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Systematic Review: The Relationship Between Brand Love and Brand Anthropomorphism In Distribution

Ngoc Dan Thanh NGUYEN¹, Trong Phuc NGO²

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to consolidate research trends about the distribution of 'other customer perspective' on 'brand love' and 'brand anthropomorphism', as well as to identify prospective research topics and provide managers with suggestions. **Design, data, and technique of research:** The purpose of this article is to examine the distribution relationship between brand love and brand anthropomorphism using a systematic review and bibliographic mapping analysis (VOS viewer) using 23 documents from 2014 to 2023. **Results:** This will be a step in the correct path if brand managers can have a great interaction with their clients by using common anthropomorphism. Yet, a second challenge will be how to anthropomorphize the brand. Moreover, there is nothing simpler than discovering oneself in a brand when there are several pictures, life ethics, sentiments, and experiences that coincide. From a different perspective, the brand sometimes looks to be the ideal model for consumers to identify with, and even fall in love with since it makes them feel close to their significant other. **Conclusion:** The findings may help companies create a long-term brand strategy and anticipate additional consumer rewards and value. They may also enhance brand-customer theory.

Keywords: Distribution, Brand Love, Brand Anthropomorphism, Bibliometrics.

JEL Classification code: M16, M31, M37

1. Introduction

In recent years, experts have focused on the unique ties created by the fact that brands are seen as a connection between companies and customers (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). In recent years, scientists around branding and the field of real business have paid particular attention to the interaction between brands and customers. Conventional marketing studies often concentrate on the physical characteristics of a product or service, such as its usefulness, pricing, availability, or quality (Mascarenhas et al., 2006). However, research indicates that customers no longer purchase goods and services (Morris et al., 1999). Some

years ago, marketing academics advised that marketing should examine other variables, such as relationship management (Berry, 2002) and value creation (Webster Jr, 1994; Raval & Grönroos, 1996). Nowadays, clients need a well-known brand and one that complements their individuality. Businesses can only establish a deep relationship with clients and generate a favorable brand image if they match these expectations, especially in the distribution.

In setting the basis for the interaction between customers and brands, it is hard not to mention the seminal study by scientist Fournier (1998), which began the trend of research chains. In this research, with the presence of a romantic

1 First and Corresponding Author. Lecturer, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam, Email: thanh.nnd@ou.edu.vn
 ORCID: 0000-0002-5839-7368

2 Second Author. Student, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam, Email: trongphuc9906@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-0631-0814

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relationship, many studies have proved that brand love has played a significant role since the discovery of the relationship between love and brand. solid connection between client and brand (Albert et al., 2008, Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Heinrich et al., 2012; Huaman-Ramirez et al, 2019; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015).

The look of Vinamilk's dancing cows with the tagline "100 parts 100" in the distribution channel, the fantastic picture of the toilet bactericidal warriors in the retail market, and the smooth curves of Coca-Cola are reminiscent of the curves of a beautiful lady. The appeal in advertising programs and several other pictures demonstrates the existence of the term brand (Brown, 2010) conclusively. Numerous academics have released papers on brand anthropomorphism to comprehend this ludicrous notion (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007). Thus, much research has addressed this notion by considering the brand to have features, emotions, and ideas. think like humans (Puzakova et al., 2013). Following these studies, (Kim & Kramer, 2015) and (Puzakova & Kwak, 2017) published research on the nature and objectives of managers' brand anthropomorphism, proving that the results of brand anthropomorphism will affect consumers' attitudes and perceptions (Wen Wan et al., 2017). Golossenko et al. (2020) created the most current development scale. All the studies mentioned above lack empirical evidence, and since then, brand managers' strategic choices to improve their businesses' brands are also somewhat impacted by anthropomorphism. Companies have human-like images. With brand pictures that can be constructed flexibly, companies also have an edge when searching for methods to humanize their brand. Then, they will remember the brand through the distribution brand name.

To create brand love in the customer's mind, especially in distribution matters, brand anthropomorphism, and connection modifiers will increase customers' trust, allowing them to spread the brand to more people quickly. Every business hopes to achieve this from their customers when they are no longer merely buyers but collaborators. From there, companies will reliably access helpful information. The above notions exist exclusively in psychology between individuals. However, when applied to the interaction between people and brands, it will be a novel and advantageous method for those interested in brand creation.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Brand Love

Most brand concepts are based on Sternberg's (1986) love triangle theory, which argues that love is made up of

three corners of a triangle: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy is a feeling of closeness and connection with a partner and is mostly rooted in emotions. Passion is attraction, attraction, and euphoria which leads to satisfaction and is rooted in motivation. Commitment involves the recognition of the relationship and the feelings that make the partner choose to maintain a long-term relationship and work towards common goals. In this respect, Rauschnabel et al. (2014) conceptualize brand love as the level of passionate passion that consumers have for a particular brand object. First, it concerns the integration of the brand into the consumer's sense of identity. Next, since brand love is conceived as a means of satisfaction, it can more simply be defined as the domination of emotions. Therefore, unlike the concept of simple love, brand love excludes the possibility of negative feelings toward the brand.

Most academic research on Brand Love begins with theories of interpersonal love and applies them to consumer behavior (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to research by Unal and Aydin (2013), Brand Love is conceptualized, and formed from two parts: love and brand. Other studies, such as Albert et al. (2008), and Ortiz and Harrison (2011) have taken a different approach, starting with in-depth qualitative research to build theories about things that everyone loves and then compare this impersonal versus interpersonal love. According to a study by Batra et al. in 2012, in contrast to interpersonal love, Brand Love is a situation where reciprocity is considered mandatory because brands should not express "emotion" like personal love. In Sarkar's study (2014), once again reinforces this view, he argues that Brand Love is not the same as interpersonal love, Brand Love here is referred to as a strong and mostly positive consumer sentiment. However, Brand Love must be based on awareness and not blindness. In this study, we will focus on the work of Batra et al. (2012) because it provides the strongest evidence for the definitions and measures of the Brand Love factor. Based on the analysis of structural equations, Batra et al. (2012) created a brand love model that includes the following seven main aspects.

Positive attitude valence: This aspect indicates that consumers rate the brand they love positively, using whatever criteria are most relevant to that brand.

Positive emotional connection: Consumers have a feeling of congruence or congruence between themselves and a brand they love and they will have positive thoughts when thinking about or using that brand.

Self-brand integration: The brands that consumers like are integrated into their current self-identity and the identity they want in the future. This represents values that help create meaning in life, rather than simply being a tool to achieve goals. In addition, the strong association between

the brand and the consumer's self is supported by the consumers' frequent thoughts about the brands they love.

Passion-driven behaviors: Consumers are strongly influenced by what has been done with their favorite brands in the past (also known as past engagement and interactions), in addition to their desire to use current brands. present and willing to invest resources like time and money to do it.

Long-term relationship: Consumers hope that their favorite brands will become a part of their life for a long time in the future.

Anticipated separation distress: If the brand they love disappears, consumers will be emotionally hurt.

Attitude strength: Consumers have a degree of certainty and confidence in their opinion of the brands they love.

2.2. Brand Anthropomorphism

Brand Anthropomorphism is described by Waytz et al. (2007) as the process of assigning characteristic human characteristics, motives, behaviors, emotions, and basic states to objects and agents, not humans. Psychological research has shown that people tend to personify objects such as brands, computers, personal phones, and cars (Waytz et al., 2010). Although only emerging in the last two decades, this trend seems to be widespread enough to attract the attention of many marketing scholars (Example: Kim & McGill, 2011; Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). These scholars are those who have studied anthropomorphism with branded products, also known as Brand Anthropomorphism.

In 2012, Fournier and Alvarez argued that for a brand to be a significant bridge in the relationship between the consumer and the brand, it must be personified, meaning that the brand possesses qualities of a human being, capable of behavior, feelings, and emotions. Puzakova et al. (2018) defined Brand Anthropomorphism as "a brand is an actual person with a variety of emotional states, thoughts, souls, and conscious behaviors that can function in parallel, like other members of society". Guido and Peluso (2015) argued that Brand Anthropomorphism is the degree to which a branded product is perceived as an actual person in our minds. At the same time, MacInnis and Folkes (2017) also asserted that consumers can see and evaluate brands as a person. According to Tuskej and Podnar (2018), Brand Anthropomorphism is described as a cognitive process that represents a consumer's tendency to attribute human-like characteristics to a brand and treat them as dynamic entities. own muscles, perceptions, intentions, and emotions. Previous studies have shown two different consumer aspects of Brand Anthropomorphism (MacInnis & Folkes 2017; Guido et al., 2015). First, Brand Anthropomorphism is activated when consumers perceive a similarity between a brand and a person in appearance. Second, Brand

Anthropomorphism occurs when consumers perceive similarities between personified brands and their concepts of self (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

However, Sarkar et al. (2019) argue that there is still a lack of scales to measure brands. While some scholars use physical attributes of the human body such as height, gender, and physical characteristics (Guido & Peluso, 2015; Sreejesh & Anusree, 2017), others use intangible attributes such as a person's name, voice, personality, emotions, or social skills to evaluate Brand Anthropomorphism (Kim & Kramer, 2015; Puzakova & Aggarwal, 2018; Tuskej & Podnar, 2018). Therefore, the definition of Tuskej and Podnar (2018) has the previous not been denied but expanded and completely made more definitions. At the same time, to have a more comprehensive and detailed view of the brand, Artyom et al. (2020) have divided Brand Anthropomorphism into four main aspects: shape, external, moral qualities, cognitive experiences, and emotional awareness.

Appearance: Besides, Brand Anthropomorphism is simply describing the similarities between the brand and a person, which is easily visible on the outside. A brand is described as having physical characteristics subtly like human physical elements but is not actually considered a person due to the lack of cognitive and emotional factors. Therefore, the external appearance of a brand depends mainly on the similarity of the external appearance of that brand to people (Landwehr et al., 2011).

Cognitive Experience: In this respect, Brand Anthropomorphism involves not only the perception of external characteristics but also the perception of a brand having the mental states necessary to be human (Kim & McGill, 2011; Puzakova & Kwak, 2009). Specifically, this aspect indicates a brand's ability to reason, reflect, communicate, form intentions, and act freely. In addition, mental state awareness can also occur when the brand does not have any physical resemblance to a person.

Moral Virtue: The essence of the anthropomorphism form is the distribution of mental states (Waytz et al., 2010). Thus, mental qualities that are considered unique to humans would be a necessary concept to perceive brands as human-like entities. From a philosophical point of view, the state of mind that distinguishes man from other entities is moral (Moore & Ghigna, 1999). On the other hand, the concept of personality ethics emphasizes moral qualities as an essential aspect to denote a human being as an individual. In this view, for a brand to qualify as an individual, it must demonstrate that it has qualities such as kindness, honesty, and trustworthiness. It is these qualities that constitute moral qualities (Sapontzis, 1981).

Conscious Emotionality: Empirical studies support the view that in addition to mental states, cognitively complex emotions are the features that distinguish humans from non-

human entities (Demoulin et al., 2004; Haslam et al., 2008). In this respect, Brand Anthropomorphism requires the brand to be aware of human emotional states (Puzakova et al., 2009). Special human emotions such as guilt, shame, regret, and empathy. These emotions are considered self-perceived and are evoked from social perspectives (Demoulin et al., 2004; Leyens & Perez, 2001). Example: A personified brand commits a wrongdoing and guilt emerges. The brand may feel guilty or remorseful about its actions. From there, the brand can be seen as reflecting its actions by applying social perspectives to its behavior. In addition, the higher a brand's ability to experience emotions, the greater its cognitive and ethical capabilities.

3. Bibliometric Analysis Method

Bibliometrics, also known as bibliographic analysis of published works. This method was first studied by Pritchard (1969) and is defined as the application of mathematical and statistical methods to quantitative evaluation of the content of books and other documents.

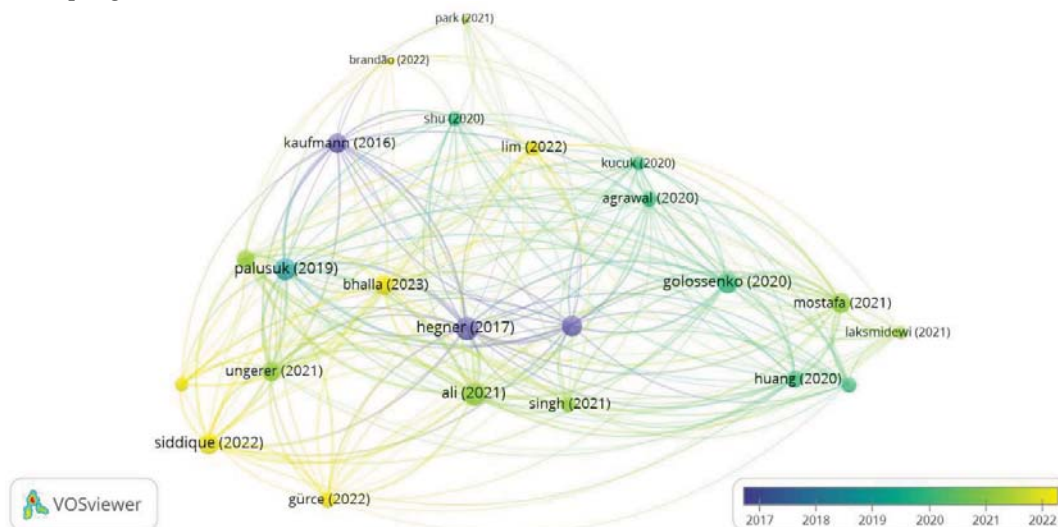
Bibliometrics is used for a variety of purposes, including helping to study the historical development of fields (Raina & Gupta, 1998) or investigating the structure of an industry and interdisciplinary cooperation (Liu & Xia, 2015). Bibliometrics are often used for statistical research from many perspectives, including statistical analysis of publication characteristics (authors, keywords) to quantify, describe, and predict the written communication process. Bibliometrics are also used to analyze the network of related bibliographic factors of documents, including co-authoring network, co-citation, co-occurrence of keywords, and bibliographic coupling.

3.1. Database Assessment

The team searched and studied documents from Dimension's database, from which an author's dataset was extracted using the Web of Science, and finally, the team performed a parametric bibliographic analysis quality based on visualization of similarities using VOS software (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The team uses this method on VOS software to visually find gaps in previous studies. This is analyzed in four steps (Akter & Wamba, 2016; Akter et al., 2019; Galvagno, 2017).

As a first step, identify search queries based on key definitions of Brand Anthropomorphism (Guthrie, 1993; Waytz et al., 2007; Tuskej & Podnar, 2018) and Brand Love (Ahuvia, 1993; Batra et al., 2012). The research team used Google Scholar and Dimension search engines, which were limited to the period from 2014 to 2023 for the purpose of accessing the most modern research trends. Next, the research team used the query technique 'TITLE-ABS-KEY' (Bresciani et al., 2021) and reference research articles should meet the following criteria: (1) the research articles must be included in the ISI system, (2) the research content is similar to the search keywords, (3) the Research articles using English as a written language, (4) are new studies in the past 10 years. The results obtained 50 research papers that met the set criteria.

In the second step, to increase the validity and reliability of the referenced research papers, the paper synthesized the number of DOIs and retrieved the data using the Web of Science. The results were 23 articles described by year of publication and by country of publication through Figure 1 and Table 1.



Source: Research team compiled, using VOS 1.6.17 application

Figure 1: Studies described by year of publication

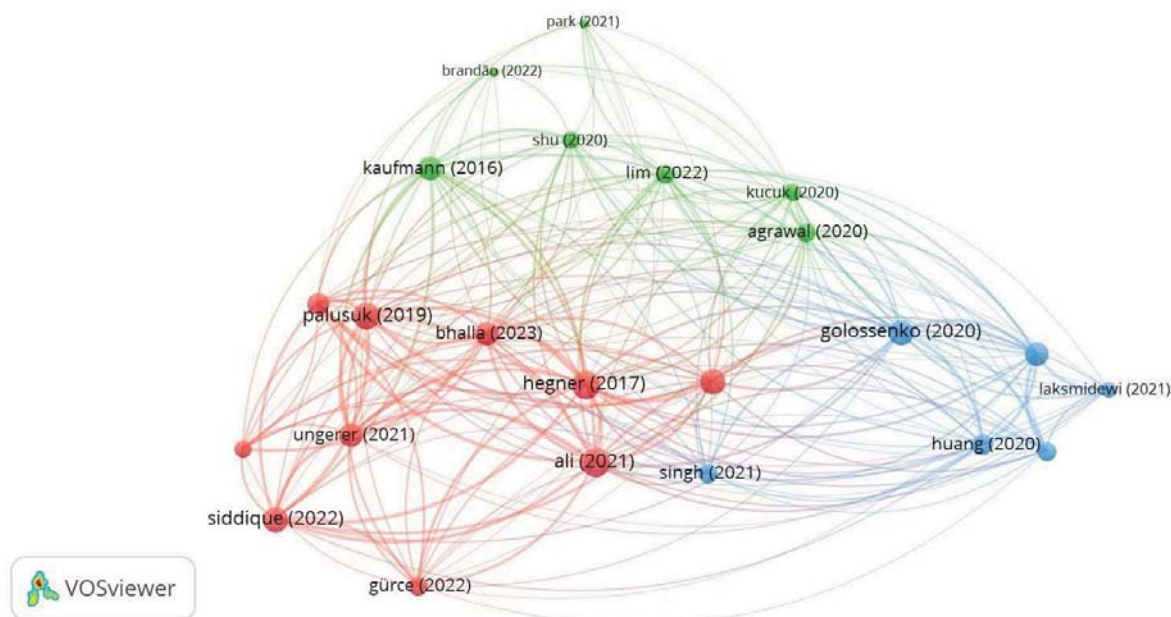
Table 1: Descriptive studies by year and country of publication.

Country Year	USA	India	South Korea	Malaysia	Germany	United Kingdom	China	France	Kuwait	Pakistan	Total
2014					1						1
2016			1								1
2017						1					1
2019								1			1
2020	2	1				1	2				6
2021	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	7
2022	2	2								1	5
2023		1									1
Total	5	5	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	23

Source: Research team compiled, using VOS 1.6.17 application

The third step is to conduct bibliographic measurement and analysis on 23 effective reference research papers. The team used VOSviewer 1.6.17 software, specifically the Bibliographic coupling feature to analyze similarities in research trends and visualize results. VOSviewer software uses some common citations to divide articles into clusters (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Bibliographic coupling

analysis found that 23 articles are linked together by division and form 3 distinct color groups (three subject groups), which reflected the basic characteristics and trends of the dataset. Each color group represents a specific research direction (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The results are shown in Figure 2.



Source: Research team compiled, using VOS 1.6.17 application

Figure 2: Research trend map

4. Result

Based on the clustering results returned by the VOSviewer application in Figure 2, the research team reviewed and classified all the papers by color clusters, finding prominent research trends and linking them together, to find research gaps in research papers. It is observed that

23 articles are divided into three trends corresponding to three different clusters.

In the red cluster with the number of research articles reaching 10 articles and the main topic being Brand Anthropomorphism affecting Brand Love and the suffixes of Brand Love, with outstanding research by Gürce and Tosun (2022), Siddique and Rajput (2022), Hegner et al.

(2017), and Rauschnabel et al. (2014). In particular, the study of Rauschnabel et al. (2014) suggested that the suffixes of Brand Love include seven main aspects expressed in the research paper "You're so lovable: Anthropomorphism and brand love".

In the blue cluster with the number of research articles reaching 6 articles and the main topic is analyzing Brand Anthropomorphism factors and how to form Brand Anthropomorphism, with outstanding research by Manajemen (2021), Jeong and Kim (2020), Mostafa and Albloushy (2021), and Golossenko et al. (2020). According to Golossenko et al. (2020), there are all four main components that make up the element of Brand Anthropomorphism as shown in the study "Seeing brands as humans: Development and validation of a brand anthropomorphism scale".

In the green cluster with the number of research articles reaching seven articles and the main topic being the analysis of Brand Anthropomorphism factors affecting consumers' feelings of love or hate for the brand, with outstanding research by Kucuk and Umit (2020), and Amélia et al. (2022).

However, studies on Brand Anthropomorphism factors affecting brand love only stop at the level of generalizing the concept of these factors but have not analyzed in depth the impact of prefixes on the suffixes of the two factors of Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Love. Although there are citations from the studies of Philipp and Ahuvia (2014) and the studies of Golossenko et al. (2020). It can be seen in the research paper of Faizan Ali et al. (2021) with the title "Brand anthropomorphism, love, and defense: does attitude towards social distancing?", the author used the definition of Tuškej and Podnar (2018) describes Brand Anthropomorphism as entities viewed as human beings with their intentions, feelings, and wills. However, the author only uses five questions to measure Brand anthropomorphism factors such as "This brand has free will, this brand experiences, this brand has intentions, this brand has consciousness, this brand has a mind of its own", these questions do not fully describe the emotional aspects, intentions, and will of a person. Besides, it can be seen in the research papers of Sierra et al. (2015) and Palusuk and Koles (2018), these authors study the Brand Love factor. However, they only analyze the consumer's love for the brand but have not analyzed what happens after the consumer loves that brand.

5. Conclusion

Several components of brand love have a strong association with brand love in distribution matters, such as feeling tied to the brand, desiring a long-term relationship

with the brand, and experiencing a sense of personal loss. Assume the brand no longer exists (i.e., the pain of separation is heralded). If anthropomorphism permits brands to be seen as ostensible actors with motives and capacities, Kervyn et al. (2012) assert that they will become more reasonable relationship partners. Hence, anthropomorphism strengthens the sense of a connection with the brand, which ought to be expressed primarily in the more relational aspects of brand love. This is consistent with earlier research indicating that individuals engage in anthropomorphic thinking to assist satisfy their social needs (Epley et al., 2007), and anthropomorphic thinking increases the feeling of connection between consumers and anthropomorphized things (Hart et al., 2013).

This is also reflected in the results that those who anthropomorphize items maintain them longer and are stated to treat them better than those who do not anthropomorphize products. Furthermore, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) discover that car-loving customers occasionally acquire car-related accessories as a token of their affection or even as a present. This conduct is more cognitively suitable for interpersonal than person-thing connections. Hence, personified thinking will lessen this cognitive discrepancy and amplify this caring habit. The brand choice component of resource readiness captures these behaviors with precision. In conclusion, since anthropomorphism enhances cognitive consistency, it fosters brand-love connections between customers and brands. This is analogous to the connection between two individuals. The brand and the client are two intimately associated entities with sentiments comparable to those between individuals developing a love for one another.

This research demonstrates a strong correlation between brand love and brand anthropomorphism in distribution matters. Unfortunately, the research does not elaborate on the antecedent aspects of these two variables. In addition, the link between these two characteristics has not yet been studied in several nations, since the ideologies, lifestyles, cultural backgrounds, and expressions of love vary. The following research might provide references to other studies on ideology in society and ways to show love in various nations. Brand love, which appears in scientific research and brand management practice, may play a function comparable to brand loyalty: consumer satisfaction, brand perception, and quality. Managers will then utilize this notion to establish and execute brand development plan targets. (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Brand love has been compared to other emotional consumer relationships since it has been examined further. Customers may show love for people and items. People worry about relationships daily since numerous emotions, their causes, growth, and maintenance exist. Again, individuals have emotional relationships with brands, which everyone believes are inert

and emotionless. The study report will show that the brand has emotions, personality, and sentiments, which are becoming increasingly apparent. Grow deep inside the psyche and in distribution brand name.

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