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Abstract

Companies are increasingly focussing on the establishment of an emotional connection between their brand and their consumers because this leads to higher levels of consumer loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005). In light of this, marketing managers are increasingly using a traditional approach to branding, which means that they tailor their brand's personality to match with how consumers 'actually' see themselves. Next to this authentic form of branding, marketing managers are also tailoring their brand's personality to fit with how consumers 'ideally' view themselves (Malär et al., 2011). The question arises which branding strategy is best suitable and in particular, which approach to branding will lead to a higher level of emotional brand attachment. This research focuses on branded products within hedonic categories in order to assess whether findings from previous research within utilitarian categories can be generalizable to other product categories. Furthermore, this research collected data in both the Netherlands and in the U.S. to assess whether and how the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment differs according to a consumer's country. The findings indicate that in both the Netherlands and the U.S., actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment than ideal-self congruence. The findings also show that ideal self-congruence has a significantly stronger effect on emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. and that actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger effect in the U.S. compared to the Netherlands. Demographics such as age and gender do not seem to influence this relation.

This research shows the importance of taking the consumer's self-views into account when defining a brand's personality. Doing so will increase the fit between a consumer's self-views and a brand and accordingly will lead to higher levels of emotional brand attachment. These higher levels of brand attachment will increase a consumer's commitment and loyalty to a brand (Park et al., 2010). This research shows that the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment can differ between consumers from different countries. Therefore, it is important to take the consumer's country into consideration when trying to establish an emotional attachment to these consumers. Furthermore, findings of this research indicate that there is no 'one shoe fits all' approach to branding. A traditional approach and an aspirational approach could both lead to an emotional attachment, but marketers should be aware of factors such as a consumer's country and product category that can also affect how consumers emotionally attach to brands.

Acknowledgements

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, research has pointed at self-congruence as an important factor in creating emotional brand attachment (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011; Park et al., 2010; Malär et al., 2011; Yao et al., 2015). An explanation for this is that consumers form strong relationships with brands that are congruent with the consumers' understanding of who and what he/she is (i.e. self-concept) (Swaminathan et al., 2007). Self-congruence refers to the "fit between the consumer's self and the brand's personality" and can enhance affective, attitudinal and behavioural consumer responses to the brand (Aaker, 1999, p. 46). Companies rely on different strategies when communicating their brand's personality to consumers. On the one hand companies rely on strategies that emphasize how consumers 'actually' see themselves. For example, Reebok's slogan states 'I am what I am', Olay's slogan states 'love the skin you're in' and L'Oreal's slogan states 'because you're worth it'. On the other hand, there are companies who promise that by using their branded products consumers become more close to who they would like to be (e.g. Venus' slogan states 'reveal the goddess in you'). These companies thus promise that by buying their brands the consumer will get closer to an 'ideal' version of him/herself. Although a lot of companies still focus on creating this 'ideal' image, recent research has shown that marketing managers are increasingly focussing on the 'actual' self (i.e. how consumers actually see themselves) (Malär et al., 2011). For example, Victoria Secret recently changed their adds from focussing on 'the perfect body' to 'a body for every body'. Whether marketers focus on the 'actual' or 'ideal' self, the goal remains to create a relationship between the brand and the consumer.

When studying consumer-brand relationships, academic researchers and practitioners in marketing have acknowledged the importance of understanding the emotional components that underlie these relationships (Park et al., 2010). This is motivated by findings that consumers can form an emotional attachment to a brand, which in turn can predict their commitment to that brand and their willingness to make financial sacrifices in order to obtain that brand (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005). Emotional brand attachment is defined as: "an emotion-laden bond between a person and a brand characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection, and passion" (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011, p. 1053). For companies it is important to this create emotional brand attachment because it leads to higher levels of consumer loyalty, which in turn increases brand equity (Park et al., 2010).

Emotional brand attachment has been researched to a large extent but little research has focussed on which consumer's self is best to target in particular situations to create this emotional attachment. Previous research does point at the necessity to adapt branding and

advertising strategies to the country of the consumers (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Monga and John, 2007). Research has also shown that companies should consider various country specifics (such as cultural differences) when communicating their brand in a specific country and that brands who are able to understand and cope with cultural diversity are more successful than brands who fail to do so (Lindridge, 2002; Usunier et al., 2005). In their research Malär et al. (2011) found that actual self-congruence has a strong positive influence on emotional brand attachment while ideal self-congruence only has an effect under certain circumstances (i.e. for consumers with low self-esteem, low product-involvement and low public self-consciousness). However, their research relied on data from the relatively small European nation Switzerland (Malär et al., 2011). Because country specifics plays an important role in how consumers respond to branding strategies there is reason to believe that results from research in Switzerland might not be generalizable across other countries and thus that the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment may differ across countries.

Additionally, previous research conducted by Malär et al. (2011) focussed on branded products within utilitarian categories only. Next to brands within utilitarian categories it is also important to research brands within hedonic categories. This is important because consumption of products within hedonic categories often serves a different purpose than consumption within utilitarian categories (Lim and Ang, 2008). That is, consumption of products within utilitarian categories often fulfil a functional task while consumption of products within hedonic categories is more viewed as an emotional experience (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). This research will therefore focus on branded products within hedonic categories to assess whether the findings within utilitarian categories can be generalizable to hedonic categories. In addition, the main goal of this research focuses on whether the relationship between self-congruence (i.e. actual and ideal) and emotional brand attachment differs across countries. Consequently, the aim of this research is to answer the following research question:

"*Do the effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment found in utilitarian categories also apply to hedonic categories and do these effects differ regarding consumers in the Netherlands and the U.S.?*"

This research aims to enlarge the body of knowledge regarding the relation between self-congruence (i.e. actual and ideal) and emotional brand attachment. More specifically, this research fills a gap in the current literature by providing insight into the effect that a consumer's country has on this relationship. This research focuses on the Netherlands and the U.S. in

particular, to assess whether and how this relationship differs. In addition, previous research regarding the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment focussed on utilitarian product categories only (Malär et al., 2011). As branded products from utilitarian categories are often consumed for different purposes than branded products from hedonic categories, the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment may differ across product categories. This research aims to fill the gap in the current literature by focusing on hedonic product categories instead. Consequently, findings from this research will indicate whether the findings within utilitarian categories can be generalizable to hedonic product categories.

Researching the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment has a number of implications for brand managers. First of all, brand managers manage the relationship between their respective brands and consumers with the aim of establishing a long-term emotional connection between their brand and the consumers. In this context, brand managers often spend millions every year to create, support and communicate their brand's personality with the aim of establishing fit with the consumer's self-concept (Jamal and Goode, 2001). Brand managers can benefit by understanding which consumer's self is best to target in specific situation. In addition, companies often try to take advantage of business opportunities in multiple countries at the same time (Oviatt and McDougall, 1994). For example, by launching the same marketing campaign in different countries. However, as previously mentioned a consumer's country plays an important role in the way in which a consumer perceives a brand. It is thus important for brand managers to understand these differences in order to know how their brand is being perceived across various countries. Additionally, brand managers can benefit by understanding which marketing strategy is best suitable in specific situations.

The second section of this research will address the theoretic foundation of self-congruence and other factors that influence how consumers emotionally attach to brands. Furthermore, the importance of incorporating country specifics in assessing how consumers emotionally attach to brands will be discussed. The third section of this research focuses on the research methodology and data collection procedure. The fourth section of this research will discuss the results of the data collected in the U.S. and the Netherlands. The fifth section of this research provides theoretical as well as managerial implications from the findings and discusses directions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The concept of self

Self-concept is defined as "the cognitive and affective understanding of who and what we are" (Malär et al., 2011, p. 36). The concept of self is of great importance in studying consumer behaviour because what a consumer buys can be influenced by the image that the consumer has of him/herself (Hong and Zinkham, 1995). Earlier research on consumer's self-concept only looked at the 'actual self' and thus conceptualized this as a unidimensional construct. Later research however, has shown that self-concept is a multidimensional construct that consists out of 'actual self-concept and 'ideal self-concept' (Malhotra, 1988). The actual self is defined as "how consumers see themselves" and the ideal self is defined as "how consumers would like to see themselves" (Sirgy and Su, 2000, p. 343).

Previous research has shown that consumers use brands as a way to define themselves to others (Malär et al., 2011). When consumers choose between brands, the personality of the brand plays an important role (Aaker, 1997). Brands can be associated with personality traits that provide expressive benefits and more specifically brand personality is defined as "the set of human character associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). Consumers thus purchase brands with a certain personality to express their self-concept (i.e. actual or ideal self) (Aaker, 1999). When consumers purchase a brand with a personality that fits their self-concept they get a certain sense of comfort (Sirgy, 1982). The importance of brand personality lies in the fact that it can impact the relation that a consumer has with a brand (Louis and Lombart, 2010).

The perception of 'actual' self is closely related to personality in the sense that individuals tend to buy brands whose personalities closely correspond to how individuals see themselves (Jamal, 2004; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). In other words, individuals express themselves by choosing brands whose personalities are perceived to be congruent with their own personalities (i.e. actual self-congruence) (Aaker, 1999). In addition, research has shown that individuals also buy brands whose personalities are congruent with who they would like to be (i.e. ideal self-congruence) in order to express themselves (Malär et al., 2011). This is in line with self-congruence theory proposed by Sirgy (1982), which suggests that people evaluate objects (e.g. brands) using the same dimensions by which they describe themselves. This theory also suggest that, because these shared dimensions have behavioural consequences, the congruence between self-concept image and brand image is a determinant of various outcomes such as selection decisions, customer satisfaction and re-purchase intentions (Sirgy, 1982; Ekinci and Riley, 2003).

2.2 Emotional attachment to brands

Research has shown that people can form emotional attachments to a variety of object, including brands (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). This approach is based on Bowlby's (1979) attachment theory, which suggests that the interaction of an individual with an object (e.g. brand) is determined by the degree of emotional attachment to that object (e.g. brand) (Thomson et al., 2005). This is important because, in line with attachment theory, "emotional attachment implies a deep desire to preserve security felt in connection with a brand and to actively avoid separation with that brand" (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011, p. 1053). Bowlby's (1979) attachment theory initially focuses on human relationships but previous studies indicate that consumers may attribute human characteristics to brands, and thus create relationships with brands, just as they do with people (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998). In the last decade, the possibility that consumers can develop emotional connections to brands has been researched to a large extend and supported in the academic literature (Berry, 2000; Thomson et al., 2005). As Berry (2000, p.134) states: "great brands always make an emotional connection with the intended audience. They reach beyond the purely rational and purely economic level to spark feelings of closeness, affection, and trust". Because of this, the focus of marketing efforts has changed from transaction-based relations to the initiation, establishment, and maintenance of long-term relationships with consumers (Levy and Hino, 2016). Marketers often try to create an emotional connection between their brand and their consumers because emotions are one of the things that motivate consumers to choose and connect to a certain product, service or brand. When a consumer has a trust-based relationship with a brand (i.e. is emotionally involved), the consumer is also committed to continuing this relationship, praising the brand and supporting the brand. Thus by developing these long-term relationships with consumers, brands are building trust, commitment and loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005). This also implies that consumers' emotional attachment to a brand can predict their commitment and loyalty to that brand (Thomson et al., 2005).

Another theory that underlies the way in which consumers establish bonds with brands is self-expansion theory (Aron et al., 2005). Self-expansion theory suggests that the more an entity (e.g. brand) is part of a person's self-definition, the greater the emotional bond with this entity (e.g. brand) (Leary, 2007). According to self-expansion theory, this occurs because people possess an inherent motivation to incorporate others (e.g. brands) in their conception of self (Malär et al., 2011). This is in line with researchers who argue that emotional attachment is inherently tied to the consumer's self-concept and that emotional brand attachment depends on the degree to which consumers view a brand of being part of themselves and a reflection of who they are (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan, 1993; Park et al., 2010). Linking this back to

attachment theory this implies that the more consumers view a brand as being part of themselves the deeper the desire to maintain a connection with this brand (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). This is especially important because this desire can drive consumers to be devoted to repurchase of the brand.

2.3 Product category

Research has shown that branded products that are used for consumption can be broadly characterized as hedonic or utilitarian. On the one hand, utilitarian products are consumed out of necessity and provide cognitive oriented benefits (Hirshman, 1980). Additionally, consumption within utilitarian product categories is motivated by rational choice and the need to accomplish a functional task (e.g. cleaning). On the other hand, hedonic products are consumed for "sensory gratification and affective purposes or for fun and enjoyment" (Lim and Ang, 2008, p. 226). Branded products within hedonic categories often contain values of pleasure and fun and are usually more luxurious (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). For example designer clothes and sports cars fall within this hedonic category (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000).

According to previous research, it is important to take product category into account when assessing emotional brand attachment because consumption within different product categories often serves different purposes and therefore can generate different responses. For example, research has shown that consumption of brands within hedonic categories tends to generate stronger emotional responses than consumption within utilitarian categories (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). One explanation for this is that while preferences for branded utilitarian goods are cognitively driven, preferences for branded hedonic goods are emotionally driven.

2.4 Actual and ideal self-congruence

Self-congruity theory states that "consumers tend to select brands that correspond to their self-concepts" (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011, p. 116). In other words, if a brand's personality is perceived to be congruent with a consumer's concept of self, his/her attitude towards the brand is positively affected (Kim et al., 2001). This is in line with research that shows that, if consumers perceive a certain fit between a brand's personality and their self-concept, they are more driven to maintain a connection to this brand than if they wouldn't perceive this fit (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). In addition, research has shown that marketers communicate the personality of a brand in different ways according to which consumer's self they want to target (Malär et al., 2011). While some companies promise that consuming their brand will bring the

consumer closer to an 'ideal' version of themselves, other companies state that their brand is a reflection of who the consumer 'actually' is. Accordingly, consumers perceive an actually self-congruent brand as "this brand's personality is like who I really am" and an ideally self-congruent brand as "this brand's personality is like who I would like to be" (Malär et al., 2011, p.36). Research has shown that both 'actual' and 'ideal' self-congruence can cause consumers to form an emotional attachment to a brand within utilitarian categories (Malär et al., 2011). What differentiates 'actual' from 'ideal' self-congruence is the motivation for consumers to use brands and the theories that underlie these motivations (Malär et al., 2011). For example, some consumers use brands to retain their self-concept (i.e. actual self-congruence) while other consumers use brands to enhance their self-concept (i.e. ideal self-congruence).

With regard to 'actual' self-congruence, self-consistency theory (Swann, 1983) indicates that people search for experiences that affirm their sense of self and avoid experiences that threaten their sense of self. According to this self-verification principle, people behave in ways consistent with how they see themselves and are motivated to ensure that others see them as they see themselves (Swann, 1983; Baumgardner and Brownlee, 1987). Self-verification leads to positive self-evaluations and thus consuming a brand that fits with the 'actual' self will also result in positive reinforcement for the consumers. In line with this principle, it is believed that consumers can attempt to verify their self-views by consuming brands who's personality is consistent with how they see themselves. This perceived 'fit' between the consumers' self-view and the brand's personality can lead to positive emotions towards that brand. Research has shown that actual self-congruence positively affects emotional brand attachment within utilitarian categories (Malär et al., 2011). In addition, previous research suggests that actual self-congruence is positively associated with brand evaluation, satisfaction and loyalty for brands within hedonic product categories (Jamal and Goode, 2001; Liu et al., 2012). Because brand evaluation, satisfaction and loyalty are indicators of emotional brand attachment it is assumed that actual self-congruence influences emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories. In line with self-consistency theory, previous research suggests that consumers buy brands within hedonic categories that match their self-view (Tynan et al., 2010; Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). Accordingly the following is hypothesized:

H₁: Perceived actual self-congruence has a positive effect on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories

While self-consistency theory assumes that people are motivated to protect and retain their self-concepts, self-enhancement theory states that people are motivated to improve their self-concepts (Swann et al, 1987). Self-enhancement is defined as "people's underlying tendency to increase their self-esteem" (Ditto and Lopez, 1992, p. 568). Consistent with the motivation to enhance one's self-concept, the central assumption of this theory is that "people are motivated to increase their feelings of personal worth" (Malär et al., 2011, p. 37). Another factor that plays a role in self-enhancement is self-esteem. Self-enhancement theory assumes that people with negative self-concepts lack self-esteem and will try to compensate their lack by trying to enhance their self-views (Swann et al., 1987). That is, a consumer looks for a brand with a personality that reflects a consumer's ideal self in order to get closer to their ideal self (Malär et al., 2011). Branded products within hedonic categories often aim at reflecting this 'ideal' image of the consumers. If consumers experience a fit between that brand and their aspirations they can become emotionally attached to that brand. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

H_2: Perceived ideal self-congruence has a positive effect on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories

In addition, research suggests that 'actual' and 'ideal' self-congruence do not equally influence emotional brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011). Research within utilitarian categories showed that 'actual' self-congruence has a larger effect on emotional brand attachment than 'ideal' self-congruence (Malär et al., 2011). An explanation for this can be found in construal-level theory, which suggests that an individual's psychological distance to an object (e.g. brand) influences thoughts and behaviour about that object (e.g. brand) (Trope et al., 2007). This theory assumes that "individuals mentally construe objects (e.g. brands) that are psychologically near in terms of low-level, detailed and contextualized features, whereas at a distance they construe the same object (e.g. brand) in terms of high-level, abstract, and stable characteristics" (Trope et al., 2007, 83). In other words, when a brand is psychologically near, a consumer tends to have a lot of information and therefore can link this to concrete and detailed terms and when the brand is more distant from a consumer (psychological distant), more abstract features are used (Malär et al., 2011). Examining this psychological distance is important because research has shown that psychological near brands are rated higher in experience than psychological distant brands (Williams and Bargh, 2008; Malär et al., 2011).

According to construal-level theory, consumers perceive their 'actual self' as psychologically near and their 'ideal self' as more distant. The most supported argument for this is that who people 'would like to be' (i.e. ideal self) takes place in the future, while 'who someone is' (i.e. actual self) is happening now (Trope et al., 2007). This implies that if a consumer perceives a brand within a hedonic category to be congruent with both the 'actual' and 'ideal' self, this brand is still psychologically more distant from the 'ideal' self. Accordingly the following is hypothesized:

H3: Actual self-congruence has a stronger effect on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence within hedonic categories

2.5 Country effect

Research has shown that the effectiveness of marketing strategies can vary from country to country (Woo Jun and Lee, 2007). Due to globalization and an increasing number of multinationals trying to benefit from entering multiple markets across countries it is important for companies to understand these variations. In other words, companies can benefit from understanding how consumers from different countries respond to their marketing strategies. Research has shown that the way in which consumers attach to brands can be influenced by their cultural context (Yoo, 2009), their level of possessiveness (Richins and Dawson, 1992) and their level of innovativeness (Steenkamp et al., 1999). These factors will also impact the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. Two countries that differ significantly on these factors are the Netherlands and the United States. While the Netherland and the U.S. are relatively similar in term of economical and physical characteristics, there are key differences in how consumers value brands and the possession of material goods. As a consequence, the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is expected to differ between these two countries. Therefore, this research will focus on the Netherlands and the U.S. to assess whether a consumer's country influences the relation between self-congruence (i.e. actual and ideal) and emotional brand attachment

One of the key factors that needs to be taken into account when looking at a consumer's country is the role of culture. This is because consumers develop views within their specific cultural context. Consequently, they mainly give meanings of particular brands within such a context. Also, consumer behaviour is likely to be influenced by social perceptions and values about products and/or services that are linked to a brand within their cultural context (Swaminathan et al., 2008). In this context, culture is defined as "the collective programming

of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (Hofstede, 1980, p.5). Therefore, consumers from different countries can behave in different ways according to their own cultural context. When establishing 'fit' between a brand's personality and the consumer's self (i.e. self-congruence) it is thus important to take the consumer's country and according cultural context into account.

An often-used way to compare countries is on the basis of their scores on Hofstede's five dimensions into cultural areas (Hofstede, 2001). These dimensions include: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity and long term orientation. Table 1 shows the scores of the Netherlands and the U.S. on these five dimensions.

Table 1: Country scores on Hofstede Dimensions

	The Netherlands	U.S.
Power distance	38	40
Individualism	80	91
Masculinity	**14**	**62**
Uncertainty avoidance	53	46
Long-term orientation	**67**	**26**

As Table 1 shows, there is little difference in scores of both countries on the dimensions 'power distance', 'individualism' and 'uncertainty avoidance'. The dimensions 'power distance' and 'uncertainty avoidance' reflect the distribution of power within a society and a society's tolerance for ambiguity. Both the Netherlands and the U.S. show low scores on the dimension power distance, which means that consumers within these countries are independent and have equal rights. With regard to the dimension uncertainty avoidance, the Netherlands scores a little higher than the U.S. which means that consumers have a higher need for rules and stability. However, these two dimensions are not expected to influence how consumers emotionally attach to brand and therefore will not be discussed in detail.

With regard to the dimension individualism, the Netherlands show a score of 80 and the U.S. a score of 91. This means that both countries are individualistic rather than collectivistic in nature. Research has shown that in more individualistic countries consumers often switch between brands in order to pursue the greatest satisfaction for themselves (Yoo, 2009). This is because in 'individualistic' countries, consumers are 'I'-conscious and self-actualization is very important. Because a high level of brand switching leads to a low level of brand loyalty, it is of

great importance for marketers to understand how they can create an emotional attachment to their brand in countries that are individualistic such as the Netherlands and the U.S.

Additionally, Table 1 shows that there is a large difference in scores of both countries on the dimensions 'masculinity' and 'long-term orientation'. With regard to the dimension masculinity the Netherlands have a score of 14 and the U.S. a score of 62. This means that the Netherlands can be described as being a more feminine society and the U.S. as a more masculine society. Feminine societies like the Netherlands are characterized by modesty and the establishment of relations plays an important role. Masculine societies, on the other hand, are characterized by performance and showing one's achievements is important. In addition, this achievement must be demonstrated and thus status brands are important to show one's success (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). Masculine societies are driven by competition, achievement and one's individual success. Also, there is a large degree of stress on materialism and wealth and self-enhancement leads to self-esteem (Lee and Peterson, 2001). Because self-enhancement plays a more important role in masculine societies it is likely that consumers in the U.S. will put more focus on the 'ideal' self than on the 'actual' self. In addition, consumers in the Netherlands put more focus on modesty and therefore it is likely that these consumers will put more focus on brands that reflect their 'actual' self. However, this does not imply that perceived 'actual self-congruence' will lead to higher levels of emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands nor that perceived 'ideal self-congruence' leads to higher levels of emotional brand attachment in the U.S. This is because the establishment of relations and consistency is much more valued in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. This also implies that it is easier for brands to establish an emotional attachment to consumers in the Netherlands compared to consumers in the U.S.

In addition, scores on the dimension long-term orientation show that, consumers in the Netherlands put more focus on the future (i.e. have a long-term orientation), while consumers in the U.S. put much more focus on the present (i.e. have a short-term orientation). The distinction between long-term orientation and short-term orientation refers to "the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-orientated perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view" (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010, p.90). Because consumers in the Netherlands put more focus on relations than transactions there is also a preference for long-term relations between consumers and brands (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). By establishing these long-term relations, brands generate trust and loyalty, which in turn influences emotional brand attachment (Thomson et al., 2005). Therefore, the level of

emotional brand attachment is expected to be higher for consumers in the Netherlands compared to consumers in the U.S.

Next to cultural dimensions there are other country specific factors that influence how consumers value and use brands. One of these factors is the level of possessiveness. Possessiveness is defined as "the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one's possessions" (Belk, 1985, p.267). Research has shown that consumers from the U.S. tend to be less possessive than consumers from the Netherlands (Dawson and Bamossy, 1990). One of the reasons for this is that in the U.S. it is more important to show one's social status than in the Netherlands. This social status is shown through the purchase of new material goods because possession of these goods is seen as a sign of success and as creating happiness (Richins and Dawson, 1992). For example, more than $525 billion per year is spent in the U.S. alone on the consumption of luxury brands (which are used to show a consumer's social status) (Wang and Griskevicus, 2014). For consumers in the Netherlands, on the other hand, possessions have a stronger and more durable meaning (Dawson and Bamossy, 1990). Consumers from the Netherlands put more focus on quality while consumers from the U.S. put more focus on quantity. This means that consumers from the U.S. are more likely to switch between brand and more easily replace a good than consumers from the Netherlands. Because consumers from the Netherland have a higher level of possessiveness, they have a more durable relation with brands compared to consumers from the U.S., who have the tendency to switch often between brands. Therefore, the level of emotional brand attachment is expected to be higher in countries with a high level of possessiveness compared to countries with a low level of possessiveness.

Another factor that influences how consumers use brands is the level of innovativeness within a country. Innovativeness refers to the "propensity of consumers to adopt new products and/or brands" (Tellis et al., 2009, p. 1). In countries with a higher level of innovativeness, consumers are more motivated to try out new products and brands and consumers are also more inclined to take risks (Rogers, 2010). Previous research has shown that the former mentioned Hofstede dimensions (1980) can be related to the level of innovativeness. In particular the dimensions individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity can be related to the level of innovativeness. Individualism and masculinity are positively related to innovativeness while uncertainty avoidance is negatively related to innovativeness (Steenkamp et al., 1999). Both the Netherlands and the U.S. score roughly the same on individualism and uncertainty avoidance but the U.S. scores much higher on masculinity. Therefore, it is likely that consumers in the U.S. are more innovative compared to consumers in the Netherlands. In addition, The Global Innovation Index (GII) is used to measure a country's capacity for and success in innovation.

The GII score for the Netherlands is 58.29 and the U.S. has a score of 61.40 (Cornell University). The U.S. has a slightly higher GII score than the Netherlands but is much more masculine in nature than the Netherlands. Therefore, it is likely that consumers in the U.S. are more innovative compared to consumers in the Netherlands. Consumers in countries with a higher level of innovativeness are more likely to switch between brands compared to consumers in countries with a lower level of innovativeness. For brands it is therefore more difficult to establish a connection to consumers in countries that are more innovative compared to countries that are less innovative (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent, 2010).

As previously mentioned, consumers tend to buy brands that match with their actual self-view for self-verification. This means that consumers behave in ways that are consistent with how they see themselves (Swann, 1983). As the Netherlands is a feminine society, consumers value modesty more than consumers from more masculine societies like the U.S. (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). Therefore, it is likely that consumers from the Netherlands put more focus on brands that match their 'actual self' and avoid brands that are not consistent with how they see themselves. In addition, consumers from the Netherlands value the establishment of long-term relations more than consumers from the U.S. Therefore, brands are better able to establish an emotional attachment to consumers from the Netherlands compared to consumers from the U.S. Also, consumers from the Netherlands have a higher level of possessiveness and a lower level of innovativeness, which means that they are less likely to switch between brands compared to consumers from the U.S. Because of this, the level of consumer trust and loyalty will likely be higher for consumers in the Netherlands compared to consumers from the U.S. This in turn will lead to higher levels of emotional brand attachment and therefore the following is hypothesized:

H_{4A}: The relationship between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories is stronger in the Netherlands than in the U.S.

As stated, consumers can also use brands for self-enhancement purposes (Swann et al, 1987). This means that these consumers look for brands with a personality that reflects their ideal self. By consuming these brands, consumers aim to get closer to that ideal version of themselves (Malär et al., 2011). As the U.S. is a masculine society, consumers in the U.S. are more focussed on showing one's social status compared to consumers in a feminine society like the Netherlands. This makes it seem likely that consumers in the U.S. would put focus on brands that enhance their self-concept than consumers from the Netherlands. However, this focus on ideally self-congruent brands does not mean that these consumers emotionally attach to these

brands. This is because consumers from the U.S. more often switch between brands compared to consumers from the Netherlands, which makes the establishment of an emotional connection more difficult. Also, consumers from the Netherlands take longer to replace an 'old' good by a 'new' good as reflected by the higher level of possessiveness compared to consumers from the U.S. When consumers use a brand to increase their self-concept, this brand is more likely to establish a connection to consumers who put more focus on the establishment of long-term relations. Consumers from the Netherlands put more focus on the establishment of these long-term relations and are therefore also more likely to re-purchase the same brand in comparison to consumers from the U.S. When consumers are likely to re-purchase the same brand, they are also more loyal to that brand and feel a stronger connection to that brand compared to consumers who often switch between brands. Therefore, when consumers from the U.S. use a brand for self-enhancement, they are more likely to switch between brands and are less focussed on establishing a connection with that brand, compared to consumers from the Netherlands. Accordingly, the following is hypothesized:

> H_{4B}: *The relationship between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories is stronger in the Netherlands than in the U.S.*

The hypotheses mentioned in this section are combined in a conceptual model as shown in Figure 1.
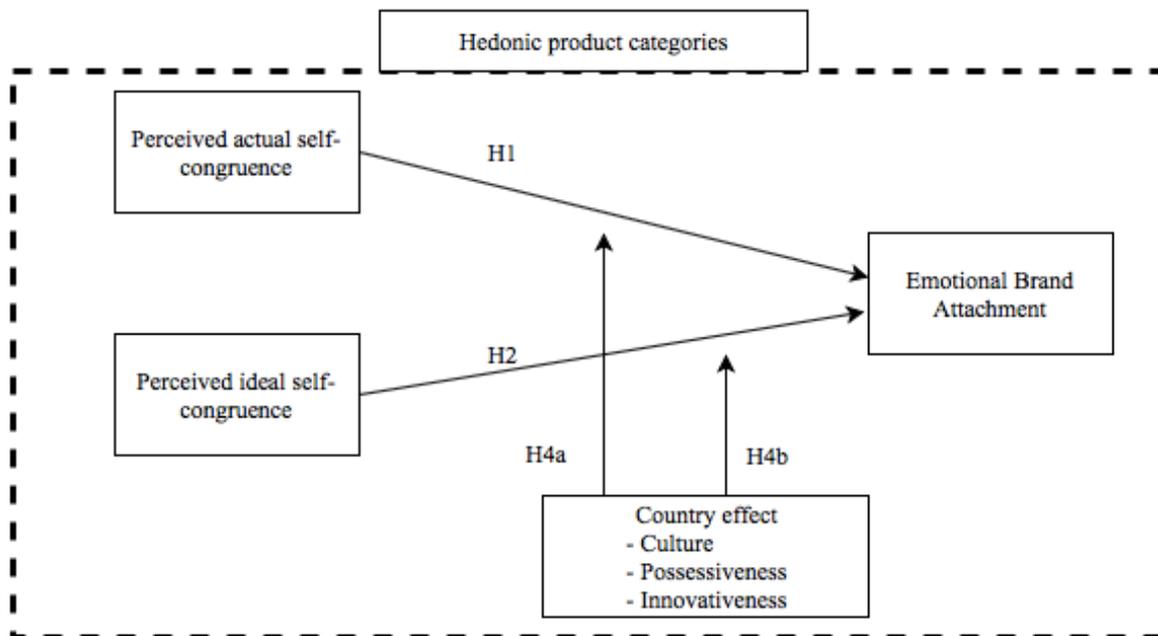
Figure 1: Conceptual model

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

This research used a survey methodology to test the hypotheses of this research empirically. The reason for conducting a survey included the possibility to generate a large number of responses during a short period of time. The response categories of the survey consisted out of a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. While research today has a preference for a 7- point scale, this research relied on a 5-point Likert scale in order to compare results to previous research by Malär et al. (2011). In the survey, respondents were asked to answer a number of questions regarding the following four brands within hedonic categories: 'Hugo Boss perfume', 'Adidas', 'Samsung' and 'Apple Smart watches'. The reason for choosing brands within different product categories was to ensure that both men and women were familiar with the brand. The survey was pretested among 15 master students in business administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen and has been adjusted based on their findings. The survey was distributed both in English and Dutch. The back-translation method was used in order to validate right translations of the used scales (Van de Vijver and Hambleton, 1996). This translation method entails that the scales that are used were first translated from English to Dutch by an objective person and then translated back to English again by another objective person.

3.1 Measurement

Regarding each brand used in the survey, respondents were first asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the presented brand. In order to measure the degree of perceived hedonism, respondents were asked to indicate whether they consider the presented brand as a necessity or a luxury. This is important because the hypotheses were formed with regard to brands within hedonic categories. Therefore, if a brand is not being perceived as hedonic, this brand will later be excluded from the analysis.

The level of emotional brand attachment was measured on the basis of three components: 'affection', 'connection' and 'passion' (Thomson et al., 2005). The survey included 2 items per component. With regard to these 6 items in total, respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how their feelings toward brand *X* can be characterized. For example, the items 'my feelings toward brand *X* can be characterized by: affection' and 'my feelings toward brand *X* can be characterized by: passion' were included.

In order to measure the level of actual and ideal self-congruence, the same two-step procedure as Malär et al. (2011) was used. First, and for both 'actual' and 'ideal' self-congruence, respondents were instructed to take a moment to think about brand *X* as if it were a person and then describe this person (i.e. brand) using human characteristics. After this, and to assess 'actual' self-congruence, respondents were asked to think about how they view themselves and how they would describe their own personality. To assess 'ideal' self-congruence, respondents were asked to think about how they would like to see themselves and what kind of person they would like to be. At step two, respondents were given 2 statements and asked to indicate their agreement with that statement. For example, for 'actual' self-congruence one of the statements was 'the personality of brand *X* is consistent with how I see myself' and for 'ideal' self-congruence 'the personality of brand *X* is consistent with how I would like to be' (Malär et al., 2011). A complete overview of the used questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

3.2 Data collection

The chosen data collection method was an online survey. This collection method is often used because it is a fast and inexpensive way to reach a large number of respondents. Also, the possibility to approach respondents in the U.S was physically excluded and therefore an online survey was the best suitable data collection method. The link to the online survey was posted on various university forums and social media platforms (e.g. LinkedIn and Facebook) in the Netherlands and the U.S. as well as sent to a variety of people with the request fill out and distribute the survey.

3.3 Research ethics

According to the APA Ethics Code, respondents were informed about the purpose of this research and the expected duration before filling in the survey. Furthermore, respondents were made aware that participation is voluntary and the contact details of the researcher were provided should they have any questions regarding the survey or research purposes. Even though participation is anonymous, respondents were given the option to fill in their contact details at the end in order to win an Amazon gift card as an incentive to participate.

3.4 Sample description

In total six hundred five people filled in the online survey in two week's time. However, the final sample only included respondents who have been born and raised in respectively the Netherlands and the U.S. and have been living there for the past 20 years. This is important because in order to compare and contrast results based on country effect, the respondents need to be from the same country (i.e. The Netherlands or the U.S.). Sixty-three respondents out of the total sample have not been born and raised in respectively the Netherlands or the U.S. and are therefore excluded. Additionally, respondents who are not familiar with a brand were excluded from the final sample. After excluding these respondents the final sample containing five hundred thirty-one respondents remained and is used for the data analysis.

Furthermore, it is important for the analysis of the data that the brands used in the measurement were perceived as being hedonic. The results show that for each used brand, all of the respondents perceived the brand as being more of a luxury than a necessity. This means that the brands can be seen as being hedonic and therefore no brand was excluded from the analysis.

Out of the final sample 48.6% has been born and raised in the Netherlands and 51.4% has been born and raised in the U.S. Furthermore, the gender of the respondents was almost equally distributed with 47.5% male and 52.5% female. More than 60% of the respondents is younger than 30 years and the largest part of the respondents (i.e. 33%) falls within the age category 21-25 years. Also, 39% of the respondents earns less than €20.000 a year and this is most likely due to the fact that these respondents are studying instead of working. Additionally, an overview of the demographic variables of both the Netherlands and the U.S. can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the final sample

	The Netherlands (n = 258)		The United Stated (n = 273)	
Gender	N	% of total	N	% of total
Male	81	31.4%	171	47.5%
Female	177	68.6%	202	52.5%
Age				
0-20 years	14	5.4%	5	3.6%
21-25 years	122	47.3%	53	19.4%
26-30 years	29	11.2%	104	38.1%
31-40 years	13	5.0%	75	27.5%
41-50 years	16	6.2%	22	8.1%
51-64 years	57	22.1%	7	2.6%
> 65 years	7	2.7%	7	2.6%
Income				
< €20.000	126	48.8%	81	29.7%
€20.000-€34.999	49	19.0%	73	26.7%
€35.000-€49.999	29	11.2%	48	17.6%
€50.000-€74.999	11	4.3%	26	9.5%
€75.000-€99.999	3	1.2%	21	7.7%
€100.000-€149.999	2	0.8%	8	2.9%
>€150.000	0	0%	2	0.7%
No answer	38	14.7%	14	5.1%

3.5 Construct reliability and validity

The three constructs used in the measurement (i.e. actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment) were first assessed on reliability. For each scale used in the measurement, Cronbach's alpha is computed to assess the internal consistency of the scales. Cronbach's alpha for all constructs is between 0.85 and 0.99. Table 3 shows a complete

overview of the computed Cronbach's alphas. A Cronbach's alpha > 0.85 ensures reliability of a measure and therefore the constructs used in this research are reliable (Field, 2013).

Table 3. Internal consistency

Construct	Original # items	Cronbach's alpha	
Emotional brand attachment	6	*Adidas*	0.92
		Samsung	0.93
		Hugo Boss	0.98
		Apple	0.93
Perceived actual self-congruence	2	*Adidas*	0.86
		Samsung	0.85
		Hugo Boss	0.88
		Apple	0.89
Perceived ideal self-congruence	2	*Adidas*	0.99
		Samsung	0.89
		Hugo Boss	0.92
		Apple	0.91

Furthermore, factor analyses were performed to assess convergent and discriminant validity. First, the items per construct were put in a factor analysis and the results in Table 4 show that the items correspond with the dimensional structure of the constructs used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy shows scores above or at the cut-off point of 0.500. In addition, Barlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < .001$) for all constructs used. The last column in Table 4 shows the percentage of explained variance for each construct. Scores between 50% and 75% are considered as having a strong interpretation power from the relationship and scores between 75%-90% are considered to have a very strong interpretation power (Field, 2013).

Table 4. Convergent validity

Construct	KMO measure of sampling adequacy	Barlett's test of sphericity	Percentage explained variance
Emotional brand attachment			
Adidas	0.904	.000	71.7%
Samsung	0.894	.000	73.5%
Hugo Boss	0.946	.000	93.5%
Apple	0.907	.000	74.9%
Perceived actual self-congruence			
Adidas	.500	.000	87.6%
Samsung	.500	.000	86.9%
Hugo Boss	.500	.000	89.9%
Apple	.500	.000	89.8%
Perceived ideal self-congruence			
Adidas	.500	.000	99.7%
Samsung	.500	.000	89.5%
Hugo Boss	.500	.000	63.1%
Apple	.500	.000	91.9%

Additionally, all items were put in one factor analysis to show the number of factors. The principal component analysis shows a number of 3 factors. However, the two items related to actual self-congruence also highly load on the factor emotional brand attachment. In order to increase interpretability, orthogonal rotation (i.e. Varimax) is used. Varimax rotates the factors so that there is more discrimination between high and low loading variables. The results of the principal component analysis and the Varimax rotation can be found in appendix II.

As the factor analyses show, the measure possesses convergent and discriminant validity. The means that the independent measures of the same construct converge. Also, the measure does not correlate too highly with measures from which it is supposed to differ. In addition, each construct used per brand shows internal consistency and therefore no brand is excluded from the data analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1 Data analysis

The data that was gathered through the online survey is analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. When deciding which analysis to use in order to test the hypotheses statistically, the number and types of independent and dependent variables have been taken into account. In this study there is one dependent variable and multiple independent variables. Because the outcome variable is predicted by a linear combination of multiple predictor variables, the hypotheses are tested statistically with a regression analysis.

4.2 Descriptive analysis

Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations of the constructs used. In addition, the Pearson correlation coefficients of the constructs are given.

Table 5. Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics

	The Netherlands ($n = 258$)			The U.S. ($n = 273$)			Total sample ($n = 531$)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Emotional brand attachment									
2. Perceived actual self-congruence	.598*			.449*			.343*		
3. Perceived ideal self-congruence	.249*	.419*		.365*	.754*		.280*	.587*	
Mean	3.15	3.40	2.98	3.5	2.29	2.69	3.32	2.84	2.83
Standard deviation	.88	.85	.93	2.16	1.02	.87	1.67	1.08	0.95

* $p < .01$

The Pearson correlation coefficients indicate that there is a positive correlation between the two independent variables (i.e. actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence) and emotional brand attachment. In the total sample, this relation is stronger for actual self-congruence because this correlation is closer to one (.343) than for ideal self-congruence (.280). This is also the case when looking at the correlations within each country sample. The correlation between

the two independent variables is positive in the total sample (.587), which indicates that if perceived actual self-congruence increases, perceived ideal self-congruence also increases.

4.3 Assumptions regression analysis

Before actually running the regression analyses it is important that the assumptions of a multiple regression analysis are checked. The four basic assumptions for a regression analysis are normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity.

The basic assumption of normality assesses whether the variables are normally distributed. Non-normally distributed variables can distort relationships and significance tests. In order to test this assumption, frequency tables and histograms were plotted to assess the values of skewness and kurtosis. The further the values are from zero, the more likely it is that the data is not normally distributed (Field, 2013). None of the variables used in the measurement showed significant skewness or kurtosis (> 2 of < -2). This means that the assumption of normality is not violated (Field, 2013).

The basic assumption of linearity measures whether the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable are linear in nature. If this relationship is not linear, results of the regression analysis will under-estimate the true relationship. This assumption can be checked together with the assumption of homoscedasticity. This assumption checks whether the variance of errors is the same across all the levels of the independent variables. This assumption together with linearity can be assessed through visual examination of a plot of the standardized errors by the regression standardized predicted value (Field, 2013). This scatterplot plots the values of the residuals against the values of the outcome predicted by the model and can be found in Appendix II. The plot shows no an odd pattern and therefore the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are met (Field, 2013).

The basic assumption of multicollinearity tests whether there exists a strong correlation between two or more predictors. In order to test for multicollinearity the correlation between the independent variables is first checked. As shown in table 5, the independent variables do not show correlation above .70, which means that there is no problematic multicollinearity (Field, 2013). In addition, all tolerance values are above 0.95 and VIF < 2.5 which means that there is no indication for multicollinearity.

4.4 Main effects

The first analysis examines the effects of actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment for all respondents. In this analysis actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence are the independent variables and emotional brand attachment is the dependent variable. H_1, H_2 and H_3 examine whether there exists a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable and do not include country effect. With regard to H_1, H_2 and H_3, there is no separation between respondents from the U.S. and the Netherlands, and therefore all cases are included in this analysis.

Table 6. Effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment

	Model 1:		
	Main effects only		
	($n = 531$)		
	β	*SE*	*p*
(constant)	1.253	.217	
Actual self-congruence	.571*	.062	.000
Ideal self-congruence	.076*	.015	.000
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.16* (.15)		

* p < .001

The results of the regression shows that the model explains a significant proportion of the variance ($R^2 = .16$, F(2,528) = 50.05, $p <$.001). Model 1 shows that there is a significant positive relation between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment in the total sample without controlling for age, gender and income ($β = .571$, $p < .001$). The model also shows that the relation between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and positive in the total sample without controlling for age, gender and income (($β = .076$, $p < .001$).

4.5 Main effects with control variables

In order to measure the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment more precisely, a second analysis has been conducted that adds control variables to the model. Through a hierarchical regression analysis, this second model controls for age, gender and income. Results of the hierarchical multiple regression are shown in the Table 7.

Table 7. Effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment while controlling for age, gender and income

	Model 2:		
	Main effects with control variables		
	($n = 531$)		
	β	SE	p
(constant)	1.475	.320	
Actual self-congruence	.579*	.063	.000
Ideal self-congruence	.072*	.015	.000
Age	.023	.046	.612
Gender	-.186	.138	.179
Income	-.009	.032	.831
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.16* (.15)		

* $p < .001$

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression show that the model still explains a significant proportion of the variance ($R^2 = .16$, F(5,525) = 20.05, $p < .001$.) As model 2 shows, the relationship between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and positive in nature (β = .579, $p < .001$) even after controlling for age, gender and income. Therefore, **H$_1$ is supported**. In addition, model 2 shows that the relationship between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and positive in nature (β = .072, $p < .001$) after controlling for age, gender and income. This means that **H$_2$ is supported**.

In order to test whether actual self-congruence has a stronger effect on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence the beta coefficients of each independent variable are compared. These coefficients reflect the relative importance of each coefficient in the model. As table 7 shows, actual self-congruence (β = .579) has a significantly larger influence on

emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence (β = .072). In other words, actual self-congruence significantly influences emotional brand attachment more than ideal self-congruence and therefore, **H₃ is supported**. In addition, the model shows that age (p=.612), gender (p=.179) and income (p=.813) do not significantly influence the relation between the independent variables and emotional brand attachment.

4.6 Country effect

The next analysis examines the effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment for respondents from the Netherlands and the U.S. separately. In order to measure this relationship as precisely as possible, these models also include the control variables age, gender and income.

Table 8. Effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment while controlling for age, gender and income for respectively the Netherlands and the U.S.

	Model 3: Main effects Netherlands (n = 258)			Model 4: Main effects U.S. (n = 273)		
	β	*SE*	*p*	β	*SE*	*p*
(constant)	.767	.243		1.540	.584	
Actual self-congruence	.507**	.078	.000	.951**	.119	.000
Ideal self-congruence	.142*	.071	.047	.007	.023	.775
Age	.031	.027	.252	-.052	.103	.616
Gender	.092	.096	.341	-.040	.244	.870
Income	-.007	.019	.704	-.019	.064	.761
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)		.37** (.36)			.20** (.19)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

The results of the regression indicate that model 3 explains a significant proportion of the variance (R^2 = .37, F(2,255) = 73.94, p <.001). Also, the results of the regression show that model 4 explains a smaller proportion of the variance than model 3 but is still significant (R^2 = .20, F(2,270) = 34.08, p <.001). As Table 8 shows, the relationship between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and positive in nature in the

Netherlands (β =.505, *p* < .001) as well as in the U.S. (β =.944, *p* < .001). The results of the regressions also show that ideal self-congruence significantly and positively influences emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands (β =.142, *p* < .05). However this relationship is not significant for the U.S. (β =.007, *p* = .775).

The results of model 3 and model 4 indicate that there is a difference between the U.S. and the Netherlands. In order to statistically interpret these differences, a dummy variable has been created. The dummy variable is created for the Netherlands and therefore the U.S. forms the control group. In other words, the dummy score for the Netherlands is one, and the dummy score for the U.S. is zero. A multiple regression was conducted including the dummy and the results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Effects of actual and ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment including Dutch dummy.

	Model 5:		
	Main effects with country effect		
	(*n* = 531)		
	β	SE	*p*
(constant)	1.274	.337	
Actual self-congruence	.929*	.089	.000
Ideal self-congruence	.009	.017	.618
Interaction (Actual * Dutch)	-.620*	.143	.000
Interaction (Ideal * Dutch)	.346*	.056	.000
Age	-.001	.044	.988
Gender	.010	.136	.940
Income	-.008	.031	.796
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)		.23* (.22)	

* p < .001,

The results of the regression indicate that model 5 explains a significant proportion of the variance (R^2 = .23, F(5,525) = 31.81, *p* <.001). The model also shows that the relationship between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment remains significant and

positive in nature (β =.929, *p* < .001). Furthermore, the relationship between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is not significant in this model (*p* = .618). The model also shows that the control variables age (*p*=.612), gender (*p*=.179) and income (*p*=.813) are not significant. In addition, the model shows that the relationship between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and negative when comparing the Netherland to the U.S. (β =-.620, *p* < .001). In other words, actual self-congruence has a significantly weaker effect in the Netherlands compared to the U.S and therefore, **H4A is not supported**. The model shows that the relationship between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant and positive in nature when comparing the Netherlands to the U.S. (β =.346, *p* < .001). This means that ideal self-congruence has a significantly stronger effect in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. and therefore, **H4B is supported**.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion

The main goal of this research was to assess whether the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment differs between consumers in the U.S. and consumer in the Netherlands. Furthermore, this research focussed on whether findings found in utilitarian categories could be applied to hedonic product categories.

First, the results of this research show that for both consumers in the Netherlands and in the U.S., actual self-congruence has a significant influence on emotional brand attachment within hedonic product categories. Previous research within utilitarian product categories also found this significant positive relation between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that brands in utilitarian as well as hedonic categories can establish an emotional connection to consumers by focusing on who these consumers 'actually' are. In addition, findings of this research show that actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence. This can explain why a traditional approach to branding (i.e. focusing on the actual self) is gaining importance.

Second, the results show that ideal self-congruence significantly influences emotional brand attachment in the total sample. However, when looking at the results in the Netherlands and the U.S. separately, the influence of ideal self-congruence is only significant for consumers in the Netherlands. The relation between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is also significantly stronger for consumers in the Netherlands compared to consumers from the

U.S. However, within the Netherlands actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence has on emotional brand attachment. These results indicate that it is possible that ideal self-congruence influences emotional brand attachment, but that factors such as a consumer's country, can influence this relation. This is in line with research within utilitarian product categories, which has shown that ideal self-congruence only influences emotional brand attachment for consumers with low self-esteem, low public consciousness and low product involvement (Malär et al., 2011). Accordingly, it can be concluded that ideal self-congruence can influence emotional brand attachment but that factors, such as country effect, need to be taken into account. Although traditional branding is gaining importance, this forms an explanation as to why companies still rely on an aspirational approach to branding (i.e. focussing on the ideal self).

Third, as the results show, there is a difference in the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment between the Netherlands and the U.S. In both the Netherlands and the U.S., actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence. The influence of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment is significantly stronger for consumers in the U.S. than for consumers in the Netherlands. Ideal self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment for consumers in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. This is interesting because within the Netherlands, actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment compared to the influence of ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment. Because of these results, it can be concluded that a consumer's country can influence the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. When companies choose between an aspirational or traditional branding strategy they need to take the consumer's country into account.

5.2 Discussion

The primary focus of this research was to develop a better understanding of which consumers' self is best to target within hedonic product categories. Findings of this research support that actual self-congruence (i.e. using a traditional approach to branding by focussing on the actual self) has a significant positive influence on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories. These findings correspond to previous findings within utilitarian product categories.

An explanation for this is that, in both product categories, consumers look for brands that reflect the reality and are authentic. By consuming a brand that is authentic, consumers feel more in control of their own social status (Doherty and Schlenker, 1991). This is important because consumers use brands in both utilitarian and hedonic categories as a way to express themselves to others. By consuming an actually self-congruent brand, consumers ensure that they communicate who they really are and don't set expectations that they can't meet. This in turn leads to higher levels of emotional brand attachment.

In addition, the assumption of this research was that actual self-congruence would lead to even higher levels of emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. However, the findings do not support this. The results do show that, within the Netherlands and within the U.S., actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence. In addition, the results show that actual self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence in the U.S. compared to the Netherlands. This is interesting because consumers in the Netherlands are more modest than consumers in the U.S. (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). This would make it likely that, compared to consumers in the U.S., consumers from the Netherlands would put more focus on brands that reflect who they 'truly' are. Consumers from the Netherlands do still look for brands that reflect their actual self but not significantly more than consumers from the U.S., who are less modest and more focussed on showing their social status. An explanation for this could be that consumers in the Netherlands perceive lower levels of product involvement compared to consumers in the U.S. Previous research within utilitarian categories suggests that product involvement strengthens the relation between actual self-congruence and emotional brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011). An explanation for this is that consumers, who have a high level of product involvement, will try to elaborate on the connection between the brand and their actual self, which leads to higher levels of emotional brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011). Previous research also suggests that choosing a brand for self-verification requires substantial cognitive efforts (Swann et al., 1990; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Consumers who have a higher level of product involvement are more willing to make this effort compared to consumers who have a lower level of product involvement. Therefore, it could be that consumers from the U.S. are more willing to choose a brand for self-verification purposes compared to consumers from the Netherlands. When consumers put more effort into choosing a brand, they also feel greater incorporation of that brand into their self-concept (Malär et al., 2011). This in turn leads to a higher level of emotional brand attachment.

The findings of this research also support that ideal self-congruence (i.e. using an aspirational approach to branding by focussing on the ideal self) has a significant positive influence on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories. However, this relation is less straight forward than for actual self-congruence and there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account. First, findings within utilitarian categories suggest that ideal self-congruence only leads to emotional brand attachment for consumers with low levels of self-esteem, product involvement and public self-consciousness (Malär et al., 2011). Furthermore, using brands for self-enhancement (i.e. ideally self-congruent brands) is more likely to occur when cognitive capacity of consumers is limited (Swann et al., 1990). This is the case for brands within hedonic categories as consumption of these brands is more emotionally driven than cognitive. This could explain why the relationship between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is significant within hedonic categories.

Furthermore, findings of this research suggest that a consumer's country can influence the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. For consumers in the Netherlands, ideal self-congruence does significantly influence emotional brand attachment while for consumers in the U.S. this relationship is not significant. Also, the relation is significantly stronger in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. It is possible that the factors that influence the relation between ideal self-congruence and emotional brand attachment within utilitarian categories also apply to hedonic categories. For example, it could be that consumers from the Netherlands have a lower level of self-esteem. Consumers who have a low level of self-esteem use self-enhancement (i.e. ideally self-congruent brands) as a way to feel better about themselves. Consequently, these consumers form a stronger relation to brands that represent their ideal self, compared to consumers who have a higher level of self-esteem. Also, and as previously mentioned, it could be that consumers in the Netherlands have a lower level of product involvement compared to consumers in the U.S. When product involvement is low, consumers prefer self-enhancing brands (i.e. ideally self-congruent brands) because this requires less cognitive capacity than self-verification. However, applying the factor 'public self-consciousness' to findings of this research proposes some contradictions. Research within utilitarian categories suggests that ideal self-congruence only effects emotional brand attachment when consumers have a low level of public self-consciousness. According to Malär et al. (2011), an explanation for this is that these consumers care less about the impression they make on others and do not fear that an ideally self-congruent brand sets other's expectations too high. In addition, these consumers take more risk and are less concerned with regard to their public impression on others (Tunnel, 1984). In contrast, consumers from the Netherlands take

less risk and are more modest compared to consumers in the U.S (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). Therefore, it is likely that consumers from the Netherlands have a higher level of public self-consciousness compared to consumers from the U.S.

It can be concluded that findings from this research show differences compared to previous research within utilitarian categories. Consequently, findings within utilitarian categories are not generalizable to hedonic product categories. More research in both categories is needed in order to get more generalizable results regarding the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. Also, the results differ between the Netherlands and the U.S. and therefore, a consumer's country does influence the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. More research is needed to assess the nature of these difference and what other country specific factors play an important role in how consumer's attach to brands.

5.3 Theoretical implication

This research adds to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. First, this research confirms the positive influence of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories and therefore also the success of an authentic approach to branding within these categories. By focussing on who the consumer 'actually' is, brands can generate trust and establish an emotional connection. This can be linked to self-consistency theory, which states that consumers search for brands that affirm their sense of self and avoid brands that threaten their sense of self (Swann, 1983). Findings of this research confirm that self-consistency theory can be applied to both brands in utilitarian and hedonic product categories. Second, this research confirms that ideal self-congruence can influence emotional brand attachment within hedonic product categories. In line with self-enhancement theory, consuming brands that are congruent with the 'ideal' self can lead to an emotional connection to that brand (Sirgy, 1982). However, as previous research already suggested, there are factors that can influence this relationship. For example, consumers who have a low level of self-esteem, and try to compensate for this lack of self-esteem by consuming ideally self-congruent brands, might get disappointed if their self-esteem doesn't rise. This in turn can lead to a lower level of emotional brand attachment. Third, this research contributes to the current literature by incorporating a consumer's country. Adding country effect as a moderator has shown that a consumer's country does influence the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. In particular, the findings support that ideal self-congruence has a stronger effect on brand attachment for consumers in the

Netherlands compared to consumers from the U.S. The Netherlands is a society that is feminine in nature and scores high on the dimensions individualism and long-term orientation. Furthermore, consumers from the Netherlands tend to have a higher level of possessiveness and innovativeness, which in turn leads to a stronger emotional attachment to brands. Surprisingly, the results show that actual self-congruence doesn't have a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. Also, the results show that ideal self-congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. This is an important finding because an authentic approach to branding is gaining favour while this branding strategy might not be the best suitable strategy for all consumers.

5.4 Managerial implications

The results of this research provide a number of important implications for marketing managers. First of all, the results confirm that the consumer's self needs to be taken into account when a brand wants to establish an emotional attachment. As mentioned earlier, marketing managers are increasingly interested in how to establish an emotional connection to their brand because it leads to stronger brand loyalty and performance (Park et al., 2010). Marketing managers can use a traditional branding strategy to connect to a consumer's actual self and an aspirational branding strategy to connect to a consumer's ideal self. Knowing when to use which branding strategy can lead to higher levels of brand loyalty and trust which in turn increase brand equity (Park et al., 2010). This means that marketing managers are advised to take the targeted consumers' self-views into account when defining their brand's personality. For example, when targeting a consumer's actual self, a brand's personality should reflect sincerity and authenticity (Aaker et al, 2004). Doing so will increase the fit between the target consumers' self-views and a certain brand and accordingly will lead to higher levels of emotional brand attachment.

Next, the results indicate that, in general, actual-self congruence has a significantly stronger influence on emotional brand attachment within hedonic categories than ideal self-congruence. This would imply that marketing managers should put more focus on tailoring the brand's personality to the consumer's actual self. However, ideal self-congruence is also able to influence emotional brand attachment. Although this relationship is weaker in this research, this doesn't mean that it should be neglected nor that an authentic approach to branding is always the most successful. For brands within hedonic product categories, an aspirational approach to branding might even be more successful because consumption within these categories is emotionally driven (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). In other words, consumers do not

only buy branded products within these categories based on function and price but also on how it makes the consumers feel to own these brands. An aspirational approach to branding might be better able to communicate the emotions that come with owning a brand than an authentic approach to branding. In addition, it is important to note that not all brands fall either within a utilitarian category or a hedonic category, but are 'somewhere in the middle'. For example, fashion brands such as 'Zara' can be seen as both utilitarian and hedonic. The products of 'Zara' are probably perceived more hedonic compared to fashion brands such as 'H&M', but are being perceived more utilitarian compared to brands such as 'Prada'. Therefore, it is possible that some consumers perceive 'Zara' as being utilitarian, while other consumers perceive 'Zara' to be hedonic. For marketing managers it is important to be aware that consumers can differ in how they perceive a brand, because this can influence their emotional attachment to that brand. There are also brands with products in both utilitarian product categories and hedonic product categories. For example, Bosch sells microwaves, which are more utilitarian, and wine cellars, which are more hedonic. It is possible that the target groups for each of these products differ in their self-views and accordingly in the way they connect to a brand. Marketing managers are therefore advised to not favour one branding strategy over the other, but to carefully assess which strategy is best suitable according to the target group and the product category.

Finally, the results show the importance of taking a consumer's country into consideration when formulating a branding strategy. Especially for global brand managers it is important to understand how consumers from different countries will respond to their brand. For example, a marketing campaign focussing on the 'ideal' self might lead to emotional brand attachment in one country but not in another. Especially, as the world is becoming more 'flat' (e.g. due to globalization) and brands are able to reach consumers all over the globe, it is important that marketing managers are aware of these differences between consumers. Although implementing the same marketing campaign in different countries is cost efficient, this 'one shoe fits all' approach does not necessarily causes consumers to respond in the same favourable way. Marketing managers are therefore advised to take into consideration how a consumer's country influences a consumer's self-views. Accordingly, they can evaluate which branding strategy is more likely to establish an emotional connection. To conclude, marketing managers are advised to tailor their branding strategies to each specific country they want to target in order to generate higher levels of emotional brand attachment.

5.5 Limitations and further research

One of the limitations of this research is that only data from the Netherlands and the U.S. is included in order to examine the effect of a consumer's country on the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment. Also, respondents were contacted through the personal network of the researchers. This means that not all consumers in the Netherlands and the U.S. had the opportunity to be included in the sample. In addition, the samples of both countries were not exactly the same in terms of demographics. For example, in the sample from the Netherlands more women were included and the average age was lower compared to the sample from the U.S. However, this research controlled for age, gender and income and none of these showed a significant influence. This means that the sample from the U.S. can be viewed as being representative for all consumers in the U.S. in terms of age, gender, and income. Also, the sample from the Netherlands can be viewed as representative for all consumers in the Netherlands in terms of age, gender, and income. Future researchers are advised to obtain a larger sample and include more control variables, such as educational level, in order to ensure more generalizability of the findings. Research in the Netherlands and the U.S. showed different results while these two countries are rather similar in economical and physical terms. For example, the countries used in this research are both western and among the top 15 richest countries in the world (Boulhol et al., 2008). Hence, it is likely that research on countries that are very different such as China or Russia could lead to different results. Although it seems that countries are becoming more alike (e.g. through globalization and easier access to information), there still exists a lot of difference between countries. Because of this, findings from the Netherlands and the U.S. aren't generalizable to other countries. Therefore, researchers are advised to include data from more different countries in their research. Doing so will provide a better understanding of the effect of a consumer's country on the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment.

Another limitation of this research is the used measurement. First of all, only the outcome measures of actual and ideal self-congruence are examined. The reason for only including the outcomes measures was to ensure that findings within hedonic categories could be compared to research within utilitarian that used the same measure. In order to get a better understanding of what exactly drives actual and ideal self-congruence, future researcher are advised to include a more detailed measure. For example, to gain insight into how self-enhancement can lead to negative emotional responses instead of positive responses. Second, the measurement used in this research included questions regarding four brands within hedonic product categories. Although all brands are perceived as being hedonic, future researchers would be advised to examine more brands within hedonic product categories to improve the

generalizability of outcomes to all hedonic product categories. In addition, future researchers would be advised not to focus on one type of product category only but include brands ranging from purely utilitarian to purely hedonic product categories. This will increase the generalizability of outcomes to all product categories.

The last limitation of this research is that only country effect is included as a moderator. Country effect is assessed on the basis of culture, the level of possessiveness and the level of innovativeness. However, the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment might be different for consumers in the Netherlands compared to the U.S. due to other country specific factors. For example, in contrast to the U.S., the Netherlands is a welfare state. In the Netherlands, the government plays a key role in the protection of the social and economic well-being of its citizens (Kuhnle, 2003). This means that all Dutch citizens have social security and the guarantee of a minimum income. This is not the same for citizens in the U.S., where for example, health care is not mandated or provided by the government. The fact that consumers in the U.S. are not necessarily ensured of their social and economical well-being could influence their purchase behaviour. Therefore, future researchers are advised to take more country specific factors into account when assessing a consumer's country. Also, previous research suggests that factors other than a consumer's country that can influence the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment (e.g. level of self-esteem and product involvement). Future researchers are advised to take a deeper look into factors that can influence the relation between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire in English and in Dutch

English version

Dear participant,

First of all I would like to thank you for your participation. In this survey you will be asked to indicate your feelings toward three brands. Please take your time to carefully read the questions and indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the given statements. Your answers will only be used for research purposes and participation is anonymous. If you want the chance to win an Amazon gift card you can leave your e-mail address at the end of this survey. If you have any questions or concerns please contact: juliette.aben@student.ru.nl

1. Have you been born and raised in the U.S.?
0 Yes

0 No

2. Have you been living in the U.S. for the past 20 years?

0 Yes

0 No

In the next section you will be presented with a few brands and asked to indicate how you feel with regard to that brand. Please take your time and if you are unfamiliar with the brand fill in 'neutral'.

3. I am familiar with brand X_1

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
O	O	O	O	O

4. I consider products from brand X_1 to be:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
A necessity	O	O	O	O	O
A luxury	O	O	O	O	O

5. My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Affection	O	O	O	O	O
Love	O	O	O	O	O
Connection	O	O	O	O	O
Passion	O	O	O	O	O
Delight	O	O	O	O	O
Captivation	O	O	O	O	O

Please take a moment to think about brand X_1. Now describe this brand (in your head) using personality characteristics such as reliable, nice, honest, charming etc. Now think about how you see yourself (what kind of person are you and how would you describe your own personality?). Once you've done this, please indicate your opinion to the following statements:

6. The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I see myself:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

O   O   O   O   O

7. The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of me:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

O   O   O   O   O

Please take a moment to think about brand X_1. Now describe this brand (in your head) using personality characteristics such as reliable, nice, honest, charming etc. Now think about how you *would like to* see yourself (what kind of person would you like to be). Once you've done this, please indicate your opinion to the following statements:

8. The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I would like to be:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

O   O   O   O   O

9. The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of the person I would like to be:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

O   O   O   O   O

Questions 3-9 will be repeated 3 times for respectively Hugo Boss, Adidas and Apple Smart watches

10. Gender
0 Male
0 Female

11. Age

12. What is your income

0 Less than $20.000

0 $20.000 - $34.999

0 $35.000 - $49.999

0 $50.000 - $74.999

0 $75.000 - $99.999

0 $100.000 - $149.999

0 $150.000 or more

0 I rather not share this information

Thank you for your participation! If you would like the opportunity to win an Amazon gift card you can fill in your e-mail address below:

Dutch version

Beste respondent,

Allereerst bedankt voor je medewerking. In deze vragenlijst wordt je gevraagd je gevoelens ten opzichte van twee merken aan te geven. Neem de tijd om de vragen rustig en goed door te lezen en geef aan in hoeverre je het eens of oneens bent met de gegeven stellingen. Je antwoorden worden alleen gebruikt voor dit onderzoek en je deelname is anoniem. Wil je kans maken op een cadeaukaart van Bol.com, laat dan je e-mailadres achter aan het einde van de vragenlijst. Je e-mailadres wordt alleen gebruikt voor de prijsvraag en je antwoorden worden er niet aan gelinkt. Heb je vragen of opmerkingen, neem dan contact op met juliette.aben@student.ru.nl

1. Ben je geboren en getogen in Nederland?
0 Ja

0 Nee

2. Heb je de afgelopen 20 jaar in Nederland gewoond?

0 Ja

0 Nee

In het volgende deel worden een aantal merken gepresendeerd. Geef je gevoelens aan ten opzichte van dat merk. Neem de tijd om je mening te vormen,

3. Ik ben bekend met merk X1

Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
O	O	O	O	O

4. Ik zie producten van merk X1 als

	Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
Noodzakelijk	O	O	O	O	O
Luxe	O	O	O	O	O

5. Mijn gevoelens ten opzichte van merk X1 worden gekenmerkt door:

	Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
Affectie	O	O	O	O	O
Liefde	O	O	O	O	O
Connectie	O	O	O	O	O
Passie	O	O	O	O	O
Genot	O	O	O	O	O
Fascinatie	O	O	O	O	O

Neem even de tijd om na te denken over je merk X alsof het een persoon zou zijn. Beschrijf deze persoon met behulp van persoonlijkheidskenmerken, zoals betrouwbaar, aardig, eerlijk, charmant, enzovoort. Denk vervolgens na over jezelf (Wat voor persoon ben je en hoe zou je je persoonlijkheid omschrijven). Zodra je dit hebt gedaan, geef dan aan in hoeverre je het eens of oneens bent met de volgende uitspraken:

6. De persoonlijkheid van dit merk komt overeen met hoe ik mezelf zie

Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
O	O	O	O	O

7. De persoonlijkheid van dit merk is een spiegelbeeld van mij

Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
O	O	O	O	O

Neem nogmaals een moment om na te denken over je merk X alsof het een persoon zou zijn. Denk nu na over hoe je jezelf zou willen zien (je ideale zelf). Wat voor persoon zou je willen zijn? Zodra je dit hebt gedaan, geef dan aan in hoeverre je het eens of oneens bent met de volgende uitspraken.

8. De persoonlijkheid van dit merk komt overeen met hoe ik zou willen zijn

Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
O	O	O	O	O

9. De persoonlijkheid van dit merk is een spiegelbeeld van de persoon die ik zou willen zijn

Volledig mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Volledig mee eens
O	O	O	O	O

Vragen 3-9 zullen worden herhaald voor Hugo Boss, Adidas, Samsing en Apple Smart watches

10. Wat is je geslacht

0 Man

0 Vrouw

11. Wat is je leeftijd

12. Wat is je inkomen

0 Minder dan €20.000

0 €20.000 - €34.999

0 €35.000 - €49.999

0 €50.000 - €74.999

0 €75.000 - €99.999

0 €100.000 - €149.999

0 €150.000 of meer

0 Ik deel deze informatie liever niet

Bedankt voor je deelname! Wil je kans maken op een bol.com cadeaukaart t.w.v 20 euro, laat dan je e-mailadres achter:
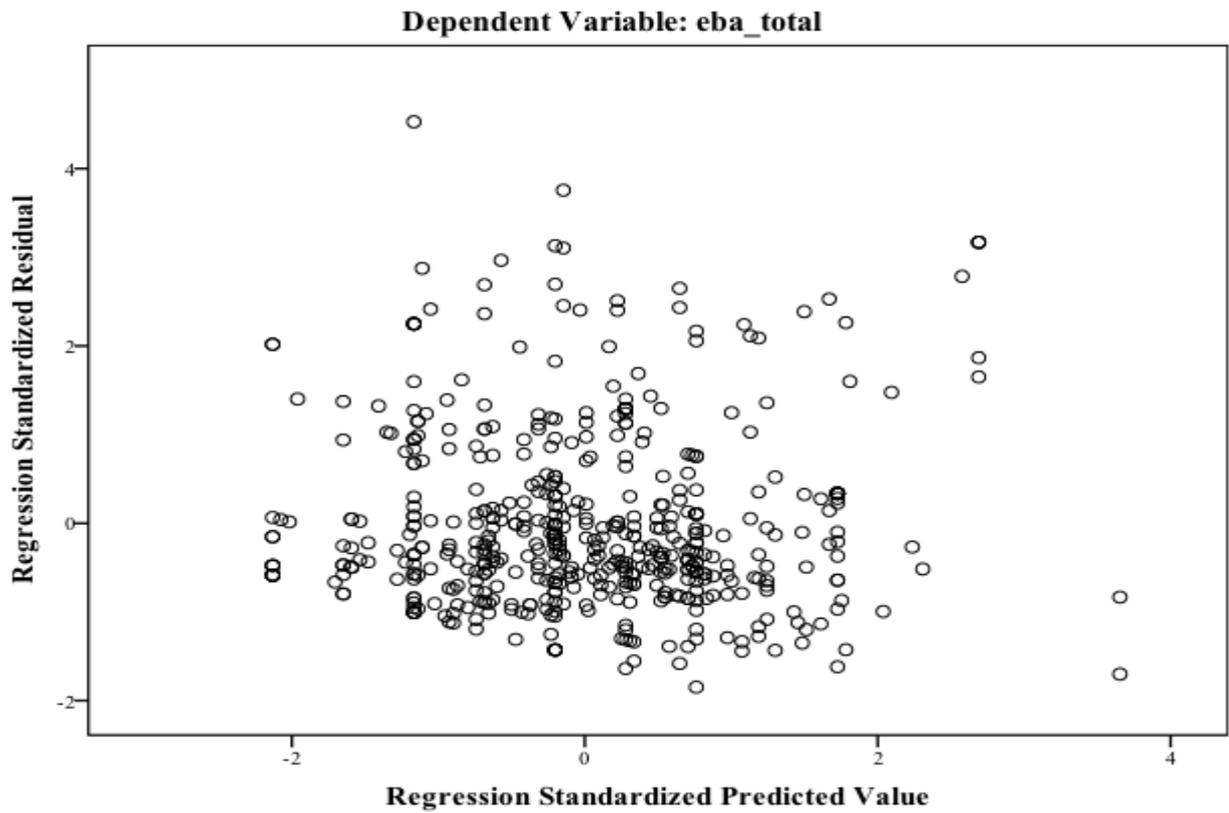

Appendix II SPSS Output

Figure 1: Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: eba_total

Table 1: Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Affection	.826	-.078	.091
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized – Love	.860	-.140	.040
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Connection	.850	.065	.073
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Passion	.802	.166	.212
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Delight	.810	.018	.269
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Captivation	.820	.080	.269
The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I see myself	.779	.160	-.460
The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of me	.767	.069	-.535
The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	.767	.069	-.535

The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I would like to be   -.170   .891   .073

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Affection	.742	.344	-.164
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized – Love	.740	.400	-.231
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Connection	.762	.387	-.025
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Passion	.802	.255	.088
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Delight	.829	.196	-.057
My feelings toward brand X_1 can be characterized by - Captivation	.841	.207	.004
The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I see myself	.427	.812	.049
The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of me	.372	.860	-.044
The personality of brand X_1 is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	-.047	-.058	.907
The personality of brand X_1 is consistent with how I would like to be	.048	.038	.914