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BRAND LOVE & THE IDEAL SELF; AN INVESTIGATION INTO ANTHROPOMORPHIC FUNCTION IN BRAND LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

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i. Dedications/Acknowledgements

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i. Dedications/Acknowledgements

ii. Resumo

"Esta investigação centra-se nos tipos de relacionamentos humanos aplicados às marcas através da relação de amor (afeição) à marca. O estudo considera dois grupos em análise: os que consideram ter amor (afeição) à marca e os que não têm. Considerando estes dois grupos comparam-se constructos chave no contexto da relação entre a marca e o consumidor. Apesar de não se terem encontrado diferenças significativas nos constructos chave, em termos demográficos é possível verificar alguns elementos diferenciadores que se encontram espelhados nos resultados desta dissertação."

Palavras-chave: brand love, comprometimento emocional, psicologia positiva, conceito do eu ideal.

JEL: **M300** Marketing and Advertising: General

JEL: **M390** Marketing and Advertising: Other

Abstract

"This investigation looks into the function of human style relationship facets when applied to brands through a brand love relationship. The investigation takes two groups of questionnaire respondents, those who self report a brand love relationship and those who do not, and compares them over a series of Likert scores testing on key human relationship facets that run along side a brand love relationship, such as the ideal self and positive psychology. Although no significant effects were found through the three key variables, the descriptive statistics showed higher averages where expected for the groups. Demographic analysis showed up two significant affects through education level, which are shown in the results."

Keywords: Brand Love, Emotional Commitment, Positive Psychology, Ideal Self Concept

JEL: **M300** Marketing and Advertising: General

JEL: **M390** Marketing and Advertising: Other

1. Introduction

From; David Hume's 'Natural History of Religion'; Section III, 1757.

"There is an universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. We find human faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, ascribe malice or good will to every thing, that hurts or pleases us. The unknown causes, which continually employ their thought, appearing always in the same aspect, are all apprehended to be of the same kind or species. Nor is it long before we ascribe to them thought and reason and passion, and sometimes even the limbs and figures of men, in order to bring them nearer to a resemblance with ourselves" (p.20-21).

Modern marketing is a field with a fraction of the simplicity it could be attributed with decades, or even years ago. Markets have exploded and flooded, every conceivable avenue has been explored to reach the consumer, and that consumer to reach whom is the goal has arguably become wiser and more experienced in the *'tricks of the trade'* used by marketers and marketing companies to reach and influence them.

Statistics are commonly published, revised, and republished on advertising exposure in the modern world, these figures in past years have varied from anywhere to 300 to 20,000+ exposures daily from various estimates. These figures must of course take into account the fact that only a small percentage of what we 'see' per day is actually consciously processed, illustrated famously in the classic *'consciousness is the tip of the iceberg'* principle (Freud 1938).

Many leaders in the marketing field have described this *'competition for attention'* style of advertising; at least as far as non-amenity products are concerned, to have had its day. To successfully market products in the current marketplace environment, marketers must employ more rounded and organic strategies involving *'customer relationship management'* (CRM) and *'relationship marketing'* processes.

Customer relationship marketing/management, or CRM, is a business process, used specifically for the purposes of this paper, in marketing and branding. Facets of the process are in which relationships with clients, customer loyalty and brand value are all built through various marketing strategies. CRM allows brands to develop long-term relationships with established and new customers. Along a similar line, relationship marketing can be seen as a facet of CRM that focuses on customer loyalty and long-term customer engagement rather than shorter-term goals like new customer acquisition and individual sales targets. The aim of relationship marketing (and indeed CRM) is to create strong, even emotional, customer connections to a brand that can lead to ongoing business, free word-of-mouth promotion and information from customers that can generate leads.

These two concepts are absolutely fundamental to the research proposed, the definition mentioned above highlights strong, emotional customer connections, which is a key idea in the research being undertaken.

Modern marketing must focus not so much on developing exposure for their product within the marketplace, as in the '*classic*' style, but they must attempt to engineer a relationship between the brand itself and the consumer they want to reach. This relationship can be achieved through many avenues and strategies under the wider umbrella term of '*brand management*'.

Brand management is an important concept to define and can be defined as; '*the analysis and planning on how a brand is perceived in the market*'. Developing a good relationship with the target market is absolutely essential for good brand management. The intangible elements of brand management that we are focusing on in this investigation are the experience that the consumer has had with the brand, and vitally, the relationship that they have with that brand.

This brings us to the concept of the '*marketing paradigm shift*' most famously first put forward by (Grönroos 1994; 1997) and heavily played upon ever since within the field. This paradigm shift refers specifically to the aforementioned more traditional style of marketing, also known as '*marketing mix*' marketing, to the more modern '*relationship marketing*' which we now see overwhelmingly as the more standard approach to marketing throughout the industry. It must be mentioned here though that of course the effective marketing style through industry is context specific to that industry itself, for example, many industries, especially those involving commitment on a personal level from consumer or provider, as an example, the service industry, have always valued the relationship between customer and client. However, in certain industries, the '*simple exposure*' premise to the consumer has always been and still is the most important factor, an example of this would be within certain commodity sectors.

The paradigm shift from traditional to relationship marketing can really be summised in a simple and sharp way; it can be viewed in simple terms as the shift of marketing from brand/product exposure focus, to brand/product relationship focus.

These concepts are being observed more and more as marketing modernizes and moves forward often closer to the field of psychology. Recognizing that the relationship between a consumer and a brand is much more than simply an economic transaction is absolutely vital to understanding, planning for and indeed capitalizing on these relationships, and indeed marketing successfully.

In terms of the literature, three vital facets have pointed out in the last two decades in relation to the progression of relationship marketing.

'A consumer's personality plays an important part in personal and brand relationships'

(Lin, 2010; Matzler, Bidmon & Grabner-Kräuter, 2006; Ozer, & Benet-Martinez, 2006; Rauschnabel, Ahuvia, Ivens, & Leischnig, 2013; Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007)

'Brands have personalities attributed to them and are contributing partners in consumer brand relations'

(Aaker, 1997; Aaker, & Fournier,1995; Fournier, 1998)

'The process of the anthropomorphisation of brands facilitates this'

(Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Agassi, 1968; Aggarwal &McGill, 2007,2012; Caporael, 1986; Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, 2007; Epley, Akalis, Waytz & Cacioppo, 2008; Epley, Waytz, Akalis & Cacioppo, 2008)

These three concepts are absolutely central to the purpose and aims of this investigation. The author intends to demonstrate, through the use of questionnaire response, a background in the necessary theory and specifically targeted questioning, that modern relationships with brands, specifically lifestyle brands, for the purposes of the investigation, run along the same lines and are strengthened by the same facets as human relationships.

This coming together of the fields of psychology and marketing is the future of effective marketing and selling, currently of a certain field of products, but eventually the author believes that this concept will spread to all areas of marketing.

The author postulates that within a few years, the leading and most forward thinking marketing organizations will be hiring psychologists to lead their communication effectively!

1.1 Aim

The aim of the proposed academic dissertation is one of a relatively simple endeavor. This can be summised as to;

*'Establish and analyse the existence of a **brand love relationship** from the consumer towards the brand, featuring the **pursuit of the ideal self** inspired by the concept of **positive psychology**.'*

It is important to mention that this can be taken on by establishing a significantly different response to a questionnaire designed to denote these effects between one group that self reports the relationship we are looking for, and a control group who do not.

To explain the aim in a broad way, we can summise several research questions to describe the effects that the investigation intends to look into;

RQ 1 – "Do consumer brand love relationships appear to mirror traditional human relationships, and is there a significant difference between a group that self reports to have a brand love relationship and a group that does not?"

RQ 2 – "Is pursuit of the ideal self a key significant factor?"

RQ 3 – "Is positive psychology a key significant factor?"

RQ 4 – "Are these effects significantly stronger over a certain gender, age group or educational level?"

The basic tenant of the paper is to suggest to the reader that a brand love relationship may be formed with a certain brand, due to the feeling of the consumer that this brand is in line with their picture of their own ideal self. This idea of their own ideal self is pursued because of the function of positive psychology, or the idea that people make a conscious or possibly unconscious decision to follow behaviours and strategies to improve themselves in an individual perspective, or move closer to their idea of their ideal self. These effects are

expected to be demonstrated by respondents who self-report themselves as having a brand love relationship and this is the effect the questionnaire is designed to test for.
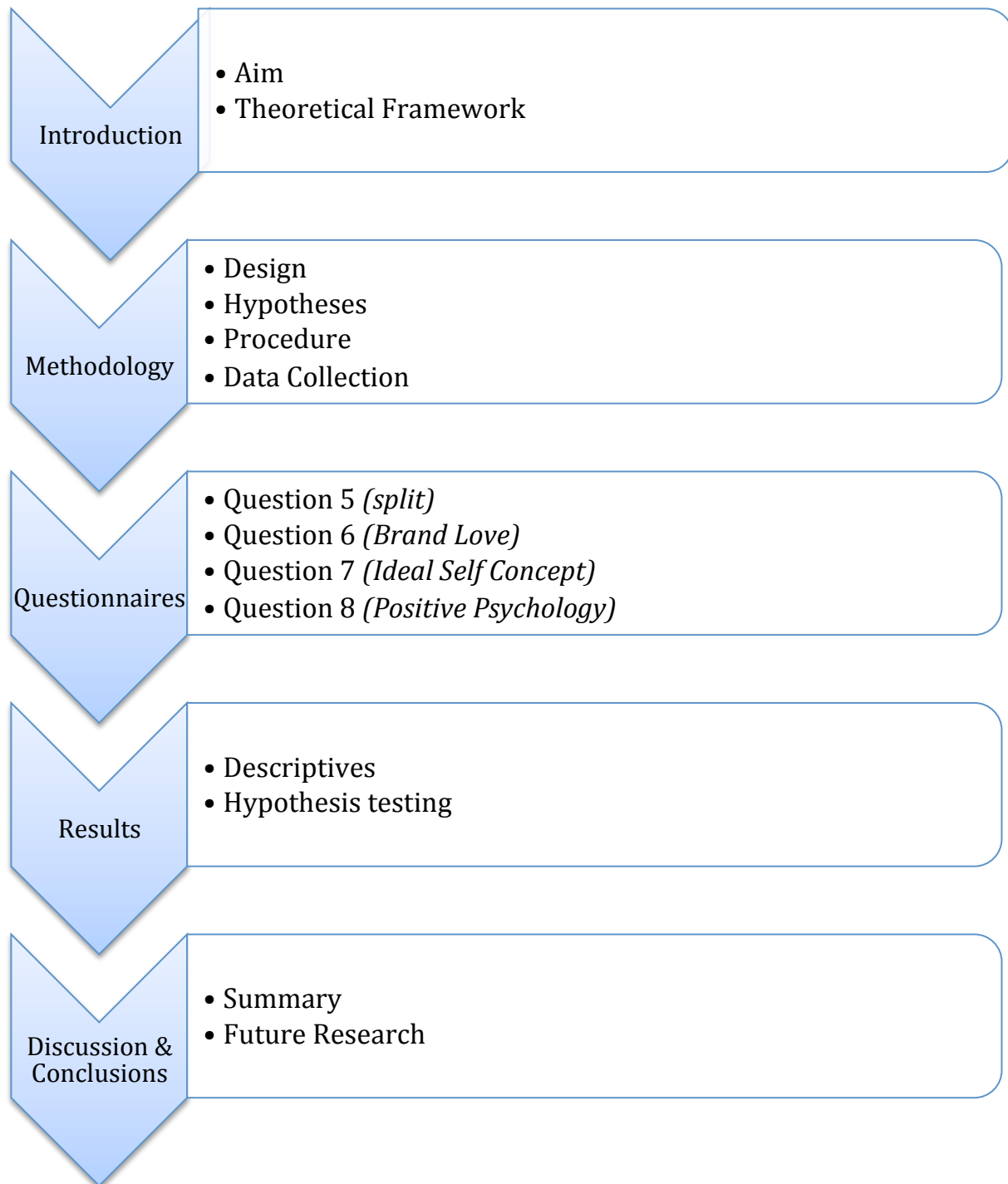
We expect to find effects showing that the group that self reports to have a brand love relationship will score significantly higher on the likert scale questionnaire, over questions that touch on measures of brand love relationships, the ideal self and positive psychology, all factors that have been shown to be tantamount and important for traditional relationships between human beings. We expect the responses of self-reported brand love relationship participants to be significantly higher than those of participants who did not self-report this relationship, thus entailing to our one tailed hypothesis as apposed to having a two tails.

In its simplest form, we are looking for an effect of participants with a self reported brand love relationship to score significantly more highly on a questionnaire with three sets of questions entailing human relationship facets than participants not self reporting having a brand love relationship. This is due to the postulated effect of human relationship styles being reflected directly onto brands, within a brand love relationship.

From this effect the author then hopes to draw conclusions along the lines of the same factors detailing the function of a human-to-human relationship and a brand love relationship.

1.2 Structure of the Dissertation

Figure 1; Structure of the Dissertation Diagram

Introduction
- Aim
- Theoretical Framework

Methodology
- Design
- Hypotheses
- Procedure
- Data Collection

Questionnaires
- Question 5 *(split)*
- Question 6 *(Brand Love)*
- Question 7 *(Ideal Self Concept)*
- Question 8 *(Positive Psychology)*

Results
- Descriptives
- Hypothesis testing

Discussion & Conclusions
- Summary
- Future Research

Source; Authors Elaboration

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Anthropomorphism in Branding

As this investigation looks in to the mirroring of relationships and commitments usually made between human beings in human relationships being applied to brands, an absolutely key factor underpinning our whole investigation is brand anthropomorphism.

"*Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human form or other characteristics to beings other than humans*" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1885).

Specifically, we are looking into the attribution of human characteristics, onto brands. This is a central factor and has been well researched and heralded as a key concept in the fields of psychology and marketing.

(Aaker and Fournier, 1995 and Aaker 1997) were the first to publish on the anthropomorphism of brands, specifically describing the phenomenon as;

'The process by which consumers permeate brands with human personality traits'

This investigation intends to test the postulation that love and commitment are human personality traits that can be and indeed are permeated into brands by the consumer. Using individual responses to questions to unpick this relationship in respondents, the investigation will look for an effect to confirm this.

The process of brand anthropomorphism to an extent, originally was born in the area of ancient philosophy. A complete summary and explanation of the history and development of theories of anthropomorphism can be found in (Epley et al. 2007); Epley describes the idea of anthropomorphism as;

'[...] the tendency to imbue the real or imagined behavior of nonhuman agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions.'

This is exactly the concept that we are looking for in the relationships between our participants and their selected and questioned brands, in the process of the study. Epley goes on to speak about the functions of '*reverse dehumanization'*, which is the exact process that is observed in branding relationships in the modern world. This effect runs along very similar lines to the anthropomorphic process that we are investigating, by applying actual human facets onto a inanimate feature, such as a brand, we are looking at the process of applying human relationships, psychological features, traits and commitments to these brands.

As previously mentioned in this section the action of this anthropomorphism in brands, put forward by (Aaker and Fournier, 1995; Aaker 1997) is very important in setting up the theoretical framework around the concepts that this study intends to test. A lot of areas have been covered more recently in terms of this anthropomorphism in branding. (Rossolatos 2012) discussed the practical applications of the use of this effect for more effective selling, (Brown 2010) looked into the literal applications of twinning the association of this brand with animal anthropomorphics (eg. Andrex puppies and Coca Cola polar bears) to increase marketing effectiveness; and authors such as (Aggarwal and McGill 2012) looked into the literal effect of placing human characteristics on brands and even going as far to interact with them in a human way, and form relationships. This is the facet of the human-brand relationship that it is key to establish for the continuation of this dissertation.

3.2 Brand Love

Importantly, before delving into the academics and specifics of the investigation; the basic, yet central question must be asked, "*What is a brand as far as this thesis investigation is concerned"*. This can be answered by the following definition;

Of concern to this concept, a brand is *'the mental expression of an experience offered by a product or service.'*

This is meaning that throughout this literature review and thesis, the author shall treat a brand as the non-physical representation of itself in the consumers mind. The brand is the personality, the anthropomorphized representation, the humanized depiction; and although this may not be entirely true of all brands, it is the focus of the brands that we address in this investigation.

Brand love has been defined many times in many papers by many authors; as it is a concept of personal differentiation it is somewhat difficult to pin down as a central concept. The most all encompassing and deep explanation of what brand love actually is by definition, comes from the publication '*Lovemarks*', a fantastic book written by Saatchi & Saatchi CEO Kevin Roberts (Roberts 2005). This book forms a valuable basis for many of the concepts within this thesis at it follows the same trail that we are following in order to represent the relationship to be tested in this investigation. Roberts highlights the three important facets of brand love in the book as; *mystery, sensuality and intimacy*, with a combination of all three of these forming a strong brand love.

Roberts explains the relationship between '*Lovemarks*' and other selling concepts through a simple schema based on respect and love. The full schema is as follows;

'Mere products (commodities) command neither love nor respect. Fads attract love, but without respect this love is just a passing infatuation. Brands attract respect, even lasting respect, but without love. Lovemarks, command both respect and love. This is achieved through the trinity of mystery, sensuality, and intimacy.'

Roberts goes well beyond the traditional views of branding in *'Lovemarks'*, he completely sets aside any possible idea that a consumer would treat a brand, rationally, economically or in a deterministic fashion. Roberts understands here that the consumer is not a number, not a statistic, but a living, breathing, inherently flawed entity that is driven not by logic, but by feeling and forces beyond the practical. This is the exact reason that branding and marketing even exist, if the consumer chose the most practical, logical and rational purchasing decision to make, then the field of marketing would be completely ineffective, unnecessary and non existent! Roberts rightly describes that this flawed nature of human beings, making it possible to manipulate, convince and influence them. is what marketing is for, and indeed why good brands succeed, and bad ones don't.

This conception will form a valuable and important pillar in this thesis research.

It is important to consider other more scientific and deterministic definitions of brand love from other authors, in order to pin down specifics and narrow the field of our research; such as;

'satisfied consumers' passionate emotional attachment to particular brands' (Carrol & Ahuvia 2006)

'Academic research on brand love or related constructs has also been substantial, finding it to be associated with positive word of mouth, brand loyalty, decreased price sensitivity, and forgiveness of brand failures, among other outcomes.' (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi 2012)

'[...] the authors discriminate brand love from three important relational constructs (i.e. brand trust, brand identification and brand commitment) and establish the relationships among the constructs' (Albert & Merunka 2013).

However, definitions such as these do not fully cover the concept that this study intends to test, to an academically accurate degree. A vital facet in defining this relationship is to remind the reader that humans tend to attribute human emotions and characteristics to a brand they love (Aaker 1997; Fournier 1998). This previously mentioned 'anthropomorphising' of brands is a concept of huge importance within the topic of this thesis.

Psychologically at least 'love' can be defined as a close and personal relationship with another, twinned with certain biological reactions in human neurobiology (Firestone at al. 2006), and it is this same reaction, in application to brands that this study intends to uncover.

3.3 Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg 1986; 2007)

As a precursor to 'Lovemarks' (Roberts 2005) and an important grounding in the basis of key concepts within this thesis we take the 'Triangular Theory of Love'; developed by Robert Sternberg in 1986 this sets down a background for the emotional commitment we see in human relationships, but importantly transferred onto human – brand relationships, more specifically brand love.

The triangular theory states that there are three key factors governing a love relationship, as we shall see again in similar form in relation to brands, from 'Lovemarks';

- *Intimacy – Which encompasses feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness.*

- *Passion – Which encompasses drives connected to both limerence and sexual attraction.*

- *Commitment – Which encompasses, in the short term, the decision to remain with another, and in the long term, plans made with that other.*

These three concepts, presented by Sternberg, although in this context applied to human relationships, form the basis of human style relationships with a brand ideally resulting in brand love.

The connection is not hard to make in terms of attributing a brand with personality, interacting with that brand personality, and then forming the same anthropomorphised relationships attached to that brand as one would with another human being. This process is well researched and supported as being a guiding light in brand love relationships (Aaker 1997; Kim, Han & Park 2001).

3.4 Emotional Commitment in Brands

Emotional commitment to a brand is a central tenant of this thesis, encompassing factors within both the 'Triangular Theory' to be referenced below, and 'Lovemarks' referenced above.

Firstly the existence of commitment is absolutely key to the human relationships from which this investigaton draws its theoretical base. The concept of the blurred lines between where human relationships stop in this area and where these human anticedents are passed on to brand relationships are well described in (Wetzels 1998). The function of commitment is described as follows;

'Commitment is based on constant weighing of the benefits of a relationship with a partner against the costs of that relationship'

This is a relatively shrewd and calculative description of commitment in a brand relationship however it describes excellently the responsibility that lies with the brand to keep the benefits of that relationship outweighing the costs. This is a key tenant in the function of the brand relationships this investigation intends to look into.

As we see here; emotional commitment is a key factor in the brand relationship; in the absence of commitment a brand love relationship can simply not form, and therefore the processes used to establish one cannot be logically studied. Emotional commitment to brands is also a key determinant of brand loyalty, these two concepts often go hand in hand, without commitment there is no loyalty and without loyalty there can be no commitment. The cognitive and affective process leading to emotional commitment are well described in (Amine 1998) where they are attributed to mimic human commitment, continuing a solid theme in the literature and within this thesis.

3.5 Attachment in Branding

Attachment theory is a very well populated area within academic literature, but a lot of this theory does not explicitly relate to the area with which this thesis is concerned; the area however, is covered in detail in (Bowlby 2005). However we must consider the theory of attachment that relates to a brand love relationship.

This more specific area, in terms of attachment to brands, is also an interesting and well-documented area in the literature, specifically (Grisaffe & Nyugen 2011) set out brand attachment as when customers develop deep emotional 'bonds' with brands. But the research in this thesis must go beyond this, entailing that we are attempting to establish the determinants in the formation of a brand love relationship, more specifically through 'positive psychology', attachment to the brand is absolutely essential.

(Patwardhan & Balasubramanian 2011) introduce an interesting concept in this area, related to brand love that is 'brand romance'; the paper explains the value of attachment in forming these relationships, but however goes more specifically to claim that brand romance is a much

more reliable, valid, and a more proximal construct that explains loyalty significantly better than attitudes. This stands in line with the other arguments that shall be presented in this thesis in that it values brand love (brand romance) more highly than simply the assembled factors of measurable traits towards a brand.

The attachment that we look into here is one of the key pillars in what forms a successful brand relationship. Without all of these factors together, a successful brand relationship simply cannot form effectively, this coming together of experience, loyalty, connection and trust.

3.6 Positive Psychology

The original part of this thesis comes from the area, not expressedly previously associated with brand love, but which the author feels is a very important modern tenant of the relationship, and this is the function of 'positive psychology' in marketing.

Positive psychology is an important mediating factor for this investigation as it is essential to propitiate the logic that the consumer wants to move towards their ideal self-concept. It is essential to establish that the consumer has a desire to move forwards, to better themselves.

Positive psychology is a recent branch of psychology whose purpose is to use scientific understanding and effective interventions to aid to satisfactory normal life rather than merely treating mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000).

Positive psychology related to marketing in that many brands currently use the technique, entwined with brand love of using positive psychology to sell '*the good life*' through their advertising.

Brands often no longer expressedly sell a product, but they sell the ideals around the product and this is what attracts customers. It can be seen in simple cases as with '*Nike*' selling shoes by association with athletes that are idolized, or by showing a person using these products in a context of a relatable and desirable life (see; references – Nike; BusinessInsider).

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi define positive psychology as;

'The scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life.'

This concept is one that the author believes to be inherently linked with the marketing of products that inspire strong brand relationships, and links to brand love. The author believes that this concept is a defining factor in complete and strong brand love relationships, as consumers relate best to products that are in line with their ideal self (Malär et al. 2011). This tenant is key and is described more compeltely in the 'Ideal Self' section below.

3.7 The Ideal Self Concept

The concept of the ideal self recognized in brands relates to the theory that human beings take steps that they believe will lead them closer to the ideal person that they want to be.

This process has many names throughout psychology but it best known as 'Self Actualisation' (Maslow 1943; 1950; 1965), first applied to brands in (Landon 1974), but is also known through its Freudian roots as the precursor to 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' (Festinger 1962) and 'Self Discrepancy Theory' (Higgins 1987); all of which lead to describe the inherent process all humans use to pursue the ideal way they want to be.

The function of the ideal self in branding that is key to our investigation is set out excellently in (Malär et al. 2011). Malär describes the function of this relationship as follows;

'Creating emotional brand attachment is a key branding issue in today's marketing world. One way to accomplish this is to match the brand's personality with the consumer's self. A key question, however, is whether the brand's personality should match the consumer's actual self or the consumer's ideal self.'

For the purposes of our investigation, this concept underpins one of the effects that we are looking for;

'On a general level, ideal self-congruence has the greatest impact on emotional brand attachment. Product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness increase the positive impact of ideal self-congruence and decrease the impact of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment'

This shows us that self-congruence between the ideal self-concept put forward by the consumer and the ideal image of themselves associated with that brand, is a very strong mediator of commitment to that brand. This process of 'mirroring' the person they want to be and how that brand can accelerate the consumer towards that end is one of the effects that we are testing.

The author believes that this concept is an incredibly important one for modern branding, advertising and brand love generation, the field is beyond the level of simply buying a product that is more exposed, but now consumers buy into a brand that they feel is in line with their lifestyle, or more specifically, the lifestyle they want.

3.8 Summary

These factors are vital to mention as they come together to form the basis for the actual statistical testing and scientific endeavor of this investigation. This investigation intends to show that humans who self report to having a brand love relationship, apply these aforementioned facets to their relationship with that brand.

The author intends to show that questions curtailing tenets of these features will cause a significant difference in scoring when participants are asked about these features and how they relate to their brands, between brand love and non brand love holding subjects. This will distinctively separate and expose the fact that brand love is trails from a human reaction to other humans, as these above facets show, and that this effect is actively transferred onto a brand, through a brand love relationship.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy

The study will work under an interpretist research philosophy, an approach to studying people, particularly within the social sciences, that starts from the position that the subject matter is inherently different from non-human subjects. It assumes that the world is dependent on the many subjective experiences of that world, and does not exist independently of experience.

An interpretist research philosophy works on the principle that all respondents have their own individual experiences of the tested effects and as the sample will be relatively small their responses can be analyzed both individually to some degree, and through the means of hypothesis and statistical testing. We will use the assembled individual responses to draw conclusions from, as statistically the similarity of individual responses is a more powerful measure, as it has more potential to differ. This means that effects found will be more significant that if the study had used methods to limit the responses of participants to the facets we are searching for.

4.2 Research Design

The research design is an experimental study designed to use a questionnaire to test a specific set of variables. Hypotheses about the effects investigated by the study will be tested and if supported, will support the academic claims made in the research proposal.

The questionnaire will have demographic questions on nationality, age group, gender and education level in order to group participants for later demographic analysis. It will follow these questions with one important 'group split' question (Q5) that will split our sample into two groups, forming our independent variable. These two groups will be; respondents that self report having a brand love relationship and respondents that do not report having a brand love relationship.

These separated groups will then form the split for our analysis of the three following question sets, drawing on features of brand love relationships (Q6), ideal self concept (Q7)

and positive psychology (Q8). These three facets are the key areas that we will test over to produce a significant or not significant representation of a human relationship extrapolated over a brand love relationship.

4.3 Timeline

The questionnaire will be online and available for a predetermined period of time in order to gain an appropriate number of responses to make the claims and analysis valid and feasible. The author has then set out a timeline including deadlines to complete sections of the paper, starting with the methodology, and theoretical framework, and ending with the statistical analysis, conclusions and abstract.

4.4 Sample

The sample will be a randomly selected voluntary sample, those agreeing to take part in the online questionnaire. Classification will divide the sample by gender, age range, education level and nationality for use in the analysis.

The sample will be split into the independent variable groups by the 'split question' (Q5); the answer to which will assign the respondent and their following data to one of the following groups for analysis (respondents that self report having a brand love relationship and respondents that do not report having a brand love relationship).

The sample consisted of 112 respondents, randomly sampled with a voluntary online questionnaire; the demographic of the sample was relatively varied through nationality, education level and age group and shall be described in the demographics section of the results. Age group, education level and gender will also be used statistically.

4.5 Hypotheses

Our main hypotheses for the function of the analysis were as follows;

H1 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of a brand love relationship than respondents who answered 'No'

H2 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of ideal self-concept than respondents who answered 'No'

H3 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of positive psychology than respondents who answered 'No'

H0 - Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 to have no significant differences in score over questions on brand love relationship/ideal self concept/positive psychology than respondents that answered 'No'.

These hypotheses cover the three main effects we are searching for in the analysis. We have postulated that our self reported brand love relationship group will score significantly higher across all measures in comparison to our self reported no brand love relationship group.

We also postulate statistical differences in the demographic groups that will be statistically tested, our hypotheses for these analyses are two tailed and as follows;

4.51 Gender Groups Demographics;

H4 – 'One gender group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 6' (two-tailed)

H5 – 'One gender group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 7' (two-tailed)

H6 – 'One gender group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 8' (two-tailed)

H02 – 'There will be no significant difference between scores of different gender groups on the corresponding question set'

4.52 Age Group Demographics;

H4 – 'One age group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 6' (two-tailed)

H4 – 'One age group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 7' (two-tailed)

H4 – 'One age group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 8' (two-tailed)

H03 – 'There will be no significant difference between scores of different gender groups on the corresponding question set'

4.53 Education Level Groups Demographics;

H4 – 'One education level group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 6' (two-tailed)

H4 – 'One education level group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 7' (two-tailed)

H4 – 'One education level group will score statistically significantly higher or lower in scores on question 8' (two-tailed)

H04 – 'There will be no significant difference between scores of different gender groups on the corresponding question set'

4.6 Apparatus

The questionnaire is an online form filled out by participants, with an introductory page, and a following demographic questions page, and questions five, six, seven and eight; these were followed by a thank you page at the end, thanking participants for their participation.

4.7 Procedure

Participants undertook the questionnaire online and in their own time, there was be no time limit, but participants may only fill out the questionnaire once each. Answers cannot be

changed or updated once the questionnaire is completed. The questionnaire is purely in online form and the participants had to voluntarily undertake the questionnaire in their web browser.

The participants were be asked a series of questions designed to test their attitudes towards a brand love relationship, their ideal self concept and the function of positive psychology. The participants will be unknowingly split on their answer to question 5;

"Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand? 'A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand."

The answer of 'Yes' or 'No' on this question (Don't Know' responses are excluded) separated the dataset into two distinct groups.

Group 1; 'Participants who consider themselves not to have a brand love relationship with a lifestyle brand'
Group 2; 'Participants who consider themselves to have a brand love relationship with a lifestyle brand'

This grouping is key in the testing of one of our key study variables, which is that participants who consider themselves to have a brand love relationship (with a lifestyle brand) will score highly on measures testing the participants anthropomorphic relationship with a brand. This means that participants who consider themselves to have a brand love relationship with a lifestyle brand, will score highly across measures testing brand love, emotional commitment, positive psychology and the ideal self; all facets that make up an organic human relationship. This is the key effect we are looking for in the investigation.

These two groups will then be analyzed; first demographically in order to validate the study in terms of sample breadth, and then statistically.

To test the hypotheses the author will statistically compare the scores of the two distinct groups in order to determine whether the means are significantly different from one and other. The author will then look into the analysis to determine whether one is significantly higher than the other, both within the three sets of questions (brand love/ideal self concept/positive psychology) and overall.

4.8 Data Collection

The data set was be automatically collected through the online survey form and transferred into an excel datasheet so it can be processed for analysis later on in SPSS. The form was hosted on the online platform SurveyMonkey, which had a user-friendly interface and was easy to collect rich data from. The dataset will contain the individual likert scores for each respondent on each individual question. This means that the questions can be analyzed individually as well as in grouped format. Each respondent's data will remain nameless and anonymous through the whole analysis process, with only the demographic information available to the analyst.

The data will be vetted for any errors, analyzed prior to statistical analysis to look for prior patterns and then will be statistically analyzed.

For analysis this excel databank can then be transferred into SPSS statistical software, in order to run tests.

4.9 Analyses

The bulk of the analysis was made using Mann Whitney U tests to compare the collective means of distinct groups. Groups 1 and 2 are our main analysis levels, and responses to question groups 6, 7 and 8 are also intercompared. Analysis into the demographics effects on the data was also tested in order to look for any patterns or effects that would be interesting to consider or study further.

Further Mann Whitney tests and Kruskal-Wallis tests are included to test the demographic information against response scores on the likert scale. This is because some of the demographic variables have two distinct groups (gender) and some have more than two (age group/education level).

4.10 Questionnaire

Data will be gathered with voluntary responses to an online questionnaire designed to gain measurable behavioural, attitudinal and classificational data.

The question set will propose questions that classify the respondents (to specific the dataset; age, nationality, gender) and will then pose attitudinal and behavioural questions in order to gain insight into the respondents attitude about the tested effects and behaviour in terms of the tested effects.

4.11 Question breakdown;

4.11a Classificational;

Gender (one selection);
- *Male*
- *Female*
- *Do not identify*

Age (one selection);
- *18 to 24 years*
- *25 to 34 years*
- *35 to 44 years*
- *45 to 54 years*
- *55 to 64 years*
- *65 years and over*

Nationality (Country of legal citizenship);
- Editable field for the respondent

Education Level (one selection);
- *Completed some high school*
- *Completed some Bachelor's degree*
- *Bachelor's degree*

- *Completed some postgraduate*
- *Master's degree*
- *Ph.D., law or medical degree*

4.11b Q5 Independent Groups Split Question;

Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand? 'A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand.';

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

This question was designed to determine whether the respondents consider themself to have a brand-love relationship, which is a key facet in answering our research questions. The answer to this question forms out independent variable, in that respondents who answer 'No' will have their data grouped into Group 1;

GROUP 1; 'Participants who consider themselves not to have a brand love relationship with a lifestyle brand'

Participants who answer 'Yes' will have their data grouped into Group 2;

GROUP 2; 'Participants who consider themselves to have a brand love relationship with a lifestyle brand'.

4.11c Question Groups Q6, Q7 and Q8

Response on a 5 point likert scale;

(1) Strongly Disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Neither Agree nor Disagree

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly Agree

To the following questions;

- "I would feel upset if this brand was to fail and close down"
- "I feel I have a personal relationship with this brand"
- "I feel I have an emotional commitment to this brand"
- "My feelings towards this brand are relatively consistent over time"
- "I feel I have a dialogue with this brand"
- "I am a satisfied customer of this brand"

These questions were designed to determine whether the respondent considered themselves to have a relationship with a brand that mimicked the function of an anthropomorphized relationship. The questions pick out personal, and emotional concepts and are designed to test for all the touchpoints of a classically human relationship, now applied to brands as mentioned in (Fournier, 1998).

Ideal Self Concept

'The Ideal Self is an idealised version of yourself created out of what you have learned from your life experiences, the demands of society, and what you admire in your role models'

On the same 5 point likert scale;

- "I consider myself to have an ideal-self concept"
- "I feel that lifestyle brands assist me in achieving my ideal self concept"
- "I believe this brand is in line with my ideal self concept"
- "I would favour this brand over others as it is in line with my ideal self concept"

These questions were designed to determine whether the respondent considered themselves to have an ideal self concept according to the definition from (Higgins, 1987). The questions were also designed to test whether the brand in question was key to that ideal self concept.

Positive Psychology

On the same 5 point likert scale;

- "I consider myself to be a self-improver"
- "I strive to achieve my ideal self concept"
- "I feel this brand assists me in pursuing my ideal self concept"
- "I feel it is natural to pursue your ideal self concept"

Finally, this set of questions was designed to test the respondents attitudinal level of 'positive psychology in relation to the brand in question according to the definitions set out in (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000).

4.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are not foreseen to be an issue in the study as all collected data is voluntarily given and will remain anonymous. On top of this none of the questions in the questionnaire have been considered to be divisive, personal or offensive in any way.
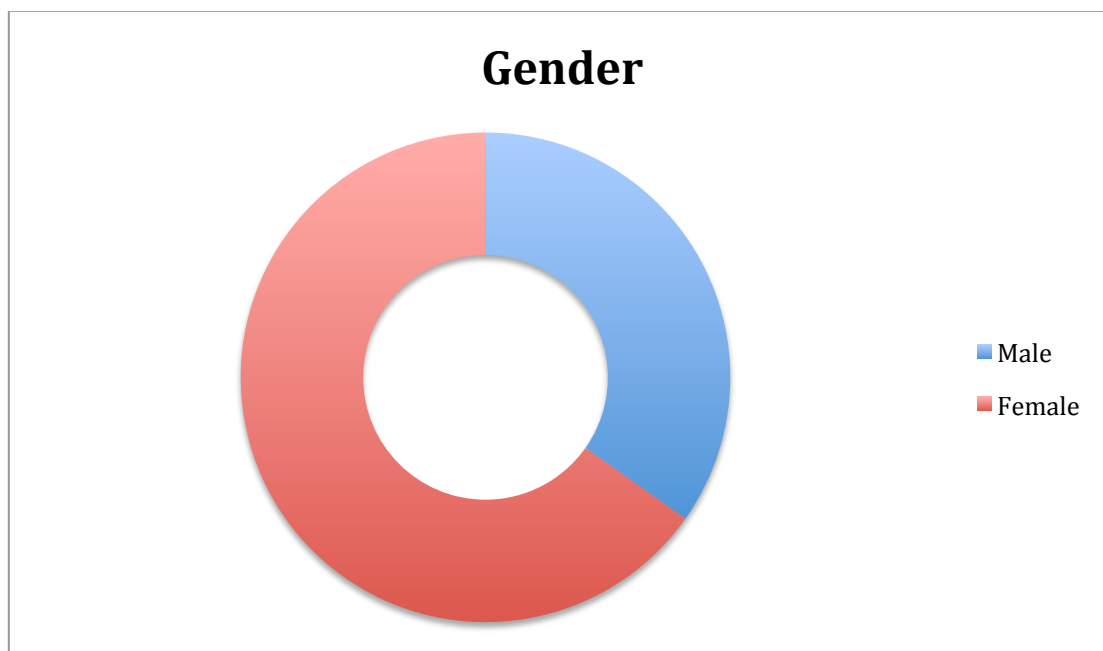
5. Results

After being collected and stored after the responses were given by participants, the data was then transferred into SPSS Statistical Software in order to carry out the analysis.

5.1 Sample Breakdown

As follows are the key demographics gained from the questionnaire;

Gender;

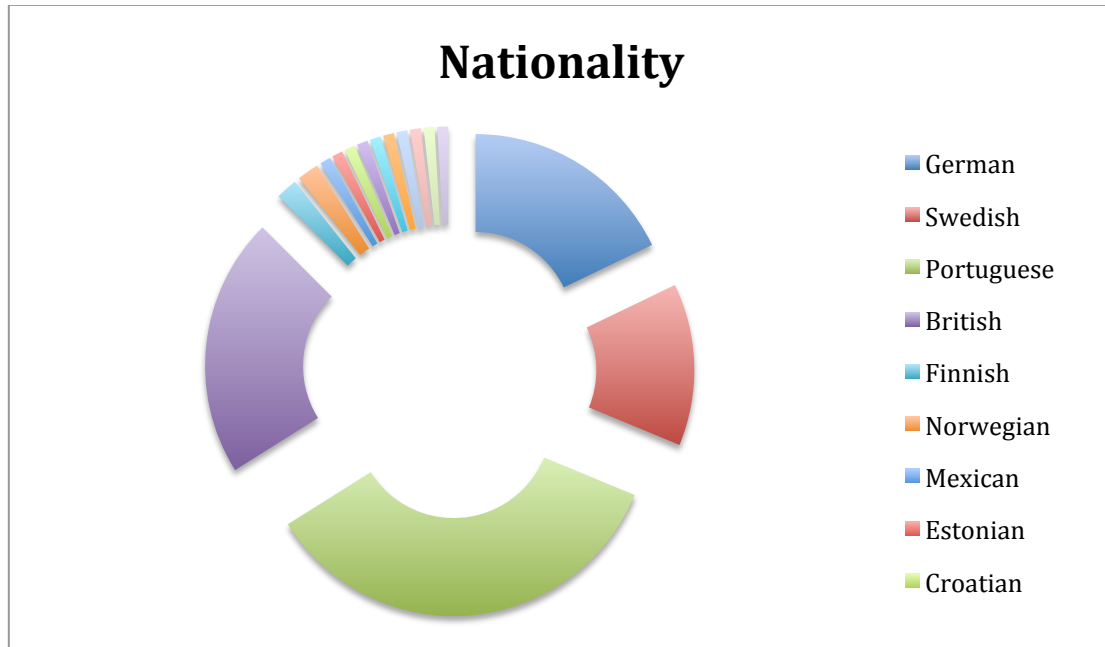*Figure 2; Sample Breakdown by Gender*

Source; Authors Elaboration

Of the total 112 respondents; 39 identified as male (34.8%), 73 identified as female (65.2%) and 0 did not identify (0%).

*Nationality;*

Figure 3; Sample Breakdown by Nationality

Source; Authors Elaboration

Of the 112 respondents; 20 were German (17.9%), 15 were Swedish (13.4%), 39 were Portuguese (34.8%), 24 were British (21.4%), 2 were Finnish and Norwegian respectively (1.8% and 1.8%) and 1 was Mexican, Estonian, Croatian, Italian, Bulgarian, South Korean, Danish, Chinese, French and a US citizen (each 0.9%).

Age;

Figure 4; Sample Breakdown by Age Group
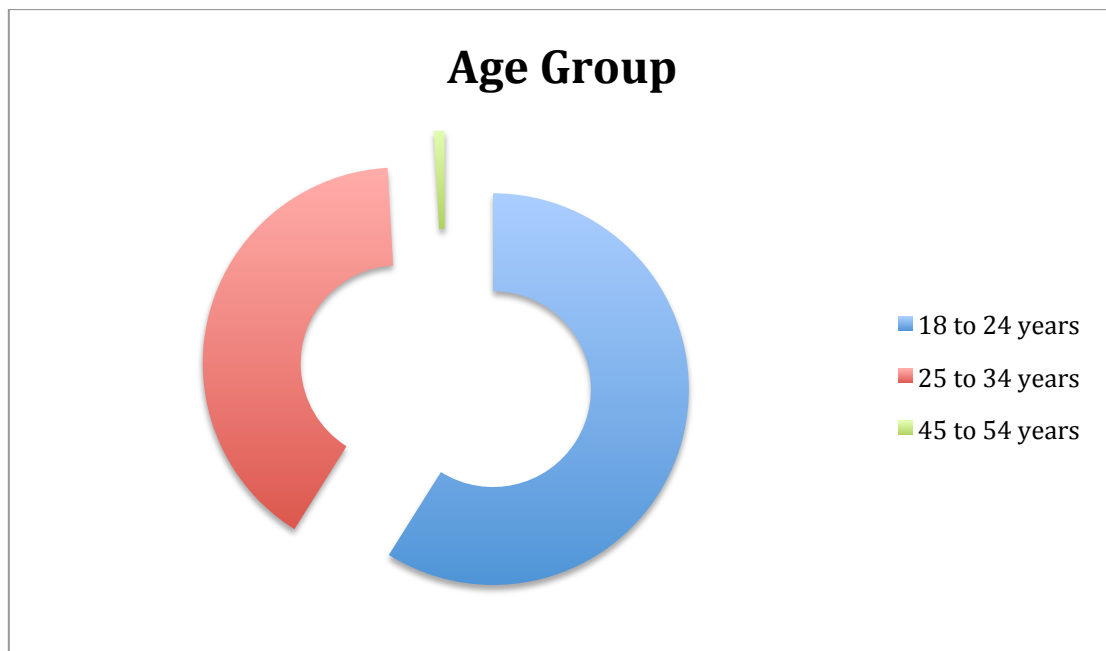
Source; Authors Elaboration

Of the 112 respondents; 66 were aged 18 to 24 years (58.9%), 45 were aged 25 to 35 years (40.2%) and one was aged 45 to 54 years (0.9%)

Education Level;

Figure 5; Sample Breakdown by Education Level

Education Level

- Some High School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some Postgraduate
- Master's Degree
- PhD, Law or Medical Degree
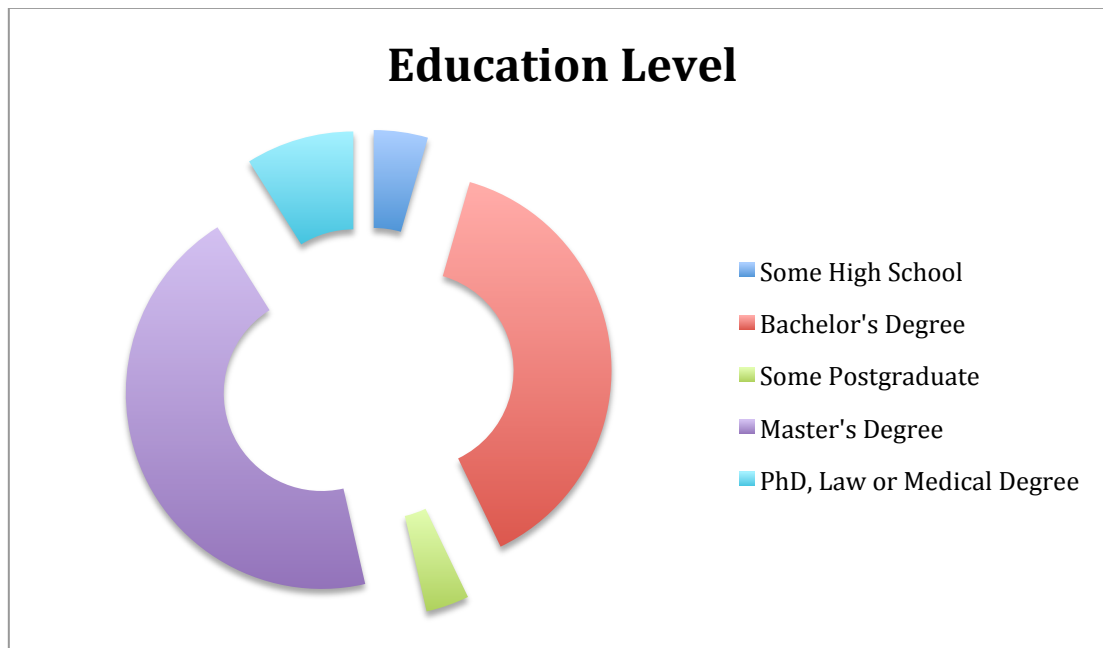
Source; Authors Elaboration

Of the 112 respondents; 5 had completed some high school (4.5%), 43 had completed a bachelor's degree (38.4%), 4 had completed some postgraduate study (3.6%), 50 had completed a master's degree (44.6%) and 10 had completed a Ph.D, law or medical degree (8.9%)

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Response to question 5;

"Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand?' A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand.'"

Our independent variables will be the answer Yes or No (excluding respondents with a Don't Know answer) to this question, and our dependent variables will be the scores produced on a likert scale in response to tenants of a brand love relationship, ideal self and positive psychology.

Of the 112 respondents; 67 answered 'Yes' to this question (59.8%), 45 answered 'No' (40.2%) and none answered 'Don't know'.

This means the analysis will include these 67 'Yes' responses in Group 2 (GR2) and the 45 'No' responses in Group 1 (GR1). Thus;
(N = 112)
(N, GR1 = 45)
(N, GR2 = 67)

Likert score averages;

From the questionnaire we also have pre-analysis averages and standard deviations;

5.21; Table 1; Question Set 1 (Q6.1 – Q6.6) GROUP 1

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q6.1	1.9	0.6
Q6.2	1.9	0.6
Q6.3	2.1	0.8
Q6.4	2.5	0.7
Q6.5	2.2	0.9
Q6.6	2.4	0.7

Source; Authors Elaboration

5.22; Table 2; Question Set 1 (Q6.1 – Q6.6) GROUP 2

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q6.1	4.3	0.6
Q6.2	4	0.9
Q6.3	3.9	0.9
Q6.4	4.2	0.7
Q6.5	3.7	0.9
Q6.6	4.3	0.6

Source; Authors Elaboration

5.23; Table 3; Question Set 2 (Q7.1 – Q7.4) GROUP 1

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q7.1	2.4	1.2
Q7.2	2	0.8
Q7.3	2.2	0.9
Q7.4	1.5	0.7

Source; Authors Elaboration

5.24; Table 4; Question Set 2 (Q7.1 – Q7.4) GROUP 2

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q7.1	3.9	0.9
Q7.2	3.8	0.8
Q7.3	4	0.9
Q7.4	4.1	0.7

Source; Authors Elaboration

5.25; Table 5; Question Set 3 (Q8.1 – Q8.4) GROUP 1

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q8.1	2	0.7
Q8.2	2.3	1
Q8.3	2.1	0.8
Q8.4	2.4	1.2

Source; Authors Elaboration

5.26; Table 6; Question Set 3 (Q8.1 – Q8.4) GROUP 2

Question	Mean Likert Score	SD
Q8.1	4	0.6
Q8.2	4.1	0.6
Q8.3	3.8	0.7
Q8.4	3.8	0.8

Source; Authors Elaboration

Statistical Analysis will determine whether the scores are statistically significant.

5.3 Statistical Analysis;

For statistical analysis it is intended to test the likert scores between two distinct groups; respondents that answered yes to the question;

"Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand? 'A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand."

This means our independent variables will be the answer Yes or No (excluding respondents with a Don't Know answer), and our dependent variables will be the scores produced on a likert scale in response to tenants of a brand love relationship, ideal self and positive psychology.

The main hypotheses for our investigation are therefore;

H1 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of a brand love relationship than respondents who answered 'No'

H2 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of ideal self-concept than respondents who answered 'No'

H3 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of positive psychology than respondents who answered 'No'

H0 - Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 to have no significant differences in score over questions on brand love relationship/ideal self concept/positive psychology than respondents that answered 'No'.

These hypotheses will be one tailed as due to prior research and the existing literature, the author expects an effect of respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 scoring significantly higher over all questions, than respondents who answered 'No'.

In order to test the basic research questions of this investigation, statistical analysis will be carried out in order to determine whether there is support for our hypotheses and therefore if there is support for our research question.

For the purposes of our analysis of the likert scores produced from our questionnaire, we must put forward our key variables.

To simplify and validate the analysis the dependent variable will be the likert score gained on each question, and on a secondary level each set of interrelated questions.

Brand Love Relationship

On the question; "Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand? 'A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand."

- *"I would feel upset if this brand was to fail and close down"*
- *"I feel I have a personal relationship with this brand"*
- *"I feel I have an emotional commitment to this brand"*
- *"My feelings towards this brand are relatively consistent over time"*
- *"I feel I have a dialogue with this brand"*
- *"I am a satisfied customer of this brand"*

Ideal Self Concept

- *"I consider myself to have an ideal-self concept"*
- *"I feel that lifestyle brands assist me in achieving my ideal self concept"*
- *"I believe this brand is in line with my ideal self concept"*
- *"I would favour this brand over others as it is in line with my ideal self concept"*

Positive Psychology;

- *"I consider myself to be a self-improver"*
- *"I strive to achieve my ideal self concept"*
- *"I feel this brand assists me in pursuing my ideal self concept"*
- *"I feel it is natural to pursue your ideal self concept"*

5.4 Hypotheses Testing;

The main effect to be tested for in this paper is the one to support our hypothesis that respondents answering YES to Q5 (self reporting having a brand love relationship) will score significantly higher than those who answered NO to Q5 (self reporting not having a brand love relationship) over the survey responses designed to test for perceptions and attitudes showing a strong effect of brand love relationships, ideal self concept and positive psychology in respondents.

H1 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of a brand love relationship than respondents who answered 'No'

H2 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of ideal self-concept than respondents who answered 'No'

H3 – Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 score statistically significantly higher on questions suggesting the function of positive psychology than respondents who answered 'No'

H0 - Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q5 to have no significant differences in score over questions on brand love relationship/ideal self concept/positive psychology than respondents that answered 'No'.

In order to test this, 3 Mann-Whitney tests were carried out on;

- Q6 (brand love relationship questions) Yes vs. No to Q5 (self reporting having a brand love relationship).

- Q7 (ideal self concept questions) Yes vs. No to Q5 (self reporting having a brand love relationship).

- Q8 (positive psychology questions) Yes vs. No to Q5 (self reporting having a brand love relationship).

Because of our hypothesized effects, all three of these tests were expected to come back as significant and the null hypothesis was expected to be rejected and the alternative accepted, meaning that respondents who answered YES to having self reported having a brand love relationship, would show significantly higher likert responses to the sets of questions that followed than respondents who answered NO.

However, as we can see in the following results, this effect was not found.

5.41; Mann Whitney U (Q5 Response Groups; Likert Scores through Q6)

When testing Q6 (brand love relationship questions) between the two groups Yes vs. No (self reporting having a brand love relationship), The test is significant at 0.6743 (>0.05; adjusted for ties). Meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups and the null cannot be rejected.

5.42; Mann Whitney U (Q5 Response Groups; Likert Scores through Q7)

When testing Q7 (ideal self concept questions) between the two groups Yes vs. No (self reporting having a brand love relationship), The test is significant at 0.3109 (>0.05; adjusted for ties). Meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups and the null cannot be rejected.

5.43; Mann Whitney U (Q5 Response Groups; Likert Scores through Q8)

When testing Q8 (positive psychology questions) between the two groups Yes vs. No (self reporting having a brand love relationship), The test is significant at 0.4723 (>0.05; adjusted for ties). Meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups and the null cannot be rejected.

5.44; Mann Whitney U (Gender; Likert Scores through Q6, Q7, Q8)

Gender; Question Set 6

Are responses to question set 6 (brand love relationship test questions) significantly different between different genders? Do either men or women score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test a brand love relationship?

Since the P-value of 0.3853 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 6 – (Brand Love relationship questions) between men and women cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q6 V1 between male and female respondents.

The Median values of Q6 13 for men and 13 women were identical within the sample, indicating that men and women respondents were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

Gender; Question Set 7

Are responses to question set 7 (ideal self concept test questions) significantly different between different genders? Do either men or women score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test ideal self-concept?

Since the P-value of 0.7708 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 7 – (ideal self concept questions) between men and women cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q6 V1 between male and female respondents.

The Median values of Q7 13 for men and 13 women were identical within the sample, indicating that men and women respondents were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

Gender; Question Set 8

Are responses to question set 8 (positive psychology test questions) significantly different between different genders? Do either men or women score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test a brand love relationship?

Since the P-value of 0.2485 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 6 – (positive psychology questions) between men and women cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q8 between male and female respondents.

The Median values of Q8 14 for men and 14 women were identical within the sample, indicating that men and women respondents were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

5.45; Kruskal-Wallis (Age Group; Likert Scores through Q6, Q7, Q8)

One or more small samples; the 35 to 44 years age group only had one respondent meaning that this age group is not adequate to conclude from.

Age Group; Question Set 6

Are responses to question set 6 (brand love relationship test questions) significantly different between different age groups? Do participants of certain age groups score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test a brand love relationship?

Since the P-value of 0.231 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 6 – (Brand Love relationship questions) between age groups cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q6 between different age groups.

The Median values of Q6; 14.5 for 18 to 24 years, 13 for 25 to 34 years and 7 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

Age Group; Question Set 7

Are responses to question set 7 (ideal self concept test questions) significantly different between different age groups? Do participants of certain age groups score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test a ideal self concept?

Since the P-value of 0.680 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 7 – (ideal self concept questions) between age groups cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q7 between different age groups.

The Median values of Q6; 14 for 18 to 24 years, 13 for 25 to 34 years and 10 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

Age Group; Question Set 8

Are responses to question set 8 (positive psychology test questions) significantly different between different age groups? Do participants of certain age groups score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test positive psychology?

Since the P-value of 0.535 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 8 – (positive psychology questions) between age groups cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported. As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q8 between different age groups.

The Median values of Q6; 15 for 18 to 24 years, 12 for 25 to 34 years and 9 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

5.46; Kruskal-Wallis (Education Level; Likert Scores through Q6, Q7, Q8)

Education Level; Question Set 6

Are responses to question set 6 (brand love relationship test questions) significantly different between different education level groups? Do participants of certain education level groups score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test a brand love relationship?

Since the P-value of 0.009 was less than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in the perception of importance in Q6 (brand love relationship test questions) among the six educational level groups can be rejected and the alternate hypothesis can be supported.

There may be some statistically significant difference in Q6 between male and female respondents in the population. The Median values of Q6 for the groups who completed high school (Med 19) and those respondents who had completed Ph.D, Law, or Medical degrees of 17.5 were the highest among the responding groups.

The relatively low response levels among those who had completed some high school and those who had completed some postgraduate work may have skewed the results to some amount.

Education Level; Question Set 7

Are responses to question set 7 (ideal self concept test questions) significantly different between different education level groups? Do participants of certain education level groups score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test ideal self concept?

Since the P-value of 0.043 was less than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) proposing no statistically significant difference in support for Q7 (questions testing ideal self concept) between education levels can be rejected and the alternate hypothesis can be supported.

There may be some statistically significant difference in Q7 V2 between male and female respondents in the population. The Median values of Q7 V1 for the groups who completed high school (Med 19) and those respondents who had completed Ph.D, Law, or Medical degrees of 17.5 were the highest among the responding groups. The relatively low response levels among those who had completed some high school and those who had completed some postgraduate work may have skewed the results to some amount.

Education Level; Question Set 8

Are responses to question set 8 (positive psychology test questions) significantly different between different education level groups? Do participants of certain education levels score significantly more highly than one or the other in response to questions designed to test positive psychology?

Since the P-value of 0.074 was greater than the level of significance (.05), the null hypothesis (H0) proposing no statistically significant difference in perceived importance of question set 8 (positive psychology questions) among the six educational levels cannot be rejected and the alternate hypothesis cannot be supported.

As such, there is no statistically significant difference in Q8 among the educational level groups. Although the sample indicated no statistically significant difference, as can be seen by the range of reported median values, there appears to be some difference between the perceptions of importance of Q8 among the sample respondents. These differences provide some evidence of the need for additional study of this variable among the various age groups.

6 Discussion & Conclusions

It is important to ask the question here, of whether the results found, were in line with the concepts set out in previous studies, as shown in the literature review.

When looking purely at the descriptive statistics, the results appear to support the concepts set out in previous studies. The author observes consistently high scoring in the areas that high scoring was predicted on, in accordance with the likert scale, such as brand love relationship holders scoring higher across the board, however these effects did not seem to come through in the statistical analysis, which may be due to the small sample size.

All of the concepts discussed in the introduction and literature review were well established and backed up over several peer reviews and further studies. The postulated link between anthropomorphisation and application of human emotions onto brands was also one that had been supported previously, and pointed out in the literature so the author was surprised to find no significant results in terms of the hypotheses.

6.1 Summary

The anthropomorphism of brands as a feature of this dissertation is a key point that the author wished to look into in terms of participants perceived brand love relationships and other qualifiers. The aim of the study was to show that participants who self reported having a brand love relationship, had attitudes that were parallel to the attitudes usually observed in relationships between human beings. This anthropomorphism of the brand is the effect that the study was looking to find evidence for.

In terms of the question sets presented in the questionnaire, there were a few key milestones through the analysis that are significant touchpoints for the formulation of these ideals to test. Question 5 was a simple split in the sample, it was designed to form two distinct groups to be compared in order to find a significant different between their attitudes. The answer Yes or No to question 5 was incredibly important, as it was the 'fork in the road' that split respondents into the group of having a self reported brand love relationship, or not having a self reported brand love relationship. These two groups then went on to form the study's main independent variables to be tested against.

The following sets of questions aimed to pick out the three ideals of;

6.11 Brand Love Relationships;

For the purposes of the study brand love relationships and their existence was a prerequisite, the literature and study into this field is vast and extremely rich, the areas of brand love and its tenants that are relevant to us are set out in the introductory sections of this thesis. The questionnaire was designed to establish the links between human to human relationships and this mirroring onto human relationships with a brand, thus supporting our hypothesized point that brand love relationships form because of anthropomorphism of the brand itself, and thus the relationship. This means the resulting trends we were looking for was that participants who had self reported having a brand love relationship would score highly on our questions that led onto feelings they would have both about a brand and about a person, if the relationships were similar; also we expected to see lower scores from participants that specified not having a brand love relationship as the questions tested emotional commitment amongst other human feeling areas, which we would not expect to be observed from a participant who did not have a strong human like relationship with a brand.

Unfortunately, yet interestingly, we did not observe a statistically different result between the two groups, meaning that, at least at a statistical level, the two groups of scores were not different enough to our chosen level of 0.05, set our in the analysis. This means that our postulated effect, does not exist strongly enough in this study to be considered significant.

When looking at the raw scores, and descriptive averages, we can however see that there were specific trends showing the kind of results that we expected to see, with at least as far as the averages are concerned, our self reported brand love relationship group scoring more highly over all questions. This was not reflected in the statistical analysis perhaps for the reasons of our sample not being large enough or other possible limitations.

6.12 The Ideal Self

For the purposes of our study, the function of the ideal self was also a prerequisite. We asked respondents to focus their idea of a brand love relationship on a lifestyle brand. This is along

the same lines as a human relationship being mutually beneficial, also a key facet discussed in the introduction to this paper. As with the function of a brand love relationship, we expected our self reported brand love relationship group to score highly over the question 7 section, which touched upon this mutually beneficial nature of a brand love relationship, thus meaning it was closer to a human relationship. These questions were designed to test for themes which, as set out in the introduction would be expected to show up in human relationships, and for the purposes of our research questions we expected them to show up in our postulated brand love relationship.

Unfortunately, and similarly with the previous question set, the statistical analysis came back to show that the differences between the two groups over this set of questions was not to our significance level (0.05). This means that the differences between our self reported brand love relationship group and our self reported no brand love relationship group can not be considered significant enough to draw conclusions from. Interestingly, as with the previous question set, the descriptive statistics and averages showed consistently higher scores across this set of questions, however they were not significant enough to draw conclusions from.

6.13 Positive Psychology

Positive psychology was an important pillar to set up through the process of our research as it denotes firstly the logical function of the ideal self and the basic function that the human being strives for what is perceivably best for them. Our set of questions to test this ideal was question set 8, and along with the logic of the previous two question sets we expected to see an effect of significantly higher scores across the questions from the self reported brand love relationship group compared with the no self reported brand love relationship group. This is because this positive psychology had been set up as one of our three central tenants to a human style relationship that can be mirrored with a brand love relationship.

Unfortunately, as with the previous two question sets, the difference between the self reported brand love relationship ground and the no self reported brand love relationship group was not to our required level of significance (0.05). This means that the differences between our two groups were not significantly large enough to draw conclusions from. As with the previous descriptive and averages results, we found higher averages across the board for our self reported brand love relationship ground, however these differences were not significant.

6.2 Demographic Findings

Through the analysis of our responses to the questionnaires presented in the study, several rounds of demographic analysis were carried out to look for significant trends or interesting effects through our collected demographic data, in relation to our likert data.

6.21 Gender

In order to look for effects in our data with the qualifier of gender a Mann Whitney test was carried out over questions 6, 7 and 8.
Unfortunately no significant differences were found throughout the data in terms of the scores between male and female respondents. This was to be expected and no effect was postulated to be found in this analysis. This is because the author considers the effect being searched for, of the mirroring of brand love and human relationships to be universal across genders.

Looking into the descriptive statistics there is also no difference at all to be found, with both genders producing exactly the same mean, of 13.

6.22 Age Groups

Age groups was a slightly more interesting facet of the demographic analysis, as the author had pseudo-postulated that there could be significant differences between the scores over the question sets as tested for. Another Mann Whitney test was carried out over the qualifiers of age groups and the likert scores over questions 6, 7 and 8.

The reasoning for the pseudo-postulation of age group differences was because of the difference of human relationships over time. (Elder 1994) had written of the change in social and functional relationships between humans over time, so for the author it was entirely plausible, that a mirrored human relationship with a brand had the potential to differ over the course of a participant's life. There was not enough information from the original literature to form a formal hypothesis on this effect, but differences in age group scores would not have been entirely unexpected.

Unfortunately, no significant effects were found between the age groups over any of the question sets. This is not entirely unsurprising as the sample was especially heavy in the younger age groups and even if an effect had been seen for the older age groups, the author would have disregarded it because of the lack of sample size in that group.

The Median values of Q6; 14.5 for 18 to 24 years, 13 for 25 to 34 years and 7 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

The Median values of Q6; 14 for 18 to 24 years, 13 for 25 to 34 years and 10 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

The Median values of Q6; 15 for 18 to 24 years, 12 for 25 to 34 years and 9 for 35 to 44 years were similar within the sample, indicating that respondents of different age groups were close in their perception of this variable being of importance.

6.23 Education Level

Another interesting demographic test that was carried out was the Mann Whitney into the relative scores of different education level groups. There was another pseudo-postulation here as (Elder & Rockwell 1979) had published a paper on the difference in human relationships over not just life course, but more specifically education and life experience. They had postulated that a more educated individual would potentially have psychological access to more advanced and more facedly committed relationships, potentially with a human, and by degree of mirroring, for the purposes of our study, potentially over a brand.

Thankfully, this demographic analysis showed up two significant results, the only two significant results of the entire analysis within this paper! Significant differences were found (to our level of 0.05) in terms of education level over the brand love relationship question set and the idea self-concept question set. The significance level of the positive psychology question set, however, was not significant (although it is worth mentioning, with a level of 0.074 it was close to our accepted significance level).

This is an important finding as it supports the suggestion that education level groups do not score in a uniform fashion across these question sets, and the difference is significant. Further study would be required to confirm these differences and establish directionality to a statistically acceptable level. It is also important to mention here that a lot of these education level groups had a low sample size, so the author would be cautious in drawing conclusions from the result of the statistical test.

There may be some statistically significant difference in Q6 between male and female respondents in the population. The Median values of Q6 for the groups who completed high school (Med 19) and those respondents who had completed Ph.D, Law, or Medical degrees of 17.5 were the highest among the responding groups.

There may be some statistically significant difference in Q7 V2 between male and female respondents in the population. The Median values of Q7 V1 for the groups who completed high school (Med 19) and those respondents who had completed Ph.D, Law, or Medical degrees of 17.5 were the highest among the responding groups. The relatively low response levels among those who had completed some high school and those who had completed some postgraduate work may have skewed the results to some amount.

6.3 Limitations & Future Research

There were a few key limitations throughout the process of this research, which are key to mention. Firstly, a key limitation was the small and relatively poorly varied sample size and breadth. With only 122 respondents it is difficult to draw any powerful conclusions from the analysis. This small sample size can be put down to the relative lack of resources and finances of the study. For example with certain online platforms it is possible to pay for survey responses, however this is extremely costly. This would also have biased our results, as it was key for our findings that participants undertook the questionnaire voluntarily.

The sample was also relatively narrow in certain areas, for example when drawing conclusions from age group, there was an age group with an 'n' of just 1. This was therefore impossible to draw any conclusions from that would have had any meaning. This concept also continues into the fact that the sample was part of a relatively specific demographic, well

educated 18 to 25 year olds, predominantly European. This also makes it hard to draw meaningful conclusions from the analysis, outside of our demographic.

In terms of future research, the author feels that it would be beneficial to run a similar study, with more specific and simple questions, cutting straight to the point of what the hypotheses are looking for. In this study the questions were designed to be non-obvious to remove the prospect of bias from responses, however, in feedback from participants the author has heard that this made some of the questions slightly confusing to participants who weren't sure that they were supposed to be answering. This was designed to reduce experimenter bias and order effects however it may have hindered the study.

The author strongly believes the concept and effect that is being searched for in this study is a very real and very strong one. With further fine-tuning of the study and questionnaire processes, the author believes this effect would be found, thus making the issue within this study, not the study itself, nor the concept, but the method of eluding to it.

6.4 Conclusions

Unfortunately, due to the lack of significance of the statistical tests performed on the data, it is difficult to draw many conclusions that hold weight. What we can conclude is that respondents who self report a brand love relationship score on average higher over all of the question groups testing for brand love facets, ideal self-concept facets, and positive psychology facets, but this difference is not to our significance level.

We can conclude that although it was postulated that respondents who self report a brand love relationship were expected to score higher, this is true, but not statistically true to a significant level.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A; Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q6 Yes vs. No to Q5

<div style="border:1px solid">

N Median

Q6 V1 Q5_N 45 13.000

Q6 V1 Q5_Y 67 14.000

Point estimate for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is -0.000

95.1 Percent CI for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is (-2.001,1.000)

W = 2471.5

Test of $\eta1 = \eta2$ vs $\eta1 \neq \eta2$ is significant at 0.6757

The test is significant at 0.6743 (adjusted for ties)

</div>

Ho cannot be rejected; there is no statistically significant difference

Appendix B; Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q7 Yes vs. No to Q5

<div style="border:1px solid">

N Median

Q7 V2 Q5_N 45 13.000

Q7 V2 Q5_Y 67 14.000

Point estimate for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is -1.000

95.1 Percent CI for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is (-3.001,0.999)

W = 2372.0

Test of $\eta1 = \eta2$ vs $\eta1 \neq \eta2$ is significant at 0.3130

The test is significant at 0.3109 (adjusted for ties)

</div>

Ho cannot be rejected; there is no statistically significant difference

Appendix C; Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q8 Yes vs. No to Q5

```
               N  Median
Q8 V3 Q5_N  45  14.000
Q8 V3 Q5_Y  67  15.000


Point estimate for η1 - η2 is 0.000
95.1 Percent CI for η1 - η2 is (-1.999,1.000)
W = 2421.5
Test of η1 = η2 vs η1 ≠ η2 is significant at 0.4745
The test is significant at 0.4723 (adjusted for ties)
```

Ho cannot be rejected; there is no statistically significant difference

Appendix D; Mann-Whitney test: Q6 V1 by Gender

```
Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q6 V1 Between Female and Male Respondents


                N  Median
Q6 V1 Sum_ F  73  13.000
Q6 V1 Sum_M  39  13.000


Point estimate for η1 - η2 is -1.000
95.0 Percent CI for η1 - η2 is (-2.000,1.001)
W = 3982.5
Test of η1 = η2 vs η1 ≠ η2 is significant at 0.3875
The test is significant at 0.3853 (adjusted for ties)
```

Appendix E; Mann-Whitney Test: Q7 V2 by Gender

Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q7 V2 Between Female and Male Respondents

             N Median

Q7 V2 Sum_ F 73 13.000

Q7 V2 Sum_M 39 13.000

Point estimate for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is 0.000

95.0 Percent CI for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is (-1.000,2.000)

W = 4172.5

Test of $\eta1$ = $\eta2$ vs $\eta1 \neq \eta2$ is significant at 0.7717

The test is significant at 0.7708 (adjusted for ties)

Appendix F; Mann-Whitney Test: Q8 V3 By Gender

Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Q8 V3 Between Female and Male Respondents

             N Median

Q8 V3 Sum_ F 73 14.000

Q8 V3 Sum_M 39 14.000

Point estimate for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is 1.000

95.0 Percent CI for $\eta1$ - $\eta2$ is (-1.000,2.000)

W = 4313.0

Test of $\eta1$ = $\eta2$ vs $\eta1 \neq \eta2$ is significant at 0.2509

The test is significant at 0.2485 (adjusted for ties)

Appendix G; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q6 V1 by Age Groups

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q6 V1 among 3 Age Range Groups of Respondents

Age Range	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
18 to 24 years	66	14.500	59.3	1.07
25 to 34 years	45	13.000	53.5	-0.80
45 to 54 years	1	7.000	10.0	-1.44
Overall	112		56.5	

H = 2.91 DF = 2 P = 0.234

H = 2.93 DF = 2 P = 0.231 (adjusted for ties)

* NOTE * One or more small samples

Appendix H; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q7 V2 by Age Range Groups

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q7 V2 Among Age Range of Respondents

Age Range	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
18 to 24 years	66	14.00	58.3	0.71
25 to 34 years	45	13.00	54.3	-0.60
45 to 54 years	1	10.00	37.5	-0.59
Overall	112		56.5	

H = 0.76 DF = 2 P = 0.682

H = 0.77 DF = 2 P = 0.680 (adjusted for ties)

* NOTE * One or more small samples

Appendix I; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q8 V3 by Age Range Groups

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q8 V3 Among 3 Age Range Groups of Respondents

Age Range	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
18 to 24 years	66	15.000	58.3	0.72
25 to 34 years	45	12.000	54.5	-0.54
45 to 54 years	1	9.000	26.5	-0.93
Overall	112		56.5	

H = 1.24 DF = 2 P = 0.538

H = 1.25 DF = 2 P = 0.535 (adjusted for ties)

* NOTE * One or more small samples

Appendix J; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q6 V1 by Education Level Groups

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q6 V1 Among 6 educational Groups of Respondents

Education Level	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
Bachelor's degree	43	13.000	50.5	-1.55
Completed some high school	5	19.000	92.8	2.56
Completed some postgraduate	4	8.500	27.9	-1.80
Master's degree	50	14.000	57.0	0.15
Ph.D., law or medical degree	10	17.500	73.1	1.69
Overall	112			56.5

$H = 13.45$ DF = 4 $P = 0.009$

$H = 13.58$ DF = 4 $P = 0.009$ (adjusted for ties)

Appendix K; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q7 V2 by Education Level Groups

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q7 V2 Among 6 educational Groups of Respondents

Education Level	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
Bachelor's degree	43	13.000	51.7	-1.24
Completed some high school	5	14.000	71.5	1.06
Completed some postgraduate	4	7.500	25.0	-1.98
Master's degree	50	13.500	57.6	0.31
Ph.D., law or medical degree	10	17.000	76.9	2.08
Overall	112			56.5

$H = 9.77$ DF = 4 $P = 0.044$

$H = 9.86$ DF = 4 $P = 0.043$ (adjusted for ties)

* NOTE * One or more small samples

Appendix L; Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q8 V3 by Education Level Groups

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Kruskal-Wallis Test on Q8 V3 Among 6 educational Groups of Respondents

Education Level	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
Bachelor's degree	43	14.000	51.2	-1.37
Completed some high school	5	16.000	75.7	1.35
Completed some postgraduate	4	9.500	28.5	-1.76
Master's degree	50	14.500	58.2	0.50
Ph.D., law or medical degree	10	16.000	72.5	1.63
Overall	112		56.5	
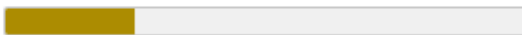
$H = 8.45$ $DF = 4$ $P = 0.076$

$H = 8.53$ $DF = 4$ $P = 0.074$ (adjusted for ties)

* NOTE * One or more small samples

Appendix M; Questionnaire Page 1 (Classificational)

Classificational

1 / 4   25%

* 1. Gender

○ Male.

○ Female.

○ Choose not to identify.

* 2. Nationality

[   ]

* 3. Age Range

○ 18 to 24 years

○ 25 to 34 years

○ 35 to 44 years

○ 45 to 54 years

○ 55 to 64 years

○ Age 65 or older

* 4. Education Level

○ Completed some high school

○ High school graduate

○ Completed some college

○ Associate degree

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Completed some postgraduate

○ Master's degree

○ Ph.D., law or medical degree

○ Other advanced degree beyond a Master's degree

Appendix N; Questionnaire Page 2 (Brand Love Relationship)

Brand Relationship

2 / 4   [██████████   ] 50%

* 5. Do you consider yourself to have a 'brand-love relationship' with a lifestyle brand?

'A brand-love relationship is an emotional and passionate relationship present between a satisfied consumer and a brand.'

○ Yes.

○ No.

○ Don't Know.

6. Please answer the following questions

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would feel upset if this brand was to fail and close down	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I have a personal relationship with this brand	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I have an emotional commitment to this brand	○	○	○	○	○
My feelings towards this brand are relatively consistent over time	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I have a dialogue with this brand	○	○	○	○	○
I am a satisfied customer of this brand	○	○	○	○	○

Prev   Next

Appendix O; Questionnaire Page 3 (Ideal Self Concept)

Ideal Self Concept

3 / 4   75%

7. Please answer the following questions

'The Ideal Self is an idealised version of yourself created out of what you have learned from your life experiences, the demands of society, and what you admire in your role models'

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider myself to have an ideal-self concept	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that lifestyle brands assist me in achieving my ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○
I believe this brand is in line with my ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○
I would favour this brand over others as it is in line with my ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○

Prev   Next

Appendix P; Questionnaire Page 4 (Positive Psychology)

Positive Psychology

4 / 4   100%

8. Please answer the following questions

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider myself to be a self-improver	○	○	○	○	○
I strive to achieve my ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○
I feel this brand assists me in pursuing my ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○
I feel it is natural to pursue your ideal self concept	○	○	○	○	○

Prev   Done