has not been agreed to at this moment although brand love has become an important topic in current research. In general, as previously discussed, brand love has been measured using uni-dimensional and multidimensional scales. First, brand love was measured using a uni-dimensional measurement developed by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006). Second, brand love was measured using a multidimensional measurement developed from several researchers such as Albert et al. (2009); Sarkar et al. (2012); Batra et al. (2012) and Bagozzi et al. (2017).

Initially, the measurement of brand love was developed by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) which was uni-dimensional with ten-item scale. The research was conducted in the context of consumer-packaged goods that have been purchased regularly over a long period of time. The

result shows that the measurement scale is already validated empirically as predictor variable of brand love. Moreover, Table 5 shows that that uni-dimensional measurement item has been used in the research of brand love in the various contexts such as context of brand/company, context of service-brand/company and platform online. Most research was conducted to respondents who already use the brand, service or platform (social media). Item was measured using Likert scale adopted with the number of items that vary for each researcher. The use of a different number of items is due to the presence of an item (which is attachment) in the measurement of brand love that is considered as independent construct, the use of an item that simply captures love with the brand (Loureiro et al., 2012), or a deleted item because it has factor loading  $<0,5$  in the context of the research (eg. Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Islam & Rahman, 2016; Wallace, 2014; 2017).

Some researchers have used the uni-dimensional measurement of Carroll & Ahuvia

**Table 5.** Summary of Past Empirical Studies for Brand Love

Author	Dimension	Scale	Context	Sample	Product category
Loureiro et al. (2012)	Unidimensional- Five items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Portugal	Car owners	Car
Hwang & Kandampully (2012)	Unidimensional- Five items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point Likert type scale	United States	Student	Luxury fashion
Ismail & Spinelli (2012)	Unidimensional-seven items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point Likert-type scale	UK	Student	Fashion brand
Albert et al. (2013)	Multidimensional (Albert et al. 2009)	-	France	Consumer	Consumer's favorite product brand category
Chen et al. (2014)	Unidimensional (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point Likert type scale	Facebook users in Taiwan	Facebook users	Facebook page
Wallace et al. (2014)	Unidimensional- Eight items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Ireland	Students (Facebook users)	Fashion brands, sportswear, soft drinks, alcohol, retailers, music, including artists & equipment, etc
Sarkar and Sreejesh (2014)	Unidimensional- Ten items. (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	India	Owners of premium car brands	Car

Vernuccio et al. (2015)	Unidimensional- Seven items. (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Europe and USA	Facebook fans' pages	Facebook fan pages (Alcohol & energy drinks, Automotive, Fashion brands, etc)
Islam & Rahman (2016)	Unidimensional- Eight items. (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	India	Students	Fashion apparel brands
Karjaluo et al. (2016)	Unidimensional- Nine items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Finnish	Consumers	Popular brand: Apple, Nike and Adidas
Roy et al. (2016)	Unidimensional (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006) Ten items	Seven-point Likert type scale	-	Online marketplace shopper.	Online retailer brands
Algharabat (2017)	Unidimensional- Ten items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point Likert type scale	Jordan	Students	Brands liked and followed on Facebook page.
Huang et al. (2017)	Unidimensional- Five items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Taiwan	Mobile phone customers	Mobile phone
Wallace et al. (2017)	Unidimensional- Eight items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point Likert type scale	Ireland	Facebook users who "Liked" brands	Fashion, haircare and cosmetics, music, food and tea/coffee, sport, alcohol, sportswear
Hsu & Chen (2018)	Unidimensional Ten items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Seven-point, Likert-type scales	Taiwan	Online bookstore users	online bookstore
Hegner et al. (2017)	Multidimensional 22 items (Albert et al. 2009)	seven-point scale	Netherlands	Respondents that indicated to have a favourite fashion brand	Fashion brand
Loureiro et al. (2017)	Bagozzi et al. (2014)	seven-point Likert-type scale	Germany	Online users (millennial generation)	Brand page on Facebook
Bairrada et al. (2018)	26-item scale, is from Batra et al. (2012) and Bagozzi et al. (2017).	seven-point Likert type scale	Portugal	Students and non-students	
Junaid et al. (2019)	Unidimensional (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006) Ten items	Five-point Likert type scale	Pakistan	Muslim smartphone users	Smartphone brands
Prentice et al. (2019)	Multidimensional Bagozzi et al. (2017)	Five- Likert type scale	Europe	Passengers who have experienced air travel with low cost carriers and existing airlines	Airline
Rodriguez & Rodriguez (2019)	Multidimensional Bagozzi et al. (2017)	Five-point Likert type scale	Portugal and Sweden	Students	Traditional luxury and neo-luxury brands from different categories product.

Amaro et al. (2020)	Unidimensional- seven items (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006)	Five-point Likert type scale	Europe	A large group of international students	Destination
Khan et al. (2020)	Multidimensional Sarkar et al. (2012)		Malaysia	Muslim users of halal branded restaurants	Restaurants

Source: the authors

(2006) as stated above; however, other research use the multidimensional measurement to measure the brand love. Like uni-dimensional measurement, the multidimensional measurement scale of brand love is also used to measure love in various contexts such as context of brand/company, context of service and online platform. Albert et al. (2009) measurement scale was already used by Hegner et al. (2017) in the context of fashion brand in Netherlands. The whole items (22 items) were measured using a Likert scale and the result showed that Albert (2009) measurement scale can be used in the context of love for fashion. Fetscherin et al. (2014) adopted the scale of interpersonal love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Lee, 1977) and parasocial love (Perse & Rubin, 1989) to measure love for favourite brand with broad product categories such as soft drinks, mobile phones, (running) shoes, cars in Brazil. The result showed that the item has been well validated.

Furthermore, the item from the scale development of interpersonal love scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) was used again by Fetscherin (2014) in the context of favourite brand which was cars in US and Japan. The research also used Likert scale and the result also shows that the item is well-validated. Items of other multidimensional measurements are measurement scales from Batra et al. (2012) and Bagozzi et al. (2017). The multidimensional scales from Batra (2012) and Bagozzi (2017) have already used in the context of brand/company and service of the company. The measurement scales of the research were measured using Likert scale. The research was conducted to respondents who loved the brand, ever used the brand, or have experienced service of the brand/company.

### Boundaries of BL and BA

BA and BL are the main factors in building the consumer relationship with the brand. Several researchers (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Thomson et al., 2005) have considered the two items to be identical. This is because those two variables (BA and BL) are constructs that have emotional content and are part of one of them. Thomson et al. (2005) defined that attachment was an emotion-laden target specific bond between a person and a specific object which was measured from affection (affectionate, loved, peaceful, friendly), connection (attached, bonded, connected) and passion (passionate, delighted, captivated). Other than that, Fournier (1998) defined love as a rich affective foundation. Moreover, Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) also defined brand love as the level of passionate emotional attachment that a satisfied customer had with a particular trade name as measured through affective components consisting of passion, attachment, positive evaluation, positive emotions and declaration of love.

The recognition of affective dimensions, which is love on Thomson et al. (2005) and attachment on Carroll & Ahuvia (2006), has showed blurred boundaries between love and brand attachment. Although both constructs involve in emotions, but the two have different focuses (Park et al., 2013; Palusuk et al., 2019). Brand attachment is the strength of the bond that connects the brand with oneself (Park et al., 2010) when the brand is relevant to the self, able to represent the consumers and able to increase the fulfillment of goals (Schultz et al., 1989; Park et al., 2018). Brand attachment is measured by the brand self-connection and prominence (Park et al., 2010). Meanwhile, brand love is driven by an emotional relationship and an ove-

rall positive attitude towards brands (Albert et al., 2009; Sarkar et al., 2012) when brands can provide intrinsic rewards such as providing happiness or excitement, or extrinsic rewards (such as great quality). Brand love is measured by passion (duration, dream, memories, intimacy, uniqueness) and affection (idealization, pleasure) (Albert et al., 2009).

Furthermore, they also have a different origin and intensity of strength. On the attachment, the bond is strong due to the close relationship between the brand and self and the prominent thoughts and memories. The perceived attachment strength is relatively based on thoughts, feelings and behaviors towards a particular object (Schultz et al., 1989) or varies in strength (Thomson et al., 2005). Meanwhile on love, a strong bond is based on the emotional relationship (affection and passion) and positive attitude towards the brand. Brand love includes affective and cognitive consistency (Fournier 1998; Carroll & Ahuvia 2006), greater attitude extremity and intensity, more certainty and importance, affective–cognitive consistency, more frequent thinking and talking about the attitude object (Batra et al., 2012). In addition, the strong feelings consumers had for brands in brand love indicated that brand love had a very deep, lasting and irreplaceable strength (Albert et al., 2013), so that love would apply to a much more limited number of brands than attachment. Based on these evidences, brand attachment and brand love are two different but closely related constructs which imply that an increase in one variable (brand attachment) can influence the increase of the other variable (brand love) (as in Loureiro et al., 2012).

The previous conceptual discussion showed that brand attachment and brand love were two constructs that both had emotional content and influenced subsequent behavior to maintain the relationship with brands. Using self-expansion theory, brand attachment and brand love are conceptualized as cognitive and affective bonds that contain motivation or desire to incorporate

the brand into their self-concept and invest their resources in the brand in the process of self-expansion. While using the attachment theory, both constructs are conceptualized as emotional bond in consumers that can predict the quality of interaction or consumer behaviour on the brand. Despite the difference of researchers in using theoretical framework to explain brand attachment and brand love, it has been recognized that brand attachment and brand love are two constructs that have emotional content and influence behavior to maintain closeness to the brand.

However, academics and managers need to understand differences between the two constructs so as not to be confusing and lead to poor understanding of the consumer-brand relationship. Brand attachment is basically a cognitive and affective state in the form of a bond that connects the brand with oneself. Those feelings and thoughts are obtained from a sense of familiarity and comfort in the brand. The better known brand will increase positive memory and psychological comfort. In contrast to brand attachment, brand love is a very rich and much stronger affective state that results from the long-term relationship between consumers and the brand (Fournier, 1998; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). In addition to strong affective state, BL includes cognitive consistency, great strength of positive attitudes, higher certainty and interest, more frequent thinking and talking about the object of attitude. Brand love comes from strong emotional relationship and positive attitude towards brands (Batra et al., 2012). Furthermore, attachment is considered as an antecedent of brand love which explains that the stronger attachment will turn into love over time. Consumers who attach to the brand are characterized by feelings and thoughts that the brand is part of the self and a strong positive memory of the brand. Over time they do not want other brands (Loureiro et al., 2012), have strong desires, perceive the brand as irreplaceable and experience anxiety when the brand is not available (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh 2020).



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Brand attachment and brand love are constructs that have a role in maintaining relationship with the brand. The difference in intensity between the two emotionally charged constructs has distinguished them from one another. In marketing practice, this paper contributes to a better understanding on the behavior that comes from the relationship of consumer-brand. Understanding consumer behavior should understand the affective effect and cues of consumers. When a brand can evoke strong and positive feelings and memories, it can motivate consumers to maintain their closeness to the brand, increase commitment, advocate and voluntarily tell about the brand. Marketing communication and positioning play an important role in increasing emotional responses to build long-term relationship with consumers. Future studies may pursue empirical comparisons between attachment and love in brand. The cognitive-affective approach seems more relevant to measure brand attachment. Meanwhile for brand love, the multidimensional measurement approach seems more relevant with more attention to attachment items in order to avoid being confused with brand attachment measures. In addition, upcoming studies may also explore antecedents and consequences of brand attachment and brand love in a model.

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