

All you need is Brand Love?

A research into the Antecedents of Brand Love and the moderating effect of Compulsive Buying

Name: Estelle Roelofs

Student number: S4239032

Radboud University

First supervisor: Dr. C. Horváth (Csilla)

Second supervisor: Dr. H.W.M. Joosten (Herm)

Masterthesis topic: Compulsive buyers and the antecedents of brand love

Nijmegen, June 17, 2019

Abstract

In the relatively new topic on brand love, this study aims to gain more knowledge about the factors leading to brand love. This thesis researches three antecedents on brand love; brand identification, sense of brand community and positive evaluation of the quality of the brand. Past research showed that all three antecedents have a positive effect on brand love. This study, however, examines the relationship between the antecedents and brand love in the clothing industry. In addition to this, this thesis also examines another interesting concept; namely compulsive buying. This study uses qualitative research, using a large sample (N = 800) to test if compulsive buying has a moderating effect on the relationship between the antecedents and brand love. Results show that brand identification, sense of brand community and positive evaluation of the quality of the brand have a positive and significant effect on brand love in the clothing industry. The analysis failed to find a significant moderating effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between the antecedents and brand love. This thesis, however, offers interesting insights in the concepts of brand love and compulsive buying and offers theoretical and managerial implications.

Index

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Research question	2
1.2 Theoretical relevance	2
1.3 Managerial relevance	2
1.4 Structure of the thesis.....	3
2. Theoretical background	4
2.1 Brand love	4
2.2 Antecedents of brand love.....	4
2.2.1 Brand identification.....	4
2.2.2 Sense of brand community	5
2.2.3 Positive evaluation of the quality of the brand	5
2.3 Compulsive buying behaviour.....	6
2.3.1 The moderating effect of compulsive buying on the antecedents of brand love	7
2.4 Conceptual model	8
3. Methodology	9
3.1 Method	9
3.2 Data collection.....	9
3.3 Data analysis procedure	9
3.4 Limitations and ethics	10
4. Results.....	11
4.1 Measurement validation	11
4.2 Sample and data analyses.....	11
4.3 Hypothesis tests for the main effects	12
4.4 Hypothesis tests for moderating effect	13
5. Discussion	16
5.1 Discussion of the main effects.....	16

5.2 Discussion of the moderating effects.....	17
6. Implications, recommendations and limitations.....	20
6.1 Theoretical implications.....	20
6.2 Managerial implications.....	21
6.4 Research limitations.....	23
References.....	24
Appendix I	29
Appendix II	31
Appendix III.....	33

1. Introduction

Compulsive buying has been investigated for over 20 years by consumer researchers (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Hirschman, 1992; Faber & O'Guinn, 1992). In recent years, there has been increased interest in compulsive buying and their relationship with brands (Lee & Workman, 2015; Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2012). Compulsive buying is conceptualised as “the chronic and repetitive purchasing that becomes the primary response to negative events or feelings” (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989, p.155).

There is limited knowledge about the differences between compulsive and non-compulsive buyers regarding brand relationships (Lee & Workman, 2015; Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). An exploratory study by Horváth and Van Birgelen (2015) indicates that non-compulsive buyers score higher than non-compulsive buyers on brand trust, brand attachment and willingness to pay a higher price for their favourite brands. Their study also indicated that compulsive buyers struggle with naming a favourite brand and that they engage in more brand-switching behaviour than non-compulsive buyers.

A study by Lee and Workman (2015) contradicts these exploratory findings, showing that high level compulsive buyers are more likely to score higher on brand attachment than low level compulsive buyers. As the results of their study are limited in generalisation, they also note the importance of further research on compulsive buying and other brand variables.

Further research on a larger scale is needed to empirically test the relationship between brands and compulsive buying. This gap in the literature of compulsive buying is what is needed to be examined further in qualitative research. Using a larger qualitative study, this thesis aims to fill the gap in the literature on compulsive buying and brands by offering insight on the differences between compulsive buyers and non-compulsive buyers and their relationship with brands.

As Lee and Workman (2015) state, it would be interesting to investigate compulsive buying behaviour in relation to certain brand variables (e.g. brand love, brand trust and brand engagement). A comprehensive brand variable is brand love, which comprises multiple cognitions, emotions and behaviours. Brand love is “the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a person has for a particular trade name” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p.81). Brand love includes and goes beyond brand attachment, which is related to compulsive buying (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Albert *et al.*, 2008, Lee & Workman, 2015). Brand love also influences important marketing variables, for example word-of-mouth and brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). This makes brand love an interesting brand variable to investigate in relation to

compulsive buying behaviour. The process of brand love and how it affects compulsive buyers versus non-compulsive buyers goes beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis will instead focus on three antecedents leading to brand love (i.e. brand identification, sense of brand community and positive evaluation of the quality of the brand) and how these antecedents differ among compulsive buyers and non-compulsive buyers.

1.1 Research question

The research question of this thesis is as follows:

Do compulsive buyers and non-compulsive buyers differ in the antecedents leading to brand love?

1.2 Theoretical relevance

This thesis contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, by examining the differences between compulsive and non-compulsive buyers in the antecedents of brand love, this research provides insight into a yet unstudied area of compulsive buying and brands. The concept of brand love has received increased attention by researchers in recent years (Batra *et al.*, 2012). No literature to date exists about how compulsive buyers (compared to non-compulsive buyers) experience brand love, and how the factors that lead to brand love differ for consumers with compulsive buying disorder. This thesis investigates three important antecedents of brand love and how compulsive buying moderates the effects of those antecedents.

Second, the qualitative and larger-scale nature of this research is a significant contribution to existing literature. Current exploratory research concerns the differences between compulsive and non-compulsive buyers regarding brand factors (e.g. brand trust, brand attachment and willingness to pay a higher price) (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). Research by Lee and Workman (2015) investigates how brand factors (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand attachment and perceived quality of the brand) affect compulsive buying behaviour; their study, however, was only comprised of U.S. students and is thus limited in generalisation (Lee & Workman, 2015).

1.3 Managerial relevance

This thesis can offer managerial implications for brands. In order to maintain the relationship between a customer and a brand over time, brand managers are interested in turning brands that are liked into brands that are loved (Batra *et al.*, 2012). There are multiple ways for a brand manager to turn a 'liked' brand into a 'loved' brand. For example, by using personalisation programmes and making the buying process more fun, brand managers can facilitate the customers' need to use the brand and invest in it. Over time, this will help the brand to be more

loved (Batra *et al.*, 2012). For non-compulsive buyers, processes like these do not need to be problematic. Given the negative consequences of compulsive buying (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992), however, constant tempting of the compulsive buyer to buy products may be unethical, because it may lead to over-spending (Lee & Workman, 2015). Since this thesis will provide insight on how compulsive buyers experience the process leading to brand love, brand managers can use this information to initiate socially responsible marketing. They can create awareness about the dangers of destructive shopping habits through campaigns about responsible shopping.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows: In Section 2 the existing literature is reviewed, and hypotheses developed. Section 3 discusses the methodology of this research. In Section 4 the results of the survey are presented. Section 5 encompasses a discussion of the results, which leads to Section 6: the theoretical and managerial implications, recommendations and the limitations of this research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Brand love

Over recent years, the concept of brand love has been of particular interest to marketing researchers (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Batra *et al.* (2012) uncover various elements of the ‘brand love prototype’, offering more insight into the complex nature of brand love. The brand love prototype includes seven core elements: “(1) passion-driven behaviours, (2) self-brand integration, (3) positive emotional connection, (4) anticipated separation distress, (5) long-term relationship, (6) positive attitude valence and (7) attitudes held with high certainty and confidence” (Batra *et al.*, 2012, p.13). Loving a brand goes further than just liking a brand, brand love is a long-term relationship with the brand, in which the brand is integrated into the person’s sense of identity (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love is unidirectional, meaning that the person loves the brand and not the other way around, as is normal in interpersonal love. The person thus does not expect the brand to love him or her back (Whang *et al.*, 2004).

Brand love has been shown to lead to higher brand loyalty and a more active engagement with the brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). This is in line with the brand love prototype: brand love leads to higher brand loyalty, increased word-of-mouth and resistance to negative information (Batra *et al.*, 2012).

2.2 Antecedents of brand love

Little research has been conducted on the antecedents of brand love. Past research shows that the types of brands that are more likely to be loved, are hedonic in nature (versus utilitarian) and/or brands that are self-expressive (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). As this thesis focuses on how compulsive buyers differ from non-compulsive buyers regarding antecedents leading to brand love, factors that are intrinsic to the person instead of to the product or brand are more applicable.

2.2.1 Brand identification

The concept of brand identification is built on social identity theory, which describes the perception of oneness with a group, leading to activities that are congruent with the identity (Kuenzel, & Halliday, 2010; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Brand identification is the overlap in which a person’s self-image matches with the image of the brand, other researchers refer to this phenomenon as ‘self-image congruity’ (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Hughes & Ahearne, 2010; Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). The self-image is a subjective representation of how a person sees him- or herself (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). The brand image

refers to the associations in which a person derives functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010).

According to the social identity theory, people seek to enhance their self-image by engaging in activities that are congruent with their identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Research has found that consumers use material possessions to strengthen their self-image (Belk, 1988). A more recent study by Ahuvia (2005) builds on this notion, finding that objects that are loved are central to a person's identity and suggest that if a person's identification with a brand is high (e.g. the image of the brand integrates with one's self-image), it is more likely that he or she will develop brand love (Ahuvia, 2005). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Higher levels of brand identification result in increased brand love.

2.2.2 Sense of brand community

The social identity theory posits that sense of community is the extent to which a person feels affiliation with a group (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2010). Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) introduced the concept of brand community, which, like other communities, is marked by "a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p.412). This research makes use of *sense* of brand community, and not the extent in which a person is in an actual brand community. By using sense of brand community, the concept is more applicable for a wider audience and therefore also applicable for a wider variety of brands (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). In a brand community, the continuous interaction of consumers leads to increased consumer relationships within the community over time, leading to more brand value in the long term (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), "Brand love oftentimes is the result of a consumer's long-term relationship with the brand" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p.81). It can thus be suggested that the sharing of values and utilities in a brand community over time leads to the development of brand love. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Higher levels of sense of brand community result in increased brand love.

2.2.3 Positive evaluation of the quality of the brand

How a consumer perceives the quality of a brand is determined by various characteristics (e.g. price, positive brand image and product compositions) (Jacoby *et al.*, 1971). Higher perceived brand quality leads to positive brand outcomes, like brand loyalty (Chi *et al.*, 2009).

Consumers have been shown to be attracted to things (for example clothing or cars) that fulfil certain needs or provide benefits (Murstein, 1988). In contrast to some forms of interpersonal love, brand love is not unconditional. Research has demonstrated that consumers

praise brands because of their attractive qualities, such a high trustworthiness and excellent performance (Batra *et al.*, 2012). For the third hypothesis, the following is proposed:

H3: Higher levels of positive evaluation of the quality of the brand result in increased brand love.

2.3 Compulsive buying behaviour

Compulsive buying is typified by behaviour that is repetitive and a primary response to negative emotions (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). People who suffer from compulsive buying behaviour feel the uncontrollable need to buy products, this behaviour is typically excessive and chronic (Billieux *et al.*, 2008). Compulsive buyers use shopping as a response mechanism to negative emotional states (Valence *et al.*, 1988). This is in line with studies conducted by psychiatric researchers, showing that a person with compulsive buying disorder, when experiencing anxiety, needs to make a purchase in order to feel a sense of completion (Black, 2007). This motivation for buying products is what distinguishes compulsive shopping behaviour from normal shopping behaviour. Whilst normal shoppers buy products for their usefulness, or because they need them, compulsive buyers buy (mostly useless and/or unused) products because the buying process makes them feel better about themselves (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Billieux *et al.*, 2008). Compulsive buyers have been shown to mostly purchase clothing and other appearance-related goods (Dittmar, 2005).

Negative feelings and emotions are not only an antecedent to compulsive buying, but also a consequence of it. Compulsive buying has severe negative consequences, such as feelings of remorse, lowered self-esteem and distress (Lejoyeux & Weinstein, 2010; Black, 2007). Other consequences of compulsive buying include financial and legal problems and troubles with interpersonal relationships (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989).

Multiple researchers have examined the demographic and personality traits of compulsive buyers (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Faber & O'Guinn, 1992; McElroy *et al.*, 1994; Dittmar, 2005). Three personality traits are common among compulsive buyers: 1) they are more likely to have compulsivity as a personality trait; 2) they tend to have the ability to fantasise (about, for example, social acceptance and/or success); and 3) they generally exhibit low self-esteem (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989).

Multiple studies suggest that most compulsive buyers are women (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992, McElroy *et al.*, 1994; Dittmar, 2005). A study by Koran *et al.* (2006), however, suggested that an equal percentage of men and women are compulsive buyers. Younger people are more likely than older people to be compulsive buyers (Dittmar, 2005).

2.3.1 The moderating effect of compulsive buying on the antecedents of brand love

Compulsive buyers have been shown to exhibit low self-esteem as a personality trait (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). When a person has low self-esteem, his or her definition of the self is unfavourable. One way to enhance self-esteem is to buy products from brands that match with one's self-image or one's ideal self-image (Malär *et al.*, 2011; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Research has demonstrated that the buying process (especially the buying of prestigious brands) helps compulsive buyers to improve their self-image, moving them closer to their ideal self-image (Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2012). In addition to this, compulsive buyers have shown to have most interest in clothing and other appearance-based products (Dittmar, 2005). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4: The effect of brand identification as an antecedent for brand love is stronger for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

Exploratory research has indicated that compulsive buyers have a lower degree of brand attachment than non-compulsive buyers and are more prone to brand switching (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). This suggests that compulsive buyers are less interested in maintaining a long-term relationship with the brand and its community. Moreover, 74% of compulsive buyers prefer to shop individually (Black, 2001). Compulsive buyers have also been shown to experience remorseful feelings after their shopping activities (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Black, 2001). As a result of these feelings of shame and remorse, compulsive buyers often feel the need to hide the products they have bought or their shopping activities (Ridgway *et al.*, 2008). Compulsive buyers have also been shown to stow away their unopened shopping bags or return them to the store from which they purchased the product (Ridgway *et al.*, 2008). Compulsive buyers focus primarily on the actual shopping experience, and not on the post-purchase consumption of the bought product (Aboujaoude *et al.*, 2003). These findings suggest that compulsive buyers are less interested in engaging in a brand community, which requires continuous interaction with other consumers in a community and a long-term relationship with a brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H5: The effect of sense of brand community as an antecedent for brand love is less strong for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

It has been suggested that compulsive buyers have the drive to buy a large quantity of (mostly cheaper) products, because the process of buying makes them feel better (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). The motivation for compulsive buying behaviour to alleviate negative feelings, suggests that compulsive buyers focus more on the buying process itself, and the positive

feelings the buying of a (hedonic) product gives. Research by O’Guinn and Faber (1989) fails to find any association between compulsive buying and emotional attachments to objects, implying that the compulsive buyer may not be interested in attachment to a specific brand. As Dittmar (2005) shows, the buying process is more important to the compulsive buyer than the possession of the product. The following hypothesis is thus proposed:

H6: The effect of the positive evaluation of the quality of the brand as an antecedent for brand love is less strong for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

2.4 Conceptual model

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this research. This thesis focuses on the effect of antecedents on brand love, and how these effects differ for compulsive buyers (as opposed to non-compulsive buyers). Compulsive buying is described in the model as a moderator. This research examines whether compulsive buying has an effect on the relationship between the antecedents and brand love.

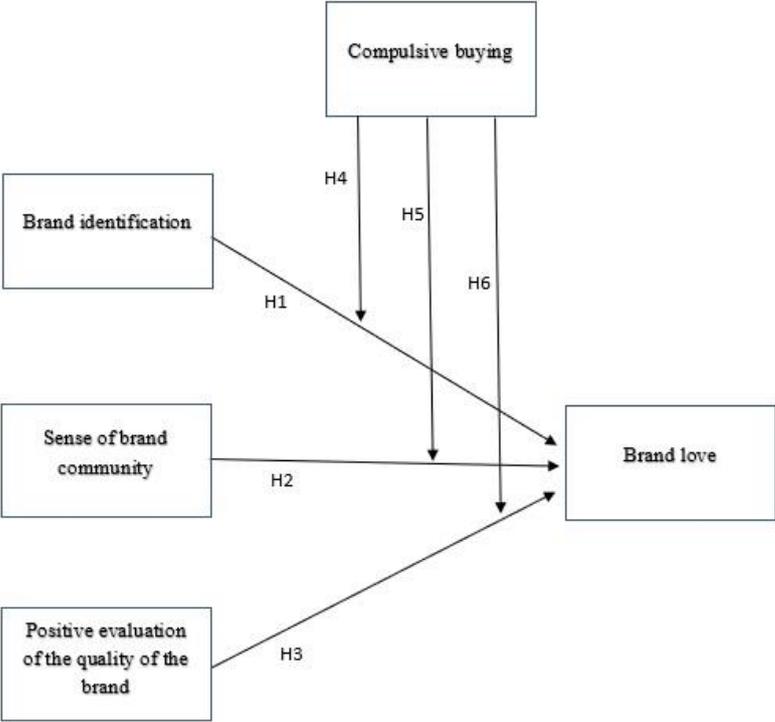


Fig. 1: Conceptual model

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

To test the hypotheses, a survey was conducted. With the use of a survey, a large quantity of respondents can be obtained. The online survey was completed through a link that was distributed via the internet. An advantage of the survey method is that the surveys are filled in anonymously. Due to the sensitivity of the subject of compulsive buying, the anonymity allows the respondent to answer with more honesty, thus strengthening the validity of the research.

3.2 Data collection

The survey was established together with two other researchers, who also study the topic of compulsive buying and brand love. The combining of the surveys of three studies into one survey, made it possible to collect more respondents.

Snowball sampling was used to obtain respondents. The population of compulsive buyers is relatively small (with an estimate of only 5.8% of the U.S. population) and this method of sampling makes it possible to reach respondents that are otherwise difficult to sample (Koran *et al.*, 2006). In order to attract more respondents, participants were given the opportunity to leave their e-mail addresses at the end of the survey in order to qualify for a Bol.com gift card worth €50,- being raffled among the participants.

The researched population consisted of both compulsive buyers and non-compulsive buyers. To improve the validity of the research, the non-compulsive buyers were approximately the same in demographic variables as the compulsive buyers.

3.3 Data analysis procedure

The instrument used for this research consisted of items related to compulsive buying, items related to brand love and the antecedents of brand love, and items that measure demographic variables (see Appendix I for the scales and Appendix II for the questions related to demographics). Other items in the survey, related to the dimensions of brand love and items related to the consequences of brand love were for the two other researchers.

The survey begins with an introduction and information for the participant. In this part, the respondent learns that the results are for research purposes only and that the survey is anonymous. This section also indicates the duration of the survey (approximately seven minutes). Following the introduction, the six-item scale by Ridgway *et al.* (2008) measures how a respondent scores on compulsive buying. The items are on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

The respondent wrote down the brand in the product category ‘clothing’ that he or she had most recently bought. Multiple questions were asked to check how the respondent felt about the brand that he or she had named (see Appendix III).

The measure that was used for operationalising brand identification is by Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010). This item uses two circles; one representing the respondent’s identity and the other the brand’s identity. The respondent chooses from A = far apart to H = complete overlap. A comparable measure has been used in other studies to measure organizational and retailer identification (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Brown et al., 2005).

Sense of community was measured using a three-item scale by Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010). The items were on a four-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = quite, 4 = extremely).

The evaluation of the quality of the brand was measured by the three-item scale by Bagozzi *et al.* (2017). The items were on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 4 = moderate, 7 = very much).

Brand love was measured on a 13-item scale, which was derived from Bagozzi *et al.* (2013).

All items are originally in English, to translate the items into Dutch, backtranslation was used. The items were professionally backtranslated by Radboud in’to Languages. Both the Dutch and English versions of the survey were pre-tested 18 times in total before distribution.

3.4 Limitations and ethics

A possible limitation of this study is that there may not be enough compulsive buyers in the sample, thus affecting the strength and validity of the research. A very large sample is needed to gain enough compulsive buyers. By combining the measuring instruments of this research with the measuring instruments of two other studies of the same topic into one survey, it was possible to collect a larger quantity of responses.

Ethics were considered; the survey is anonymous, due in part to the fact that the topic of compulsive buying was potentially sensitive to the respondents. At the end of the survey, the respondent was given the option to include his or her e-mail address, in order to participate in the lottery for the Bol.com gift card. The e-mail addresses were only used for the lottery and are not connected to the respondent’s answers in the survey.

4. Results

4.1 Measurement validation

The internal consistencies of the items were measured. Table 1 below shows each variable's Cronbach's alpha score. The alpha scores are $> .80$, showing that each variable has a high enough reliability.

Table 1

Internal consistency

Variable	Cr. α
Compulsive Buying	.839
Brand Identification	/*
Sense of Community	.808**
Evaluation of Quality	.818
Brand Love	.884

* This variable has only one item, so measuring internal consistency is not possible.

** This variable had a Cr. α of .686, showing that the internal consistency of the items is not sufficient. After deleting the third item of this measure ('To what extent is *brand x* used by people like yourself?'), the Cr. α rose to .808. This item was deleted to ensure a high enough reliability of the measurement.

Before starting the regression analysis required for testing the hypotheses, the constructs were tested for the assumptions that need to be met in order to start the regression analysis. All assumptions for linear regression were met. The predictor variables were linear with the outcome variable. The P-P plot shows that the residuals are normally distributed and the scatterplot shows homoscedasticity. The correlation matrix with the predictor variables shows no high coefficients (all are below .35) and the VIF scores are also between 1 and 10, meaning that there is no multicollinearity.

4.2 Sample and data analyses

After deleting incomplete responses to the survey, the final sample size consisted of 800 responses. The vast majority of the sample consisted of women (80.3%). The largest age category of the sample was 18 to 24 years old (46.3%). A large part of the sample (41.3%) picked 'student' as their current employment status. 58% of the participants buy a product for his or her chosen brand at multiple times a year. The correlation matrix showed a significant

effect on gender and compulsive buying, indicating that in this sample women are correlated with developing compulsive buying behaviour.

Table 2 gives an overview of the descriptive statistics of the variables.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for all measures.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Compulsive Buying	3.26	1.20	1.00	6.67
Brand Identification	3.48	1.65	1.00	8.00
Sense of Community	1.50	.66	1.00	4.00
Evaluation of Quality	5.33	1.02	1.33	7.00
Brand Love	3.20	.95	1.00	7.00

4.3 Hypothesis tests for the main effects

The results of the correlation matrix show a positive and significant effect of brand identification on brand love, showing that brand love increases if levels of brand identification are higher. This supports Hypothesis 1.

In line with the first hypothesis, the results of the correlation matrix also show a positive and significant effect of sense of brand community on brand love. This indicates that brand love increases if levels of sense of community are higher. This supports Hypothesis 2.

For Hypothesis 3, the results of the correlation matrix show a positive and significant effect., meaning that brand love increases if levels of positive evaluation of the brand's quality are higher. This supports Hypothesis 3.

See Table 3 for the Pearson correlations.

Table 3
Pearson correlations.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Brand Love
Brand Identification	3.48	1.65	.488*
Sense of Community	1.50	.66	.502*
Evaluation of Quality	5.33	1.02	.291*

* significant at the 0.01 level.

The effects of all three antecedents on brand love were tested with the regression analysis. The regression analysis was calculated to predict brand identification, sense of brand community and positive quality of the brand based on brand love. Results indicated a collective significant effect between brand identification, sense of brand community, positive quality of the brand and brand love; ($F(3, 796) = 181.25, p < .001, adj. R^2 = .404$).

The standardised beta values showed that brand identification and sense of community had the largest significant effect on brand love. Positive evaluation of the quality of the brand had a smaller effect, but was still significant.

See Table 4 for the regression results.

Table 4
Regression results with brand love as the criterion.

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% <i>CI</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Brand Identification	.187	[.154,.221]	.325	11.03	.000*
Sense of Community	.533	[.451,.614]	.372	12.77	.000*
Evaluation of Quality	.193	[.143,.244]	.208	7.51	.000*

Note. R^2 adjusted = .40. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. Beta indicates standardised regression weights.

* significant on the 0.01 level

4.4 Hypothesis tests for moderating effect

To gain a deeper understanding of the effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between the antecedents and brand love, a regression analysis was conducted. In order to make a clearer distinction between respondents that scored low and respondents that scored high on the compulsive buying index (Ridgway *et al.*, 2008), the group was divided into three parts; the 33% that scored highest on the compulsive buying index, the middle group and the 33% that scored. Since the variable now had three different levels, two dummy variables were created in order to start the regression analysis.

The hypothesised effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between brand identification and brand love was non-significant, ($F(5,794) = 66.39, p < .001, adj. R^2 = .290$), thereby rejecting Hypothesis 4. Note that the *p*-value is significant, this can be explained by the significant main effects in the regression model. The interaction effects, however, are non-significant.

See Table 5 for the regression results.

Table 5
Regression results with brand love as the criterion.

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% <i>CI</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Brand identification	.260	[.203, .316]	.450	9.040	.000
D1	.238	[-.075, .552]	.116	1.492	.136
D2	.456	[.142, .770]	.231	2.851	.004
BI*D1	.009	[-.074, .093]	.018	.222	.824
BI*D2	.025	[-.056, .106]	.052	.602	.547

Note. D1 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. medium. D2 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. high. BI = brand identification. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *Beta* indicates standardised regression weights.

When testing the effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between sense of brand community and brand love, the results were non-significant, ($F(5,794) = 64.54, p < .001, adj. R^2 = .284$, resulting in the rejection of Hypothesis 5. As with Hypothesis 4, the *p*-value is significant, this is due to the significant main effects in the regression analysis.

See Table 6 for the regression results.

Table 6
Regression results with brand love as the criterion.

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% <i>CI</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Sense of brand community	.728	[.567, .890]	.509	8.860	.000
D1	.206	[-.144, .556]	.100	1.153	.249
D2	.622	[.288, .957]	.315	3.655	.000
Sense*D1	-.021	[-.246, .204]	-.017	-.182	.855
Sense*D2	-.125	[-.333, .083]	-.118	-1.178	.239

Note. D1 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. medium. D2 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. high. Sense = sense of brand community. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *Beta* indicates standardised regression weights.

The regression also showed that positive evaluation of the brand as an antecedent of brand love was not moderated by compulsive buying. The results were non-significant, ($F(5,794) = 32.41, p < .001, adj. R^2 = .164$), thus failing to support Hypothesis 6. After filtering the group that scored in the medium range on compulsive buying (i.e. the middle part of 33%), the regression results remained non-significant. This was done to test if there was a significant interaction effect in the regression when the two groups are more clearly distinct (e.g. compulsive buying low versus compulsive buying high). The analysis however stayed non-significant.

See Table 7 for the regression results of the interaction effect.

Table 7
Regression results with brand love as the criterion.

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% <i>CI</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Positive evaluation of the quality	.337	[.232, .442]	.364	6.308	.000
D1	,794	[-.015, 1.602]	.386	1.927	.054
D2	1.090	[.300, 1.880]	.551	2.708	.007
Quality*D1	-.077	[-.227,.073]	-.199	-1.011	.312
Quality*D2	-.079	[-.223,.064]	-.221	-1.087	.278

Note. D1 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. medium. D2 = dummy variable that represents the compulsive buying group low vs. high. Quality = positive evaluation of the quality of the brand. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *Beta* indicates standardised regression weights.

5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the main effects

The first part of this research was to test three antecedents (brand identification, sense of brand community and positive evaluation of the brand) of brand love. These antecedents were tested to determine whether there is a relationship between the antecedents and brand love, and to see which of the three antecedents has the greatest influence on brand love.

H1: Higher levels of brand identification result in increased brand love.

This study hypothesised a positive relationship between brand identification and brand love. The results of this research show that when levels of brand identification are higher (e.g. a person's self-image matches the image of the brand), the love a person feels for the brand is greater. A person's self-image is subjective, meaning that it is intrinsic to the person (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). The brand identification leads to brand love can be explained by the fact that people prefer brands that are close to their self-image and often use certain brands to enhance their self-image (Dolich, 1969; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The results of this study indicate that there is a deeper connection with the brands that are close to a person's self-concept.

H2: Higher levels of sense of brand community result in increased brand love.

When studying the effect of sense of brand community on brand love another significant effect was shown. The sense of brand community is the degree to which a person feels 'oneness' with a group that is associated with a certain brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). In the long term, the quantity and quality of interactions in a brand community increase and lead to brand-focused interpersonal bonds (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). These interpersonal bonds in turn lead to repurchasing intentions, higher brand loyalty and more brand value over time (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). People also tend to be unwilling to leave a close-knit brand community, because they are afraid that leaving the community will lead to losing close interpersonal relationships (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), the long-term relationship between a consumer and a brand often leads to brand love. This study provides an indication for that notion, and shows that brand identification has a positive significant effect on brand love.

H3: Higher levels of positive evaluation of the quality of the brand result in increased brand love.

This study's analysis showed a significant and positive effect of higher levels of positive evaluation of the quality of the brand on brand love, meaning that, when a consumer's perception of the quality of a certain brand's products is high, increased brand love can result. A positive evaluation of the quality of the brand has previously been shown to result in positive customer outcomes (higher customer trust and satisfaction), which in turn lead to positive brand outcomes (brand loyalty) (Kao & Lin, 2016). This study showed that a positive evaluation of the quality of the brand can directly influence a brand outcome (in this case, brand love). Consumers not only love a brand because of the positive feelings they have when they use it, but also because they feel that the brand's products can offer trustworthy and excellent performance (Batra *et al.*, 2012).

The results of this study also showed that of the three antecedents that are tested in this research, positive evaluation of the quality of the brand has the lowest effect of all three antecedents on brand love. This may be because the other two antecedents (i.e. brand identification and sense of brand community) have a deeper meaning than perception of the quality of the brand. When looking at the seven distinct elements of brand love, elements 2 (self-brand integration), 3 (positive emotional connection) and 4 (anticipated separation distress) show that brand love goes deeper than simply enjoyment in using the brand and satisfaction with the products of a certain brand (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). This may explain why brand identification and sense of brand community, which are both deeply integrated in a person's self-identity, predicts more brand love than the evaluation of the quality of the brand, which can be seen as a more objective judgement (Kuenzel, & Halliday, 2010).

5.2 Discussion of the moderating effects

This research analysed the effect of compulsive buying on the relationships of the antecedents on brand love. Interestingly, compulsive buying was found not to have a significant effect on the antecedents of brand love.

H4: The effect of brand identification as an antecedent for brand love is stronger for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

Although it was hypothesised that compulsive buying would positively moderate the effect of brand identification on brand love, the regression analysis showed a non-significant effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between brand identification and brand love. A possible explanation could be that compulsive buyers, because of their lower self-esteem, have more difficulty discerning their self-image and therefore shop for products that are new or unique in

order to enhance how they feel about themselves (Horváth & Adıgüzel, 2018). In addition, compulsive buyers have been shown to prefer higher-classed brands, which provide them a sense of prestige and recognition (Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2012). It is possible, however, that although they prefer these brands, they do not identify themselves with them due to their lower self-esteem. Another explanation may be that one of the main drivers for compulsive buyers to shop is to alleviate negative feelings (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989), indicating that compulsive buyers care more about the shopping process than the actual product itself. Further research would be necessary to study how deeply connected compulsive buyers are with brands on an emotional level.

H5: The effect of sense of brand community as an antecedent for brand love is less strong for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

The results of the regression analysis showed a negative effect of sense of brand community on brand love; this effect, however, was found to be non-significant. It is possible that there were multiple factors that cancelled each other out, resulting in a non-significant effect. On the one hand, exploratory research shows that compulsive buyers engage more in brand switching than non-compulsive buyers (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2012), this indicates that compulsive buyers would be less willing to invest time and effort in a brand community (which requires the repurchasing of products of the same brand) and thus develop less brand love (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Moreover, compulsive buyers have been shown to prefer to shop alone (Black, 1996), partly due to feelings of shame and guilt (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). This would result in a negative effect on the relationship between sense of brand community and brand love. On the other hand, compulsive buyers have been shown to be more easily influenced by others (e.g. salespeople or other members of a community) and associate buying with social status and thus may be inclined to engage in social activities related to shopping (d'Astous, 1990; Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, compulsive buyers often feel that they need approval from others when buying products to feel a sense of belonging in a community (Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2016). This indicates that compulsive buyers would be more inclined to engage in a brand community and repurchase products in order to gain approval from community members, which could lead to brand love. This would result in a positive moderating effect. Further research (e.g. in-depth interviews) is needed to assess how compulsive buyers interact with others in a brand community.

H6: The effect of the positive evaluation of the quality of the brand as an antecedent for brand love is less strong for compulsive buyers (in comparison with non-compulsive buyers).

This study hypothesised that compulsive buying negatively moderated the relationship between positive evaluation of the quality of the brand and brand love; the results show a negative non-significant effect. It is possible that there were contradicting factors that together cancelled out a significant effect. On the one hand, compulsive buyers have shown to embark on shopping expeditions in order to alleviate negative feelings, indicating that they care less about the utility of the product and more on the buying process itself (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Dittmar, 2005). Exploratory research has also suggested that compulsive buyers care more about the social benefits a product or brand offers, while non-compulsive buyers are more appreciative of the functional benefits (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). Compulsive buyers have also been shown to prefer buying larger quantities of lower-priced products (Horváth & Van Birgelen, 2015). Together, these findings indicate that for compulsive buyers, the positive evaluation of the quality of the brand was a less strong antecedent for brand love than for non-compulsive buyers.

On the other hand, due to their extensive shopping experience, compulsive buyers have been shown to be more knowledgeable about brands than non-compulsive buyers (Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2012). Contradicting the finding that compulsive buyers are more price sensitive, a previous study showed that compulsive buyers prefer prestigious brands (which tend to be more expensive and of quality) above store brands (Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2012). It is possible that compulsive buyers are more inconsistent with their shopping expeditions, meaning that they prefer the higher-classed brands, but in the meantime search for the best prices. This could explain why the results of the testing of Hypothesis 6 were shown to be non-significant. Further research is needed to study the shopping process of compulsive buyers and how they incorporate quality when they shop.

6. Implications, recommendations and limitations

6.1 Theoretical implications

The results of this study contribute to existing literature on the topics of brand love and compulsive buying. The first part of this research – which consisted of examining the effects of three antecedents on brand love – showed significant results. These are in line with results from other studies that also examined the effects of these antecedents on brand love (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). This study contributes to the relatively new area of brand love and its antecedents by showing that, for clothing brands, brand identification, sense of brand community and positive evaluation of the quality of the brand have a positive effect on brand love.

Past research has implied that building a brand personality that matches the target consumer's self-concept is beneficial for brand loyalty and customer satisfaction (Kressmann *et al.*, 2006; Jamal & Goode, 2001). This study adds to that existing implication by showing that matching the brand image with the consumer's image is also beneficial for how much the consumer loves the brand.

Other studies have shown that brand communities lead to positive brand outcomes. For example, repurchasing intentions are higher in a brand community; this may be due to social support (other members of the community encouraging repurchase), or because of exit barriers (losing valued interpersonal relationships when leaving the brand community) (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). This study adds to the existing literature of brand communities by showing that higher levels of sense of community increase brand love.

Past research has shown that a positive evaluation of the quality of the brand results in higher customer satisfaction and trust, which in turn leads to higher brand loyalty (Kao & Lin, 2016). This study builds on this by showing that brand love also increases when the perception of the quality of the brand is positive.

This study also contributes new insights in the area of compulsive buying and its relationship with brands. Compulsive buying has been shown to be a growing problem (Neuner *et al.*, 2005) and due to its potentially severe negative consequences (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992) it is important to gain more knowledge about how this vulnerable group of consumers behaves. Despite not being able to find significant results on the effect of compulsive buying on the relationship between brand identification, sense of brand community and positive quality of the brand on brand love, this study offers new leads for further research.

6.2 Managerial implications

The results of this study may be useful for marketers. Brand love is a desired outcome for marketers, and brand managers can employ the results of this study in order to make their brand more beloved. Since this study's results show that brand identification has a positive effect on brand love, marketers should encourage their target group to identify more with the brand in order to make their brand more loved. This can be achieved by, for instance, bringing their advertising closer to their customers in order for them to more easily identify with the brand's products. The brand 'Dove' exemplified this by portraying many different kinds of women in their 'Real Beauty' campaign, which showed women as they are in real life, and not only 'perfect' models. This campaign boosted the morale of (insecure) women and with that changed the image of the brand and how women identified with it (i.e. Dove is a brand that can be used by every kind of woman).

The results of this study also showed that it can be rewarding for marketers to facilitate brand communities — for example online communities via Facebook — where customers can share their stories and experiences with the product. Interactions between consumers in a brand community can lead to positive brand outcomes, like higher brand loyalty, repurchasing intentions (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002) and, as shown in this study, increased brand love. For marketers, it is important to create and maintain these communities, which can be achieved in many creative ways. Including organising meetings, for which people can register online and then meet in real life. Ekris Mini cars, for example, is head sponsor of the 'New Mini Club', which is an online forum in which people discuss and show their new Minis and organise meetings. Marketers in the clothing industry can facilitate this as well, by opening forums in which consumers can show their new clothing items and, for example, discuss the newest fashions.

The results of this study also showed that when consumers feel that a certain brand offers high quality, it has a positive effect on brand love. For marketers, this means that if the brand is able to offer high quality, it is important to advertise this to their target group. It should be noted that brands should be careful with this, as it would be negative for a brand's image if it promised high quality but could not live up to customers' expectations. For brands that do deliver high-quality products, they should make extra use of this by advertising their reliability, as in, the 2014 commercial by Opel featuring Claudia Schiffer in which she claimed, 'An Astra doesn't break down'. Opel thoroughly tested the car for its endurance, and the outstanding test results led to the initiation of the commercial. Marketers of fashion brands can take similar action to show their target group that they offer high quality products.

In the case of compulsive buyers, this study failed to show a significant effect. It is known, however, that compulsive buying can lead to high levels of debt and depression (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Besides the negative consequences to the individual, the harmful effects of compulsive buying have also been shown to impact society (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Due to compulsive buying's severe negative consequences and the fact that it is a growing concern (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992; Neuner *et al.*, 2005), it is important for marketers to engage in corporate social responsibility, in order to protect this more vulnerable group of consumers and its surroundings. Marketers can, for instance, limit their advertising of discount promotions to avoid continuously triggering compulsive buyers to purchase their products. Marketers can also hold campaigns in which they advocate responsible buying. By using slogans such as 'only buy what you can afford'. Although this may seem contradictory (i.e. a brand advertising that the consumer should perhaps refrain from buying), the brand consequently boosts its brand image by showing that it cares for its customers and for society.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

The insights from this study can be used for following researches of brand love and its antecedents, it would be interesting to compare other possible antecedents with the ones that are examined in this study. More research is needed to gain more insight in brand love. This research is mostly interested how brand love develops and which of the three chosen antecedents has the strongest effect on brand love, for further research it would be interesting to see what is needed to not only obtain, but also maintain brand love in the long-term.

As this study noted in Chapter 5, there are many contradicting results concerning compulsive buyers. It would be interesting to examine compulsive buying and its effect on brand love through a more in-depth method of investigation. Clearer insights may be obtained through the use of interviews in order to delve more deeply into the mental processes of compulsive buyers and their emotional connection with brands.

Another interesting area for further research would be the testing of brand love and the antecedents researched in this study, while controlling for culture. Most of the respondents in this study are from the Netherlands, which has a more individualistic culture (Hofstede, 1980). Sense of brand community, for example, would be an interesting variable to test in more collectivistic cultures, as well as brand identification in more masculine cultures. It would be interesting to test if and how the results of this study differ in other cultures. When taking compulsive buyers into account, it may be possible that in other cultures the results of a comparable study show significant effects.

6.4 Research limitations

Although this research offers some interesting results, it nevertheless has its limitations. The first limitation is that the sample consists mainly of young women; it would be interesting to assess the relationships between the variables for men or for older women.

A second limitation relates to the survey and how it was constructed. The major advantage of combining three surveys into one was that it was possible to collect a large quantity of respondents. This method, however, has its drawbacks; in order to not make the survey overly long, it was necessary to use measuring instruments that were concise. Brand identification, for instance, was measured with a one-item scale, and although a comparable scale had been used in previous research, it would be more favourable for the measuring of the construct's reliability and validity to include multiple items. Furthermore, the control variables were limited in this research. The survey contained some control questions, but they were very limited and not valid enough for interpretation.

References

- Aboujaoude, E., Gamel, N., & Koran, L. M. (2003). A 1-year naturalistic follow-up of patients with compulsive shopping disorder. *The Journal of clinical psychiatry*, 64(8), 946-950.
- Ahuvia, A. C. (2005). Beyond the extended self: Loved objects and consumers' identity narratives. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(1), 171-184.
- Albert, N., Merunka, D. and Vallette-Florence, P. (2008), "When consumers love their brands: exploring the concept and its dimensions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 61 No. 10, pp. 1062-75.
- Albert, N., Merunka, D., & Valette-Florence, P. (2009). The feeling of love toward a brand: Concept and measurement. *ACR North American Advances*.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of management review*, 14(1), 20-39.
- Bagozzi, R. P., Batra, R., & Ahuvia, A. (2017). Brand love: development and validation of a practical scale. *Marketing Letters*, 28(1), 1-14.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2012). Brand love. *Journal of marketing*, 76(2), 1-16.
- Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of consumer research*, 15(2), 139-168.
- Bergami, M. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2000) Self-categorization, affective commitment and group self-esteem as distinct aspects of social identity in the organization. *The British Journal of Social Psychology* 39 (4): 555–577
- Bergkvist, L., & Bech-Larsen, T. (2010). Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love. *Journal of brand management*, 17(7), 504-518.
- Billieux, J., Rochat, L., Rebetez, M. M. L., & Van der Linden, M. (2008). Are all facets of impulsivity related to self-reported compulsive buying behavior?. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44(6), 1432-1442.
- Black, D. W. (2001). Compulsive buying disorder. *CNS drugs*, 15(1), 17-27.
- Black, D. W. (2007). A review of compulsive buying disorder. *World Psychiatry*, 6(1), 14.

- Brown, T.J., Barry, T.E., Dacin, P.A. and Gunst, R.F. (2005) Spreading the word: Investigating antecedents of consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions and behaviors in a retailing context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 33 (2): 123–138.
- Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing letters*, 17(2), 79-89.
- Chi, H. K., Yeh, H. R., & Yang, Y. T. (2009). The impact of brand awareness on consumer purchase intention: The mediating effect of perceived quality and brand loyalty. *The journal of international management studies*, 4(1), 135-144.
- d'Astous, A. (1990). An inquiry into the compulsive side of “normal” consumers. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 13(1), 15-31.
- Dittmar, H. (2005). Compulsive buying—a growing concern? An examination of gender, age, and endorsement of materialistic values as predictors. *British Journal of Psychology*, 96(4), 467-491.
- Dolich, I. J. (1969). Congruence relationships between self images and product brands. *Journal of marketing research*, 6(1), 80-84.
- Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2005). Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(3), 378-389.
- Faber, R. J., & O'Guinn, T. C. (1992). A clinical screener for compulsive buying. *Journal of consumer Research*, 19(3), 459-469.
- Hirschman, E. C. (1992). The consciousness of addiction: Toward a general theory of compulsive consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19(2), 155-179.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and organizations. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 10(4), 15-41.
- Horváth, C., & Adıgüzel, F. (2018). Shopping enjoyment to the extreme: Hedonic shopping motivations and compulsive buying in developed and emerging markets. *Journal of Business Research*, 86, 300-310.
- Horváth, C., & Birgelen, M. V. (2015). The role of brands in the behavior and purchase decisions of compulsive versus non-compulsive buyers. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(1/2), 2-21.

- Hughes, D. E., & Ahearne, M. (2010). Energizing the reseller's sales force: The power of brand identification. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(4), 81-96.
- Jacoby, J., Olson, J. C., & Haddock, R. A. (1971). Price, brand name, and product composition characteristics as determinants of perceived quality. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55(6), 570.
- Jamal, A., & Goode, M. M. (2001). Consumers and brands: a study of the impact of self-image congruence on brand preference and satisfaction. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 19(7), 482-492.
- Kao, T. W. D., & Lin, W. T. (2016). The relationship between perceived e-service quality and brand equity: A simultaneous equations system approach. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 57, 208-218.
- Koran, L. M., Faber, R. J., Aboujaoude, E., Large, M. D., & Serpe, R. T. (2006). Estimated prevalence of compulsive buying behavior in the United States. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 163(10), 1806-1812.
- Kressmann, F., Sirgy, M. J., Herrmann, A., Huber, F., Huber, S., & Lee, D. J. (2006). Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty. *Journal of Business research*, 59(9), 955-964.
- Kuenzel, S., & Halliday, S. V. (2010). The chain of effects from reputation and brand personality congruence to brand loyalty: The role of brand identification. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 18(3-4), 167-176.
- Kukar-Kinney, M., Ridgway, N. M., & Monroe, K. B. (2012). The role of price in the behavior and purchase decisions of compulsive buyers. *Journal of Retailing*, 88(1), 63-71.
- Kukar-Kinney, M., Scheinbaum, A. C., & Schaefer, T. (2016). Compulsive buying in online daily deal settings: An investigation of motivations and contextual elements. *Journal of business research*, 69(2), 691-699.
- Lee, S. H., & Workman, J. (2015). Compulsive buying and branding phenomena. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 1(1), 3.
- Lejoyeux, M., & Weinstein, A. (2010). Compulsive buying. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 36(5), 248-253.

- Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D., & Nyffenegger, B. (2011). Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 35-52.
- Mcelroy, S. L., Keck, P. E., Pope, H. G., Smith, J. M. R., Strakowski, S. M., & Ballenger, J. C. (1996). compulsive Buying: A Report of 20 Cases. *Year Book of Psychiatry & Applied Mental Health*, 1996(8), 338.
- Miltenberger, R. G., Redlin, J., Crosby, R., Stickney, M., Mitchell, J., Wonderlich, S., ... & Smyth, J. (2003). Direct and retrospective assessment of factors contributing to compulsive buying. *Journal of behavior therapy and experimental psychiatry*, 34(1), 1-9.
- Muniz, A. M., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of consumer research*, 27(4), 412-432.
- Murstein, B. I. (1988). A taxonomy of love. *The psychology of love*, 13-37.
- Neuner, M., Raab, G., & Reisch, L. A. (2005). Compulsive buying in maturing consumer societies: An empirical re-inquiry. *Journal of economic psychology*, 26(4), 509-522.
- O'Guinn, T. C., & Faber, R. J. (1989). Compulsive buying: A phenomenological exploration. *Journal of consumer research*, 16(2), 147-157.
- Onkvisit, S., & Shaw, J. (1987). Self-concept and image congruence: Some research and managerial implications. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 4(1), 13-23.
- Park, C.W., Jaworski, B.J. and MacInnis, D.J. (1986) Strategic brand concept-image management. *Journal of Marketing* 50 (4): 135–145.
- Ridgway, N. M., Kukar-Kinney, M., & Monroe, K. B. (2008). An expanded conceptualization and a new measure of compulsive buying. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(4), 622-639.
- Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T. F., Park, J. O., Chon, K. S., Claiborne, C. B., ... & Berkman, H. (1997). Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-image congruence. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 25(3), 229.
- Valence, G., d'Astous, A., & Fortier, L. (1988). Compulsive buying: Concept and measurement. *Journal of consumer policy*, 11(4), 419-433.
- Whang, Y. O., Allen, J., Sahoury, N., & Zhang, H. (2004). Falling in love with a product: The structure of a romantic consumer-product relationship. *ACR North American Advances*.

Zhou, Z., Zhang, Q., Su, C., & Zhou, N. (2012). How do brand communities generate brand relationships? Intermediate mechanisms. *Journal of Business research*, 65(7), 890-895.

Appendix I

Measuring instrument for this research (English version)

Scale	Items																																				
Compulsive buying (Ridgway, Kukar-Kiney and Monroe, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My closet has unopened shopping bags in it. - Others might consider me a shopaholic. - Much of my life centers around buying things. - I buy things I don't need. - I buy things I did not plan to buy. - I consider myself an impulse purchaser. 																																				
Brand identification (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010)	<p>Imagine that one of the circles at the left in each row represents your own personal identity and the other circle at the right represents <i>brand x</i>'s identity. Please indicate which one case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G or H) best describes the level of overlap between your and <i>brand x</i>'s identities. Circle only one letter on the following scale:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Me</th> <th>/BRAND/</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>Far Apart</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>Close Together but Separate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td colspan="2">○○</td> <td>Very Small Overlap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td colspan="2">○○</td> <td>Small Overlap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td colspan="2">○○</td> <td>Moderate Overlap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td colspan="2">○○</td> <td>Large Overlap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td colspan="2">○○</td> <td>Very Large Overlap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>H</td> <td colspan="2">○</td> <td>Complete Overlap</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Me	/BRAND/		A	○	○	Far Apart	B	○	○	Close Together but Separate	C	○○		Very Small Overlap	D	○○		Small Overlap	E	○○		Moderate Overlap	F	○○		Large Overlap	G	○○		Very Large Overlap	H	○		Complete Overlap
	Me	/BRAND/																																			
A	○	○	Far Apart																																		
B	○	○	Close Together but Separate																																		
C	○○		Very Small Overlap																																		
D	○○		Small Overlap																																		
E	○○		Moderate Overlap																																		
F	○○		Large Overlap																																		
G	○○		Very Large Overlap																																		
H	○		Complete Overlap																																		
Sense of community (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you feel like you belong to a 'club' with other users of <i>brand x</i>? - Do you identify with people who use <i>brand x</i>? - To what extent is <i>brand x</i> used by people like yourself? 																																				
Positive evaluation of quality (Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia, 2017)	<p>I believe the product of <i>brand x</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has functional quality - Is practical - Is well made 																																				
Brand Love	<p>To what extent do you feel that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wearing of <i>brand x</i> says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person? <p>To what extent is <i>brand x</i> able to...</p>																																				

<p>(Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia, 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make you look like you want to look? <p>To what extent is <i>brand x</i> able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do something that makes your life more meaningful? <p>To what extent do you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find yourself thinking about <i>brand x</i>? <p>To what extent...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are you willing to spend a lot of money improving and fine-tuning a product from <i>brand x</i> after you buy it? <p>Using the products: To what extent do you feel yourself..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desiring to wear <i>brand x</i>? <p>To what extent have you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interacted with <i>brand x</i> in the past? <p>Please express the extent to which...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You feel there is a natural “fit” between you and <i>brand x</i>. <p>Please express the extent to which...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You feel emotionally connected to <i>brand x</i>? <p>To what extent do you feel that <i>brand x</i>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is fun? <p>Please express the extent to which you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believe that you will be wearing <i>brand x</i> for a long time. <p>Suppose <i>brand x</i> were to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anxiety <p>On the following scales, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards <i>brand x</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7-point negative-positive
--	--

Appendix II

Questions related to the demographics of the respondent

Hereafter some final questions will follow about your gender, age, nationality, etc.

Please indicate your gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

Please select the category that includes your age

- Under 18
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 29
- 30 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 or above

What is your nationality?

- Dutch
- Other: nationality in EU-country
- Other (please specify)

What is your current employment status?

- Student
- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed (currently searching for a job)
- Unemployed (currently not searching for a job)
- Retired

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, please indicate the highest degree received.

- Primary education
- High school degree or equivalent
- MBO
- University of Applied Sciences
- University
- PhD

What is your annual household income?

- Below €10.000
- €10.000 - €20.000
- €20.000 - €30.000
- €30.000 - €40.000
- €40.00 - €50.000

- Over €50.000
- I prefer not to say

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Cohabitant
- Married or registered partnership

Appendix III

Extra questions

		Strongly disagree		Moderate			Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	In most cases, <i>brand x</i> is my first choice of clothing brand							
	I can always rely on <i>brand x</i>							
	I feel guilt when I buy <i>brand x</i>							
	I feel happiness when I buy <i>brand x</i>							
	I feel excitement when I buy <i>brand x</i>							

Please, indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement

		Strongly disagree		Moderate			Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	I like the experience of shopping clothes							

To what degree does the following statement apply to you?

		Not at all	Slightly	Quite	Extremely
		1	2	3	4
	Do you feel deep affection, like 'love', for <i>brand x</i> ?				

Please, indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements about *brand x*:

		Strongly disagree		Moderate			Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<i>Brand x</i> is my favorite clothing brand							

Please, indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:

		Strongly disagree		Moderate			Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	I have a lot of favorite clothing brands							

On average, I buy a product from *brand x*...

- Once a day or more often
- Twice to six times a week
- Seven times a month or more often
- Once a month
- Multiple times a year
- Once a year
- Less than once a year