Conceptual Analysis of Brand Love in Online Brand Community

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Abstract

Online brand community is commonly viewed solely as a tool for engaging with customers online. It has unavoidably given rise to build a strong online brand community and brand love representing highly meaningful customer relationship management instruments for firms. For this reason, this study proposes a conceptual model to further understand the effect of sense of online community and brand community identification on brand love leading to brand evangelism and branding co-creation. By documenting these issues is critical due to the fact that the advantage of online brand community is crucial tool to enhance the feeling of love towards brand, favourable customer behaviours and also a successful long-term relationship with customers.

Keywords: Brand Love, Sense of Online Brand Community, Brand Community Identification Brand Evangelism, Branding Co-Creation

Introduction

In the past decade, there has been an unprecedented surge in companies involvement in developing brand activities since the mid-80s (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2009) when the researchers discover the various relationships between branded products and consumer such as brand trust, brand loyalty, brand commitment, and brand sensitivity (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008). The reality that companies have to confront is that brand strategy is a key instrument which emerges the opportunities for companies in order to identify its product (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2009) and differentiate from rival firms (Chernatony & Riley, 1998; Kotler & Keller, 2012). With the intensification of brand strategies in the context of company, have put inevitably pressure on marketers and researchers to be given a significant rise to the researches on brand management.

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The reality is that people are more likely to love a brand that allows members express themselves on community (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2014). In this respect, companies should embark on meaningful marketing activities where members can express their ideas and feelings about the brand to reach greater company profitability (Popp & Woratschek, 2016) and deeper emotional connections (Simon, Brexendorf & Fassnacht, 2016).

Researchers highlighted that consumers love a brand because a brand helps in reflecting who they truly are. Furthermore, love and passion are main categories of consumer brand relationships driving favourable behaviour including positive word-of-mouth, resistance to negative information and willingness to pay a premium price (Wallace, Buil & De Chernatony, 2012; Wallace, Buil & De Chernatony, 2014) leading to brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998).

It can be seen that marketers are sharply investigated in using brand community to communicate with customers and establish long-term relationships with them (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002) including online community in social network (Relling, Schnittka, Ringle, Sattler & Johnen, 2016; Zaglia, 2013). The growth of online social networks increased significantly over recent decade. This issue has been gaining increasing momentum within both the researchers and marketers in order to explore and build effective brand strategies for firms (Zaglia, 2013). Accordingly, it is imperative for companies in order to develop an effective marketing program and build a strong brand community (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005) such as branding co-creation.

Co-creation of value is an opportunity for companies in order to communicate with customers and strengthen the bonds of loyalty (Hajli, Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay & Richard, 2017). However, there were few researches which investigated the role of branding-co creation towards brand love. For this reason, it would be useful to consider the association between brand love and branding co-creation in order to develop and reinforce relationships with customers.

It can be argued that consumption plays a significant role in the maintenance of sense of identity among consumers (Ahuvia, 2005). People are more likely to love a brand that allows members express themselves on online brand community (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2014). In this respect, companies should embark on meaningful campaigns where members can express their feelings and ideas about the brand to gain deeper emotional connections (Simon, Brexendorf & Fassnacht, 2016) and greater company profitability (Popp & Woratschek, 2016).

Over the recent decade, researchers have investigated the feeling of love towards brand which refers to the degree of passion that consumers attached to a particular trade name (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi (2012) highlighted that consumers love a brand because a brand helps in reflecting who they truly are. Besides, love and passion are main categories of consumer brand relationships driving positive word-of-mouth (Wallace, Buil & De Chernatony, 2012; Wallace, Buil & De Chernatony, 2014) and leading to brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998).

While prior research highlighted that sense of community directly and indirectly influences brand love (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010), little attention has been particularly paid to the role of online community for building brand love. For this reason, more research is important to address critical issues in various aspect. A greater exposure to the effect of online community on brand love is needed. Part of these studies aim to fill this void in online brand community research by investigating the feeling of love for a brand in the sector of online community among brand admirers. The research has taken four major directions including: firstly, the effect of sense of online community on brand love; secondly, the influence of brand community identification on brand love; thirdly, the effect of brand love driving brand evangelism which includes word-of-mouth, brand purchase intentions and oppositional brand referrals; lastly, the influence of brand evangelism on branding co-creation.

Literature Review

Part of these studies has focused on the feeling of love for a brand in the sector of online community among brand admirers. The research has taken four major directions including brand community, brand love, brand evangelism and branding co-creation which are demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

Brand Community

The first research stream deals with the sense of community and brand community identification with regard to online community issue. Nowadays, marketers are facing intense building a long-term relationship with customer instead of considering only improving individual transaction due to the potential of long-term relationship enhancing a competitive advantage for firm (Muniz & O'Guinn (2001). Community is considered to have a positive impact on developing relationship because: (1) communities put pressure on members to maintain loyal to the collective and to the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn (2001); (2) community is emerged by the relationship and interaction between members in society (McAlexander,

Schouten & Koenig, 2002). For this reason, brand community carry out crucial components for firms in order to communicate with customers such as sharing contents, expression culture of the brand and providing special services for members (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Community is recognized by researchers and managers as a critical tool that maximizes opportunities to engage with customers (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). Muniz & O'Guinn (2001) have identified three core dimensions of community including; firstly, consciousness of kind which refers to the feelings that members involve with other members and distinguish themselves from others not in the community; the second of community element is the presence of rituals and traditions which can be viewed as an exchange in history, consciousness, culture, behavioural norm and value; the final marker of community is a sense of moral responsibility which can be described as the sense of duty or obligation to the community to its individual members.

According to the research by Muniz & O'Guinn (2001), they proposed the relationship between brand and customers as consumer-consumer-brand triad developing from the traditional consumer-brand dyad. However, in a recent review article, McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig (2002) called for extension of relationship model of brand community. They present an exchange framework for consumer-centric relationship representing that community is existed and meaningful base on customer experience.

Social Identity

As the definition of consumers' identification with a brand can be explained by the theoretical roots of social identity concept (Tuskej, Golob & Podnar, 2013), which firstly emerged in 1972 (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social identity can be defined as the categories that people classify themselves and others into diverse social categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) in order to create their own place in society (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Another past researches pointed out that participations of brand community among consumers can drive centre-social identity of brand and create brand relationships with consumers (He, Li & Harris, 2012; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). Social identity concept is clearly related to three antecedent constructs of brand love, namely online brand community, brand community identification and sense of online community, which are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Brand Community Identification

The potential of brand community identification can be described from a set of cognitive and affective components (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). Firstly, cognitive components refer to a self-awareness of membership within brand community

that memberships can define themselves as a part of this community distinguishing them from other communities (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). Secondly, affective components refer to the emotional involvement towards community including the acceptance of community's norms, traditions, rituals, and objectives. (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005; Bhattacharya, Rao & Glynn, 1995). To support this evidence, empirical findings showed the positive effect of strong brand community identity of European car enhancing community engagement and increasing normative community, which then affect behavioural intentions among memberships (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

It can be argued that brand community identification is the closeness between self-image of customers and brand's image (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). For example, brand community members will classify themselves into different sub-group based on differences (Zaglia, 2013). In addition, brand community identification also positively relates to brand love (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) and influences member behaviours (Yeh & Choi, 2011).

Sense of Community

While, sense of community can be defined as the degree to which customers feel relate to other members within brand community (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). The significant key of participation in brand community is not only the passion for a brand, but also social relation to other members (Zaglia, 2013). Furthermore, Carlson, Sutar & Brown (2008) propose a model of sense of psychological brand community leading to brand commitment. Sense of psychological brand community refers to the perception of relational bonds between consumer and other users in brand community (Carlson, Sutar & Brown, 2008).

Particularly, empirical findings from the previous research conducting on Australian students demonstrated a positive association between sense of community, brand love, and brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). For this reason, it would be useful for firm to develop and create sense of community among consumers, for instance, launching effective advertising or event sponsorship (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010).

Online Brand Community

The reality that social media can be characterized as a smart communication hub for providing the effective corporate communication strategy due to its numerous advantages including: (1) easy searching; (2) open participation; (3) a minimal publishing threshold; (4) dialogue; (5) community; (6) networking; (7) the rapid and wide spread of information and contents; (8) a broad range of feedback and networking system (Aula, 2010). Reflecting this scope of the power of social media has experienced a serious shift, from emphasizing more

traditional commercial information about directly promoting your products and promotion to introducing more amazing contents and developing relationships with online influencers (Chang, Yu, & Lu, 2015; Dijkmans, Kerkhof & Beukeboom, 2015).

Interestingly, social media play a unique role of collective truth as people will collect information and knowledge about an organization and then share to others. Thus, collective truth in social network is the essential factor identifying what an organization is and what it should be (Aula, 2010). Furthermore, the underlying argument quality, post popularity and attractiveness site has the power to influence and increase preferences among users (Chang, Yu & Lu, 2015). As a result, marketing communication on site can be guided by genuine concern about online activities and useful comments (Chang, Yu & Lu, 2015).

Moreover, Dijkmans, Kerkhof & Beukeboom (2015) find that customers who have the previous experience with brand are more involve with social media platform and have more optimistic perceptions of the firm's reputation than non-customer. However, it can be noted that the effective social media activities and positive reputation can transform non-customer to customer easily.

Consumer communities can be existed by social network, which defines as an interacting and exchanging knowledge and fellowship between social network users influencing human behaviour among members (Granovetter, 1985; Zaglia, 2013). Particularly, online social networks are platforms that members can communicate, exchange, share, and discuss contents in the form of various content such as wording, audio (Zaglia, 2013), pictures, and video (Cheung & Lee, 2010). It can be argued that the duration of membership positively enhances personal relationships with other members in online community and rises the consciousness of kind (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). Nowadays, there are several social media services including the distribution of website that established by users such as Wikipedia, network services, video and photos sharing websites, personal blogs, and content producing (Aula, 2010).

Moreover, study of social network Facebook indicated that online brand community contained three major components of social identity including: firstly, the perceived themselves as a member of a group.; secondly, online members seek to achieve self-esteem from community membership; thirdly, the feeling of emotional connections to brand community such as the feeling of love towards community (Zaglia, 2013), which will be discussed in the following sector.

Brand Love

As consumers have a strong love to only few brands in the market (Ahuvia, 2005; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016), the second group of research focuses on the role of brand love is noticeably applied to companies (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012) in order to consider the level of attachment with brand, which lead to a strong relationship between customers and branded products (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Fournier, 1998). Rauschnabel & Ahuvia (2014) also suggested that love is the relationship which involve a broad range of emotions and establish long-term experience.

The term "Brand Love" is attracting considerable attention within academic sector due to the fact that the feeling of love plays a crucial factor in consumer's consumption (Ahuvia, 2005; Richins, 1997) and builds consumer brand relationships (Fournier, 1998). For this reason, there are several researches developed brand love scale in order to measure brand love precisely (Sternberg, 1997; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). Furthermore, other researches then focus mainly on the relationship between brand love and consumer brand relationship (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008).

Developing of Brand Love Scales

Primarily, it can be seen that the investigation about love has firstly emerged in 1986 with the triangle theory of love in figure 1 (Sternberg, 1997). The triangle theory of love has been fundamentally utilised as a model to identify scales of brand love (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). According to triangle theory of love (Sternberg, 1997), love can be broadly described in terms of three constructs including; (1) intimacy which refers to the feeling of closeness in loving relationship involving happiness, regard, understanding, sharing, and support; (2) passion can be defined as to the impulse to romance, sexual consummation and physical attraction; (3) decision/ commitment which refers to the way that people decide to love others in the short-term and maintain love in the long-term. Integrating these three components leads to eight possible kinds of love depending on the absence of each constructs. While the geometry of love triangle can be shaped by the amount of each component (Sternberg, 1997).

Specifically, the concept of triangle theory of love has been widely accommodated to predict the feeling of love in particular brand (Heinrich, Albrecht, & Bauer, 2012) and the relationship between consumers and objects (Shimp & Madden, 1988). In their analysis of the triangle theory of love in the context of consumption, it is clear that measurement scales

which based on brand intimacy, brand passion and brand commitment distinctly reflects brand love (Heinrich, Albrecht, & Bauer, 2012). On the other hand, it can be recognized that loving relations between people and consumption object is slightly distinguish from person-person relation (Shimp & Madden, 1988).
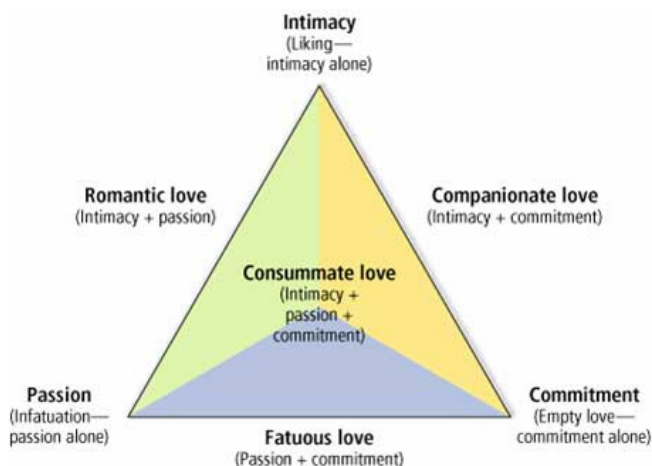

Figure 1: The concept of triangle theory of love (Sternberg, 1997)

Shimp & Madden (1988) proposed three components, which include liking, yearning and commitment leading to eight kinds of consumer-object relations adapting from the theoretical root of triangle love. Firstly, non-liking relations are consumers who disengage with products or they already have products from other companies in their minds. Secondly, liking relations characterized the relation in which customers like a particular trade name, but purchasing the brand regards as undesirable. Thirdly, infatuated relations can be defined as a group of consumers who yearn to consume products which suited to short-term purchases such as fast fashion products. Fourthly, functionalism relations refer to consumers who prefer to purchase a particular trade name without strong emotional attachment. Fifthly, inhibited desired relation characterized the relation in which customers who attach to a particular trade name and yearn to buy, however, there are some confinements discourage decision. Sixthly, utilitarianism relations refer to a group of consumers who like and commit to consume products without a passionate towards products. Seventhly, succumbed desire relation can be defined as consumers who don't like a particular trade name but they decide to buy products with a strong motivation. Lastly, the final type of loving relation is loyalty relations defining to a group of consumers who attach to a particular brand, have a fondness for products and also commit to consume the objects.

However, there has been much research argued that the feeling of love towards brand is deeper, and more enduring (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Fournier, 1998). To support this evidence, Fournier (1998) suggested that brand love is one of the key instrument that reflects consumers' relationship with brands, which can be divided into six relationships including love and passion, self-connection, commitment, inter-dependence, intimacy, and brand partner quality.

Meanwhile, this limitation leads to the development of higher-order representations of brand love (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi (2012) classified brand love into seven dimensions including 56-item scales based on a concept of consumers' declaration of love towards brand: firstly, passion-driven behaviour developing strong desires to use a brand such as a personalized set of product; secondly, self-related cognition which refers to the expression of consumers' identity through brand and the ability to connect with consumers' self-identity; thirdly, positive affect creating emotional connections with brand such as a meaningful event for memberships; fourthly, satisfaction; fifthly, long term relationship which creates a sense of commitment; sixthly, attitude strength which refers to a frequent thought about brand ;finally, loyalty including strength of loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and resistance to negative information. However, it can be argued that this research discovered brand love scales through the wideset lens, rather than, merely talks particular brands (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016).

Recently, Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia (2016) applied previous result to a single brand developing three versions of the scale including 6-item, 13-item and 26-item scale measuring brand love in order to potentially predict brand loyalty, word-of-mouth, and resistance to negative information. While the 26-item scale were employed to investigate a multifactor model of brand love, 6-item and 13-item scale presented overall brand love providing valuable insights into the outcomes and antecedents of brand love.

Another important factor that influences the declaration of love is fundamental differences in cultural perceptions (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008). Culture can be defined as a human community that people who live in the same period of time in a same region sharing attitudes, beliefs, roles, values and norms within a group (De Mooij, 2010). Firstly, concept of brand love is mostly investigated American consumers. Researchers therefore looked at how cultural differences between the US and French people affecting core dimensions of love (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008). Although the findings showed that three dimensions including intimacy, passion and pleasure are appeared in these two countries (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006),

there are explicit differences in the way they expressed the feeling of love towards brand. It is clear that much of American consumers used the word "love" to declare the feeling of love, while French consumers tended to use the word "adore" or "like" (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008). Furthermore, the dimensions of memory and trust are employed in France, on the other hand it was not shown in the US consumers when talking about their admired brand (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008).

Driving Force in Brand Love

There are valuable works have accumulated in the field of brand love, due to a unique role of brand love enhancing a long-term relationship with customers (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012) and establishing the emotional relationships with the brand (Maxian, Bradley, Wise & Toulouse, 2013). In recent years, the investigation of driving force in brand love is broadly addressed. Studies have produced four interesting points.

Firstly, Albert & Merunka (2013) lately found that brand global identification, which refers to a correspondence between brand's image and consumer's image significantly develops a feeling of love for the brand. Also, brand trust which reflects a sense of reliability and honesty to the brand is another key antecedent of brand love (Albert & Merunka, 2013)

Secondly, Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi (2012) includes the perception of high quality as one of the core element influencing consumers' love. They demonstrated the fact that when consumer talked about products they admired, consumer spontaneously discussed about the benefit and quality of products such as product performance, trustworthiness, and beautiful design. Interestingly, hedonic product is clearly generated positive emotional experience leading to the feeling of love to the brand and encouraging favourable behaviours (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

On the other hand, Rauschnabel & Ahuvia (2014) argued that perceived quality is essential, but anthropomorphic thinking clearly explain about brand love representing 23 per cent, whereas perceived quality stood at only 1.2 per cent. Furthermore, they also pointed out that anthropomorphism plays a potential antecedent of brand love towards defensive marketing strategy. Another important factor driving brand love is brand community (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Likewise, self-expressive brand also increases consumers' love towards brand. Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) formally defines self-expressive brand as the degree to which brand can express and shape consumer's identity.

Brand Love Enhancing Consumer Brand Relationships

The third pertains to the behavioural aspects with regard to the sector of community among brand admirers. Brand evangelism can be defined as an actively way to spread positive

opinions and convince others to attach to the same brand (Kautish, 2010). Brand evangelism can be described based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which is an enlargement of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB has been widely utilised as a model to describe customer behaviour, which is determined by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). As a consequence, the efficacy of the integration of perceived behavioural control in the TPB increases the efficiency of forecasting intentions and behaviours, which has can be validated in measurement behavioural intentions towards brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008).

Behavioural intentions can be broadly categorized into two dimensions: favourable and unfavourable behavioural intentions. Yi & La (2004) revealed that favourable and unfavourable behavioural intentions are connected to the following: firstly, the intention to generate positive or negative word-of-mouth; secondly, the willingness or unwillingness to purchase at a premium price; and lastly, the intention to repurchase or switch the brand. In addition, these behavioural intentions are the instruments that affect loyalty and commitment towards products or services (Yi & La, 2004), and brand as well (Albert & Merunka, 2013).

It can be recognised that favourable behavioural intentions occur when customers admire the company, which creates two behaviours, including loyalty and willingness to purchase at a premium price (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). The result also shows that loyalty becomes a significant factor, which contains positive word-of-mouth comments, considering the company as the first choice among rivals, and recommending company to others (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). In contrast, unfavourable behavioural intentions contain three behavioural intentions: (1) customer exit; (2) external response such as complaints to others; and (3) internal response, which includes ambiguity (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996).

In recent years, there has been much prior researches conducted on the impact of brand love on behavioural intentions including positive word-of-mouth (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008), willingness to pay a premium price (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012), and resistance to negative information (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012). Particularly, brand love is conceptualized as the implementation of a strategy for promoting brand buzz due to strong lovers for the brand generating word-of-mouth in social media and also avoid negative information

about the brand (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). To reach the full competitive potential of brand love, companies should concentrate on consumer who already like the brand and then convert their feelings into stronger love (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Furthermore, the driver of brand commitment and brand loyalty is clearly related to the feeling of love towards brand. (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008)

Additionally, there was study argued that brand community also influences members' intentions and behaviours, which consist of membership continuance, active participation, loyalty to the brand (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005), and recommendation to non-members (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005; Brodie, Ilic, Juric & Hollebeek, 2011). The result showed that these three intentions are imperative for companies in order to develop an effective marketing programs and build a strong brand community (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

Branding Co-creation

Co-creation of value is a unique opportunity for companies in this era. Due to the rich source of diversity and knowledge within online communities, social media platforms became a crucial part of branding co-creation. (Hajli,Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay & Richard, 2017) which the firm and customers jointly produce brand meanings, experience (Brodie, 2009), and value-addition (Kamboj, Sarmah, Gupta & Dwivedi, 2018). Companies enhance interactive communications in social media platform by encouraging users to provide ideas and contents in order to acquire opinions regarding its brand. It can be recognised that the interactive communications between customers within communities enhance not only consumers' relationships towards the brand (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002; Zaglia, 2013) but also a long-term relationship (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002) which can be an effective strategy of co-creation of value for branding (Hajli,Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay & Richard, 2017).

Conceptual Model and Research Proposition

A proposed model of brand love embedded in online brand community demonstrated a general concept of the research. Then, the propositions are shown along with the theory and explanations about the key constructs including sense of online community, brand community identification, brand evangelism, brand love, and lastly branding co-creation.

Conceptual Model

In order to capture the effect of drivers and consequences of brand love, a conceptual framework consisting of eight key sets of construct is developed (see Fig.2). Accordingly, the conceptual model was formulated and all the propositions are elaborated in the following subsections.
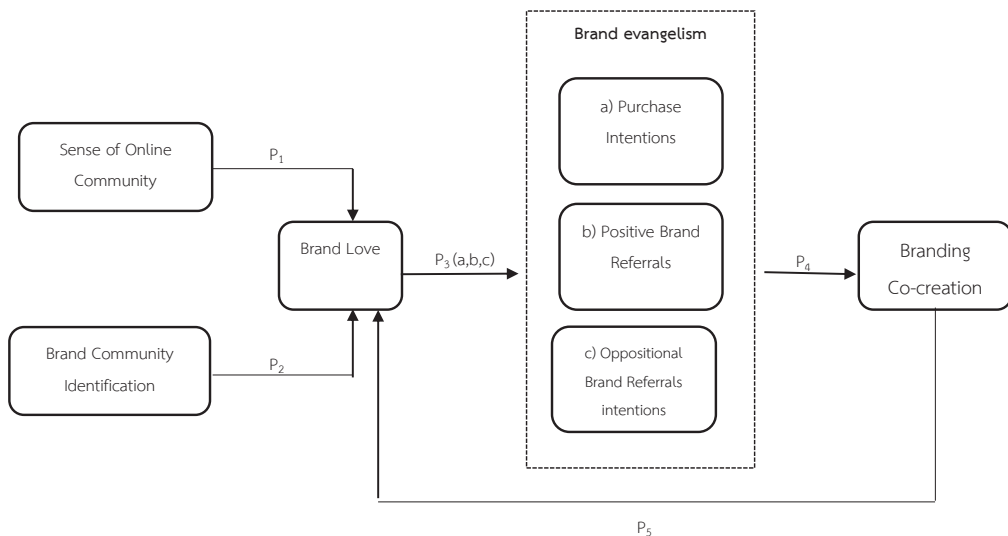

Figure 2: Conceptual framework to examine brand love in online brand community.

Propositions Formulation

Drivers of Brand Love

The model incorporates two antecedent constructs, namely sense of online community, brand community identification and anthropomorphism. Firstly, sense of online community can be defined as the degree to which customers feel relate to other members within online brand community (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). The significant key of participation in brand community is not only the passion for a brand, but also social relation to other members (Zaglia, 2013). Secondly, it can be argued that brand community identification is the closeness between self-image of customers and brand's image (Algesheimar, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). For example, online brand community members will classify themselves into different sub-group based on differences (Zaglia, 2013).

To support this conceptual framework, empirical findings from the previous research conducting on Australian students demonstrates the positive association between sense of community and brand love (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Similarly, brand community

identification also positively related to brand love (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Based on the above statement, it therefore assumes that sense of online community, brand community identification are antecedents of brand love.

P_1 Sense of online community positively influences brand love

P_2 Brand community identification positively influences brand love.

Impacts of Brand Love on Brand Evangelism

Brand love refers to "the level of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Due to the fact that brand love has a positive relationship with behavioural intentions among customers (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008), it has been noted that the feeling of love towards brand increases favourable behavioural intentions among customers including positive word-of-mouth comments (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 2008), willingness to pay more for branded products (Albert & Merunka, 2013), and resistance to negative comments (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012).

Brand evangelism can be defined as an influential group of consumers who actively attempt to persuade others to experience the beloved brand and dissuade the others brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). Consider the impact of brand love regarding online brand community on the brand evangelism. Three brand-related behaviour of online member are investigated: (1) brand purchase intentions; (2) positive brand referrals; and (3) oppositional brand referrals which is disparaging comments to other brands (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). As a consequence, it can propose the following propositions.

P_{3a} Brand love positively affects brand purchase intentions.

P_{3b} Brand love positively affects positive brand referrals.

P_{3c} Brand love positively affects oppositional brand referrals.

The Link between Brand Evangelism and Branding Co-creation

Co-creation is "the process of customer's engagement in value creation as online customers are changed from inactive to active consumers" (Kamboj, Sarmah, Gupta & Dwivedi, 2018). Furthermore, the previous researches clearly pointed out that brand

evangelism plays a crucial role in spreading positive opinions, driving a long-term relationship with the brand (Kautish, 2010) which leads to branding co-creation (Kamboj, Sarmah, Gupta & Dwivedi, 2018). Thus, the propositions can therefore be assumed:

P_4 Stronger brand evangelism lead to stronger branding co-creation.

Furthermore, it can be argued that branding co-creation can strengthen relationship between members within community and the bonds of brand (Hajli, Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay & Richard, 2017). For this reason:

P_5 Stronger branding co-creation strengthen the feeling of love towards brand.

Summary

A number of literature reviews can be drawn from this paper including the theory of social identity and the theory of triangle love. Briefly, it is clear that strong online brand community identification, sense of online brand community play a crucial role to enhance brand love among members in social networks. A proposed model then demonstrates the link between brand love and brand evangelism which includes the intentions to purchase product, positive brand referrals and oppositional brand referrals (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). The findings will uncover the power of strong online brand community building the feeling of love and also branding co-creation.

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