

An Investigation of the Role of Emotion and Cognition in Brand Self-Congruity

Victoria Pina & Dr. Zhuofan Zhang

Department of Management, Marketing and Information Systems

ABSTRACT

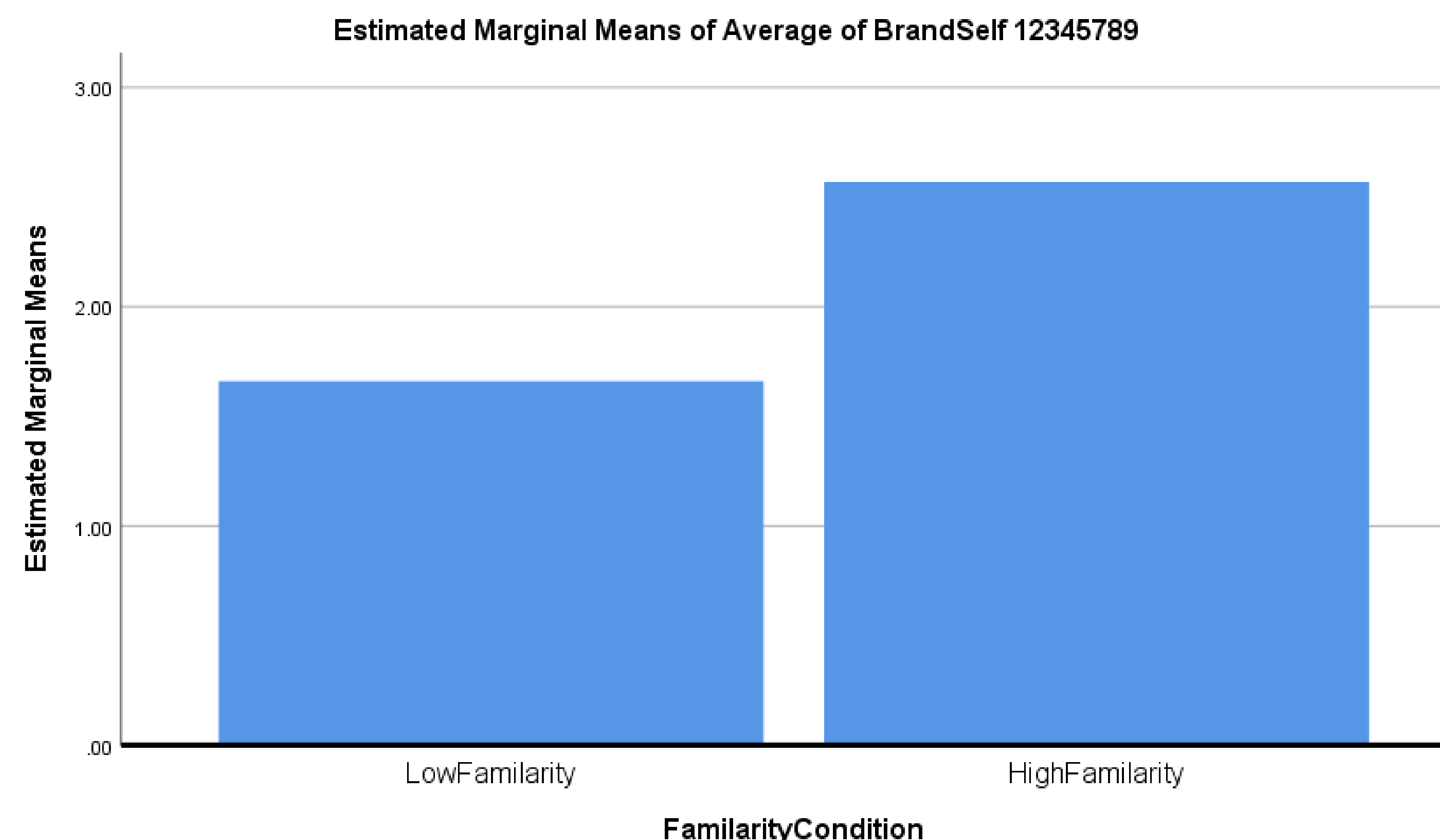
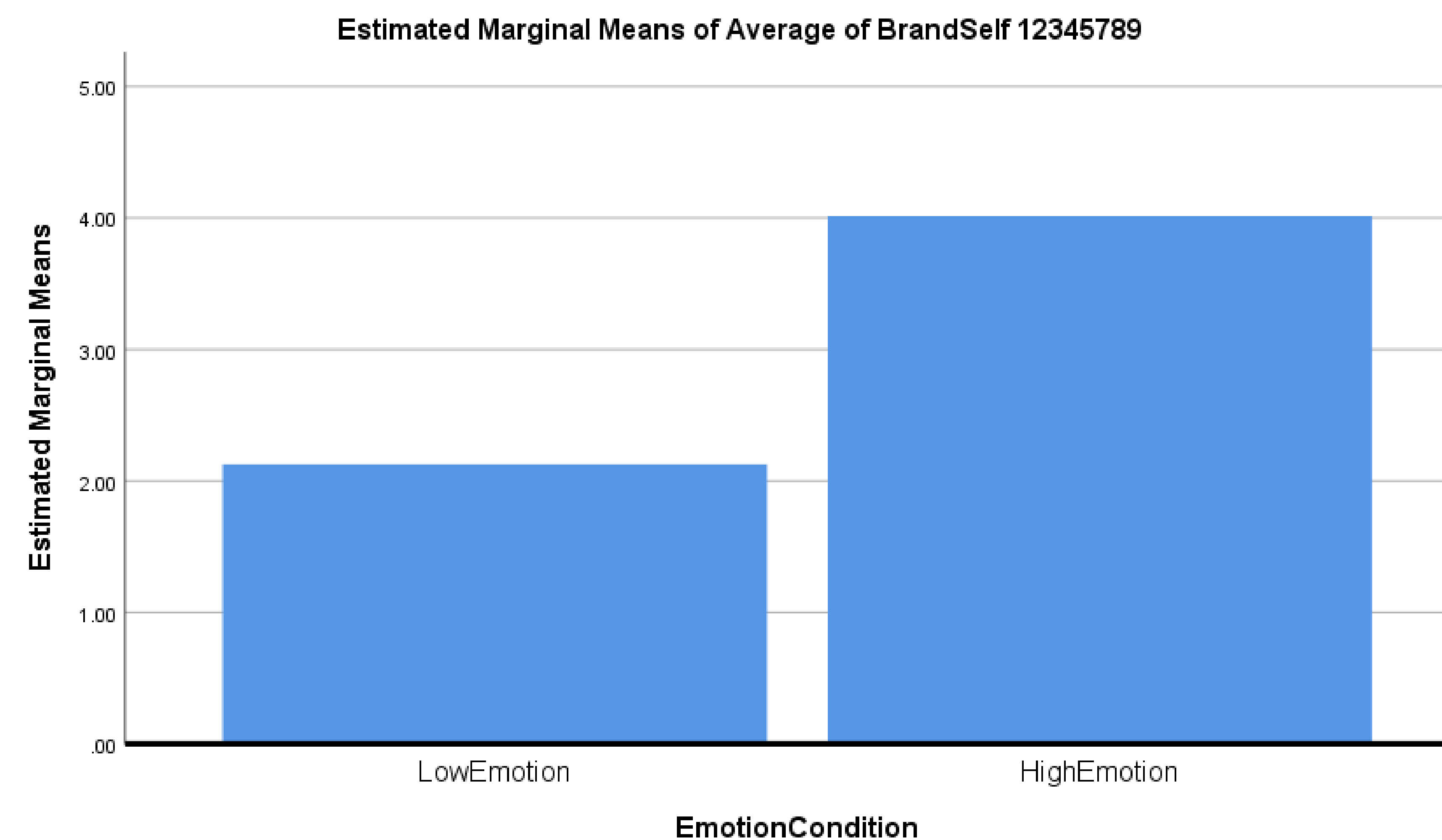
Brand-Self Congruity describes the matching of a brand's personality with the consumers' concept of themselves. Previous studies have not investigated the relationship between consumers' self-brand connection and the emotional and cognitive factors, such as emotional attachment and brand familiarity. Despite the evidence in the previous studies suggesting that the brand-self connection has both emotional and cognitive dimensions, this study argues that the emotional or affective dimension of the brand-self connection has a stronger influence on the congruity between the brand and the self. In order to test the above hypothesis, an experimental design was conducted among Texas A&M University Kingsville students, staff, and faculty members. The results have shown that participants assigned to high emotional attachment scenarios reported higher levels of brand-self congruity than those assigned to low emotional attachment scenarios; participants assigned to high familiarity versus low familiarity scenarios did not differ significantly in terms of brand-self congruity. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it adds support to existing theories of brand personality self-congruity and self-concept, as well as providing new insights about how emotions affect self-congruity. From a managerial perspective, when marketers attempt to connect self-brand image to a brand, they should focus on affective rather than cognitive elements, and emphasize the emotional feelings of the consumer to strengthen the association.

INTRODUCTION

- Aaker created the foundational framework for a concept called brand personality, or the human traits assigned to brands (Aaker, 1997).
- Experts found that brands with a distinct personality had a larger percentage loyal consumers (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015b).
- This has been explained by a concept called Brand-Self-Congruity or the alignment of a consumer's personality with a brand's. People with higher levels had a significantly positive connection and feelings regarding the brand (brand attachment), which led to them purchasing more often.
- Brand attachment signals a strong emotional bond, consisting of affection, passion, and connection (Ahmad and Thyagaraj, 2015a; Yao et al. 2015).
- This concept involves mental aspects, but brand attachment is "emotional in nature". Yao et al. (2015) Additionally, this attachment all depends on what their personality stems from: their self-concept.
- Our study aims to contribute knowledge and support to the theories of brand-self congruity and self-concept. This data will assist marketers' and managers' focus in successful branding.

RESULTS

Participants assigned to the high emotional attachment scenarios demonstrated greater brand-self congruity ($M = 4.01$, $p < 0.05$) than those assigned to the low emotional attachment scenarios ($M = 2.13$); participants assigned to the high familiarity ($M = 2.57$, $p > 0.1$) and low familiarity ($M = 1.66$) did not exhibit a significant difference in brand-self congruity. The results supported that self-brand congruity is purely emotional; it is not based on the cognitive dimension of self-brand connections.



MATERIALS & METHODS

- Between-groups design
- Online survey composed of four randomized scenarios (two emotional vs. two cognitive).
- Design:
 - Consent Form
 - Randomized Scenarios: High/Low Brand F/A Scenarios
 - Manipulation Check
 - Dependent Measure: Brand-Self Congruity
 - Demographic Variables
- One-Way ANOVA tests will be used to analyze for any statistical significance

REFERENCES

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 347-356. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.945432>
- Ahmad, A., & Thyagaraj, K. S. (2015a). Impact of Brand Personality on Brand Equity: The Role of Brand Trust, Brand Attachment, and Brand Commitment. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 45(5), 14. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2015/v45/i5/79937>
- Ahmad, A., & Thyagaraj, K. S. (2015b). Understanding the Influence of Brand Personality on Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, 38-43. <https://doi.org/10.12720/Joams.3.1.38-43>
- Cheng, G., & Yu, W. (2022). Positive and Negative Behaviors of Oppositional Loyalty in Online Communities. *IEEE Access*, 10, 20948-20963. <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2021.3113578>
- Farhat, R. (2016). The Congruence Effect of Personalities: An Empirical Analysis. *Amity Business Review*, 17(1), 131-151.
- Geuens, M., Weijters, B., & de Wulf, K. (2009). A new measure of brand personality. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 26(2), 97-107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.12.002>
- Kumar, A. (2018). Story of Aaker's brand personality scale criticism. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC*, 22(2), 203-230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/sjme-03-2018-005>
- Lee, J. K., Hansen, S. S., & Lee, S. Y. (2018). The effect of brand personality self-congruity on brand engagement and purchase intention: The moderating role of self-esteem in Facebook. *Current Psychology*, 39(6), 2116-2128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9898-3>
- Madadi, R., Torres, I. M., & Zühiga, M. A. (2021). A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF BRAND LOVE/HATE. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 34, 103-118.
- Oklevik, O., Supphellen, M., & Maehle, N. (2019). Time to retire the concept of brand personality? Extending the critique and introducing a new framework. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 19(3), 211-218. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1805>
- Parker, B. T. (2009). A comparison of brand personality and brand user-imagery congruence. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 26(3), 175-184. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760910954118>
- Swaminathan, V., Stille, K. M., & Ahluwalia, R. (2009). When Brand Personality Matters: The Moderating Role of Attachment Styles. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(6), 985-1002. <https://doi.org/10.1086/593948>
- Yao, Q., Chen, R., & Xu, X. (2015). Consistency Between Consumer Personality and Brand Personality Influences Brand Attachment. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 43(9), 1419-1427. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2015.43.9.1419>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Zhuofan Zhang, and the staff of the McNair Scholars Program for their kindness, generosity, and guidance over these past ten weeks. Without them, this project would be impossible. Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity to complete a research project and to grow not just professionally, but personally as well.