Brand Love Across the Consumer Lifespan: Evidence on Important Antecedents and Consequences

Malte Christ[a]* and Tobias Langner[a]

[a]*Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, University of Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany*

*Corresponding author:

Malte Christ
Schumpeter School of Business and Economics
University of Wuppertal
Gaußstraße 20
42119 Wuppertal
Germany

Email: malte.christ@uni-wuppertal.de

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Abstract

Brand love, the most intense, positive form of consumer-brand relationships, promises substantial economic value for firms. This research addresses whether elderly form new brand love relationships and examines antecedents and consequences of brand love across the consumer lifespan – a relevant topic against the backdrop of aging global populations. Drawing on socioemotional selectivity theory, we use semi-structured interviews and a between-subjects comparison of consumers loving versus liking brands.. Results reveal that the prevalence of brand love increases across the lifespan, exceeding 50% in old ages. We introduce relief and expert experiences along with materialistic orientation and cognitive fitness as antecedents of brand love in later life. Further, we introduce emotion regulation and the last-item effect as important consequences of brand love in later life. Results implicate, that managers should leverage identified experiences and highlight the emotion regulation function of brand love in advertising, to establish valuable brand relationships with older customers.

Keywords: branding; brand love; branded experiences; brand relationships; relationships building & trust; emotion regulation; aging consumers; older consumers