

Influencing Factors of Emotional Attachment on Luxury Brands: An Empirical Study in Tanzania

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Abstract: Emotional attachment (EA) is very important to understand customer's preference to luxury brands. How do consumers shape their emotional attachment toward luxury brands in developing countries, e.g Tanzania in Africa?. To explore this issue in details, the study proposed and investigated three influencing factors of emotional attachment towards luxury brands including Passionate Love (PL), Self-Congruence (SC) and Affective Brand Experience (ABE). After literature review, hypotheses development and proposing of conceptual framework, the study conducted a questionnaire survey in Tanzania. 100 questionnaires were collected for data analysis, using modified mature scale. In data analysis, the study employed analytical software Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), to conduct descriptive analysis, reliability test, correlation analysis and regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. The results support the impact of PL, SC and ABE on EA towards luxury brands in Tanzania. Besides, the results of gender's moderating effect advance the understanding of the differences between males and females emotional attachment to luxury brand which enrich luxury brand research. In conclusion, the discussions on the findings, its theoretical and practical implications as well as the limitations of the coupled with the recommendations for further studies have been presented.

Keywords: Luxury brands, passionate love, self-congruence, luxury brand involvement, affective brand experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of luxury has been a rising interest topic for most researchers that have attracted research from almost every discipline (Duggan, 2012). Most managers in the luxury sector are currently altering their strategies and philosophies to suit consumers' preferences. Unfortunately, they are experiencing a drawback in their attempt to change their strategies due to the insufficient scale of measurement of consumers' consumption of luxury brands (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Every brand desires to be loved by consumers, because they know that brand love translates to growth and increased revenue (Pourazad, Pourazad, & Saniee, 2015). Many companies prefer to launch their new products as brand or line extensions, leveraging already successful brand names (Thakur & Kaur, 2016). The motive for a brand extension strategy is usually an effort to leverage previous positive consumer attitudes towards a brand on new products carrying that same brand name (Pourazad & Pare, Emotional Brand Attachment: Antecedents and Consequences for Luxury Brands, 2014).

The previous understanding of luxury brands was that, they were goods or services that were exclusively limited to a minority group of consumers with difficult consumption gains by the majority of consumers (Hassan, Ilyas, & Rehman, 2016). It is found that, luxury brands are the highest level of prestigious brands encompassing several physical and psychological values and its consumption is mostly motivated by impressing others or addressing interpersonal aspects. Generally, luxury brands are known to be influenced by consumers' lifestyle, besides consumers have become more conscious and they are more eager to keep themselves updated with the recent trends of luxury brands (Casidy, 2012).

Consumer self-concept must be involved with the emotional brand attachment to occur that's why self-congruence should play a especially prominent role in creating emotional brand attachment. The positive or negative feelings that individuals nurture towards the product can be transferred and extended to the brand (Arthur, 2012). Many companies are in the continuous search of finding out the ways and tools to create a strong emotional brand attachment connecting within the

mind frame of the consumers. This can be done by finding such connections which will lead to high levels of consumers' brand loyalty with a particular brand. For example, i-Phone has communicated with consumers for years that using an i-Phone will make them more superior, charming and attractive which will bring them closer to realizing an ideal vision of them which is called as the ideal self (Pina & Bravo, 2015). Luxury brands on the other hand have certain models which are average in style but are more closely to how most of the consumers presumably see themselves; called actual self. This idea generally leads us towards consumers thinking and causing them to form an emotional brand connection with that brand (Becker, Lee, & Nobre, 2018).

Consuming a brand, more specifically luxury brands allow consumers to express themselves in front of others. Luxury goods can be defined as goods that people use to show prestige and status while the difference in functional utility over other goods is largely negligible (Mandel, Petrova, & Cialdini, 2006). A luxury brand can be thought as the most selective in its distribution, the most expensive and the most image driven. Luxury brands has shown an extreme growth over the last decades and is quite resistant to economic downturns into market responses toward luxury brands as well as the role of gender in this relationship is extremely important (IDC, 2016). On the other hand, the study done by the advertising bureau of South Africa (IAB) and Effective Measure revealed that 91.7% of South African Internet users own luxury brands (Effective Measure, 2014). An analysis of the purchase intentions of luxury brands' users also revealed that 23% of these users desired the purchase of a new brand within six months and another 16.5% in less than a year. These findings revealed that there exist within the South African luxury brand market, an early adopter consumer group that presents opportunities for luxury brand distributors to maximize sales (IDC, 2016). A study done in Kenya on luxury brands' consumers found that, features and functions played a great part in attracting consumers in buying the brand. However, a study done in Tanzania by Dumba(2016) on branding and emotional attachment among luxury brands revealed that luxury brands were of attraction among consumers in relation to other brands such as cars, iPhone and Techno (Dumba, 2016) but the study fail to account for the role of gender. Therefore, this study tries to empirically asses how variables like passionate love, self-congruence and affective brand experience, with emotional brand attachment in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. We also accounted for the moderating role of gender to enrich the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Passionate Love and Emotional Attachment

Passionate love leads to the concept of brand love which is defined as an attitude that consumers held toward a particular brand which include their ability to think, feel, and behave with regards to the particular brand (Rodrigues, Reis, & Cantista, 2015) . Consumers are presently creating bonds with brands or goods and with the option of having many options to choose from, consumers may switch between brands when they cannot find what they require. This creates a halo effect on brand loyalty as with the deep commitment of consumers to repatronize a particular brand; the marketing efforts have less effect on them (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). In other words, brand love is a long relationship about customers' identity that reveals emotions for a particular brand, and also forces them to do the positive behavioral intention (Malar *et al.*, 2011).

When consumers love the brands, it will shape a consumers' identity just as similar to what the brand is perceived and it is likely to have more competitive advantage and brand loyalty (Vlachos, 2012). Consumers' love includes the following characteristics: (1) passion for a brand, (2) brand attachment, (3) positive evaluation of the brand, (4) positive emotions in response to the brand, and (5) declarations of love toward the brand (Arthur, 2012). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed as follows;

H1: *Passionate love has significantly positive impact on attachment to luxury*

2.2 Self-congruence and Emotional Attachment

Theoretical arguments support the impact of self-congruence on emotional brand attachment (Salimi & Khanlari, 2018) . Self-congruence belongs to a broader class of cognitive consistency theories that suggests that people strive for consistency in their beliefs and behaviors because inconsistency produces feelings of unpleasantness and tension (Baek *et al.*, 2010). Applying these theories to the current context, consumers are motivated to hold a set of beliefs about themselves which is called as a self-concept that motivate them to act in ways e.g. prefer, purchase and use brands with a matching brand personality that reinforce their self-concept (Pina and Bravo, 2015). It is stated that consumers buy products and brands they believe to possess symbolic images similar and/or complementary to their self-image that is to achieve image congruence (Alleres, 2008). Likewise, self-congruence plays a significant role in influencing consumer

behaviors. Goetz *et al.*, (2014) state that self-congruence affects advertising effectiveness, facilitates positive attitudes towards products/brands. The marketing literature identifies four dimensions of self-concept to explain and predict behavior: (1) actual self-concept (“me as I am”), how a person sees himself or herself; (2) ideal-self-concept (“the good me”), how a person would like to see himself or herself; (3) social self-concept, how consumers think others see them; (4) ideal social self-concept, how a person would like to be perceived by other people (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2018) .

Moreover, due to the dynamic nature of the self-concept, its influence on brand attitude is potentially determined by changes in a consumers’ self-concept over time (Park *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented as follows.

H2: *Self-congruence has significant positive impact on emotional attachment to luxury brands.*

2.3 Affective Brand Experience and Emotional Attachment

Affective brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral responses which are evoked by brand related stimuli and that are the part of communications, packaging, brand design and identity, and environments (Brakus, 2009). Alleres (2008) stated that brand experience can be defined as the perception of the consumers at every moment of contact they have with the brand, whether it is in the brand images projected in advertising, during the first personal contact or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive. Affective brand experience is created when consumers actually use the brands; they start talking with others about brands; they are seeking out the brand information, promotions, different events etc (Kapucu & Akar, 2018). Thus, emotional brand attachment will help in linking the brand experience to target consumers enduring self concept. The main aim of every marketer is to have life time relationship between the brand and consumer and it is only possible if target consumers core values are understood (Roets *et al.*, 2014). Thus, brand experience is a response to brand-related stimuli. Therefore, based on the above analysis the hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H3: *Affective brand experience has a positive impact on Emotional attachment to luxury brands.*

2.4 Moderating effects of gender

Studies on attachment to luxury demonstrated that males and females perform differently in emotional attachment and have a different attitude toward luxury brand. Females are more emotional and have a more positive attitude toward luxury consumption than males (Fournier, Breazeale, & Fetscherin, 2012; Soodan & Pandey, 2016). Albert, (2013) empirically argued that females have a higher level of emotional attachment for luxury and are more interested in using luxury brands than males. Other research also obtained similar findings in brand preference (Denegri-Knott and Mike, 2010) and brand loyalty (Fombelle *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H4a. *The effect of Passionate love on the attachment to luxury brands is stronger for females than for males.*

Males and females have different behaviors in purchasing activities. Compared to males, females strive for consistency in their beliefs and behaviors because inconsistency produces feelings of unpleasantness and tension (Baek *et al.*, 2010) and are more likely to make shopping decisions based on luxury brand (Salimi & Khanlari, 2018). These findings indicated that females are more prone to luxury brand than males. Thus, females may have a higher emotional attachment to luxuriate than males. In addition, females have more needs in acquiring luxury. Luxury brands can satisfy their emotional attachment. Since theoretical arguments support the impact of self-congruence on emotional brand attachment, therefore, the expectation that *Self-congruence* has a stronger effect on the emotional attachment to luxury for females than for males is reasonable. We hypothesize that:

H4b. *The effect of Self-congruence on the emotional attachment to luxury is stronger for females than for males.*

Gender influences emotional control or regulation (Kessler and Staudinger, 2019; Orgeta, 2019). Males seek to avoid emotional situations and to stay in a neutral state. They exert higher self-control in situations of strong positive or negative feelings. Therefore, the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment should be stronger for female consumers because they experience more intense emotions in their interactions with brands, are more proactive to receive gratification with external stimulation, and control their emotions to a lesser extent. Because female consumers seek more interactions with brands and enjoy them more, they should develop more intense attachment toward brands. Based on these arguments, we hypothesized that:

H4c. *The effect of Affective brand experience on the emotional attachment to luxury is stronger for females than for males.*

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework gives us the relationship that exists between the identified factors and the Emotional attachment to Luxury Brand. Under this, factors under the relationship are Passionate Love (PL), Self Congruence (SC) as well as Affective Brand Experience (ABE), which are hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect of consumers' Emotional attachment to luxury brand. We further hypothesized that emotional attachment to luxury brand is higher for female than for male; this can be shown in the figure below.

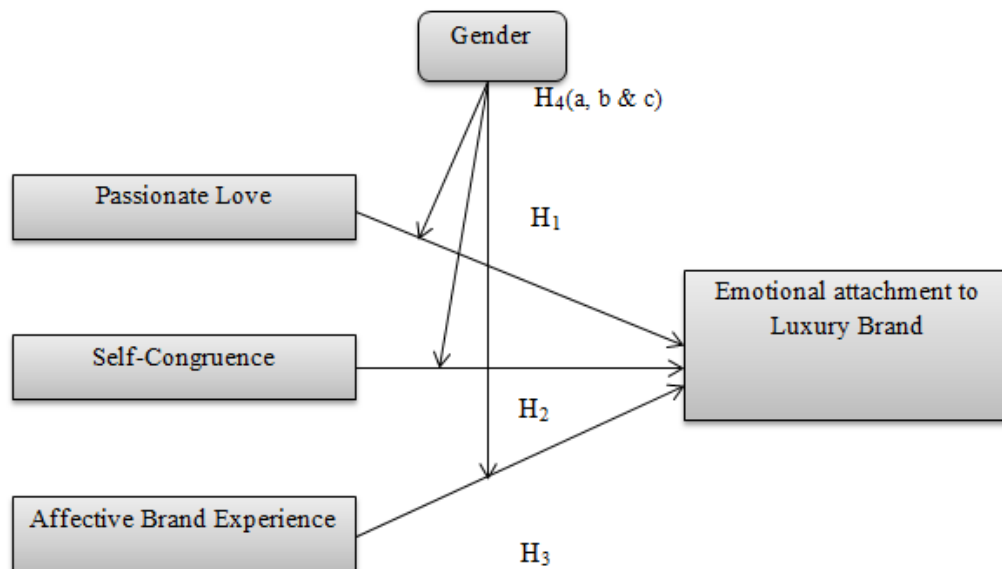


Figure 4: Conceptual framework

3. METHODOLOGY

The research follows a quantitative approach where questionnaires were used to collect the data. Data were collected from a convenience sample in Dar es Salaam business center. Respondents were restricted to sellers and consumers who sell or had purchased any luxury brand item within the previous two years by distributing 100 Self-administrated questionnaires

The collected data from the field was prepared through coding and editing of the data. This involved checking of data collection forms for legibility and consistency as well as discarding the incomplete responses which have missing data. Thereafter, identified potential errors in data collection were discussed for proper presentation. This method assisted in coding both words and phrases depending on respondents' responses. This allowed open ended questions to be analyzed systematically while data being entered into a user friendly and retrievable database.

Furthermore, Quantitative data was summarized, coded and analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Regression was employed to test the hypotheses of the framework developed for the study and correlation matrix used to see the relationship among the variables. Further, regression analysis [multiple regression was used to explore the causal relationships between consumers' passionate love with emotional attachment to luxury brands and the dimensions of brand image, consumer behavior, and cognitive response.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

After the determination of the demographic information from respondents, the factor analysis was also performed in order to determine the variable loading; this helped to reduce some of the components that do not load positively with the variables under determination.

The factor was analyzed to determine if its components can be used for further analysis. From the factor analysis, all the scale reliabilities were found to be greater than the minimum accepted level of 0.7 and hence were accepted for further analysis. The factor loading components were also analyzed and the results were such that all components were found to be positively loading with the factor loads above 0.5 and hence all factors were taken for further analysis.

4.1 Pearson Correlation

In order to analyze the relationship that exists between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable (Emotional Attachment); the measurement of Pearson Correlation is required. All three independent variables have found to be significant; thus, each has important information to tell about its relationship with emotional attachment on luxury brands.

4.2 Regression Analysis

In order to know the extent of impact that the factors have on emotional brand attachment to luxury, the measurement of regression is inevitable. This is due to the reason that regression analysis measures rate of impact the compile variables featured in the particular study. As for the study under review, a regression has been employed in order to measure the relationship of the subject matter

Table 4.1: Regression of independent variables and Dependent variable

Variables	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.164	.466	2.498	.014
Gender	.064	.092	.692	.491
Age	.004	.066	.053	.958
Earning	.094	.050	1.882	.063
Passionate Love	.015	.063	2.840	.005
Self -Congruence	.389	.095	4.083	.000
Affective Brand Experience	.250	.085	2.950	.004
<i>F</i>	8.019			.000
<i>R</i> ²	.341			

From the table above, it shows that, Passionate Love, Self Congruence and Affective Brand Experience are all positive and significance in explaining the Dependent variable which is Emotional Brand Attachment with t-value of 2.840, 4. 083 and 2.950 at a significance level of q= 0.005, q=0.000 and q=0.004 respectively. Due to this, it is confirmed that, the dependent variables which are Passionate love, Self Congruence and Affective Brand Experience have a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable which is Emotional Brand Attachment.

4.3 Moderation Analysis

The multi-group analysis for the moderating effects of gender is shown in tables 4.2. The chi-square difference test was utilized to examine the hypotheses.

Table 4.2: Moderating Effects of Gender

Hypothesis	Male(M)		Female(F)		Subgroup comparison (Unconstraint)		Result
	Standardized Coefficient	C.R	Standardized Coefficient	C.R	Constrant χ^2 (544)	χ^2 difference (516)=759.555	
H _{4a}	.357**	11.204	.624**	15.661	763.081	3.526	F > M
H _{4b}	-.047	-1.583	.547**	15.781	765.380	5.825	F > M
H _{4c}	.014	.510	.273*	8.726	764.931	5.376	F > M

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01

Table 4.2 shows that the gender moderate all the paths in the research model which led to the acceptance of hypotheses 4a 4b and 4c:

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study purposed to inform about the impact of factors such as Passionate love, Self Congruence and Affective brand experience on Emotional Attachment to Luxury brands. In order for this main objective to be reached, where the detailed substantiation of each variable and its extent of relationship to the subject matter “emotional attachment” are as discussed below:

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The first findings are obtained from the relationship between passionate love and emotional attachment. Based on the results illustrated on the table above; the significant level is 0.005 which means the relationship is significant, the level of strength using r value is 0.95 which means high correlation yet in a positive direction. These results are bringing a major finding which confirms hypothesis H1; thus, there is a significant and positive impact of passionate love on emotional attachment to luxury brands.

The second findings are obtained from the relationship between self-congruent and emotional brand attachment. Based on the results illustrated on the table above; the significant level is 0.000 with t-value of 4.083, which means the relationship is significant and correlation which is in positive direction. These results are bringing a major finding which confirms hypothesis H2; thus, Self-congruence has a significant and positive impact on emotional attachment to luxury brands.

The third finding is toward affective brand experience and emotional brand experience. Based on the results illustrated on the table above; the significant level is 0.004 which means the relationship is significant, the level of strength using t value is 2.950 meant high correlation which is in positive direction. These results are bringing a major finding which confirms hypothesis H3; thus, Affective brand experience has a significant and positive effect on emotional attachment to luxury brands.

Finally, the study found that females are more emotional and have a more positive attitude toward luxury consumption than males.

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