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**Brand experience effects on brand attachment:**

**The role of brand trust, age, and income**

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*and Dwight Merunka*

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** — The aim of this study is to examine how brand attachment is related to brand experience. The model tests the partial mediating role of brand trust, and the moderating role of age and income.

**Design/methodology/approach** — 334 participants consuming brands with an experiential offering completed an online questionnaire in a cross-sectional study. The data were analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), and advanced methods such as the heterotrait-monotrait ratio and the Henseler's multigroup analysis were used.

**Findings** — Brand experience is positively related to brand attachment, and the more so for younger consumers. This relationship holds for both hedonic and utilitarian brands. Results demonstrate the partial mediation of brand trust in this relationship, especially for utilitarian brands, and with a weaker indirect relationship for high-income consumers.

**Research limitations/implications** — The research was conducted in one country (Peru). Generalizability of results should be established by carrying out additional studies in other settings or countries.

**Practical implications** — Experiential marketing both as a positioning strategy and through marketing operations may help brands to increase consumer attachment. This may be managed both through the direct effect of favoring positive experiences, and through the enhancement of brand trust. This is particularly the case for target markets composed of young and low to medium income consumers.

**Originality/value** — Results confirm the impact of brand experience on brand attachment for both utilitarian and hedonic brands, and establish both the mediating role of brand trust and the moderating role of age and income. These are new insights on the process itself, and on boundary conditions of an important established relationship.

**Keywords** Brand experience, Brand attachment, Brand trust, Age, Income.

**Paper type** Research paper

## **Introduction**

According to an online study from company MBLM which analyzes emotional connections between consumers and brands, brands with strong connection to consumers generated \$2.9 billions more in profits compared to those with weak connections (Fortune, 2017). Therefore, brand attachment is an effective brand management objective which results in positive financial performances beyond established consequences such as brand loyalty and price premium (Thomson, McInnis and Whan Park, 2005). Therefore, brands seek to create an emotional connection with customers such as McDonald's with its recent "*I'm lovin' it*" slogan displayed both in advertising and on packagings. Achieving brand attachment may be seen as a successful brand strategy, and a better understanding of the process favoring brand attachment is relevant both to the academic and brand management communities.

Brand attachment is one of the main concepts studied in the domain of consumer-brand relationships since it is well established that this emotional bond between consumers and brands has strong and positive consequences on multiple relationships and behaviors such as brand love (Correia-Loureiro *et al.*, 2012), brand loyalty (Japutra *et al.*, 2016), compulsive buying (Japutra *et al.*, 2017), commitment (Belaid and Behi, 2011), ethical judgment (Schmalz and Orth, 2012), satisfaction (Belaid and Behi, 2011), separation distress (Park *et al.*, 2010), proximity maintenance, emotional security, and safer haven (Thomson *et al.*, 2005), purchase intent (Esch *et al.*, 2006), and resilience to negative information (Japutra *et al.*, 2016). Beyond established positive consequences, a main research question is how brand attachment may be favored. Recently, researchers explored potential antecedents of brand attachment such as fear (Dunn and Hoegg, 2014), emotional value (Koronaki *et al.*, 2017), perceived brand responsiveness (Japutra *et al.*, 2016), self-congruence (Malar *et al.*, 2011) or social crowding (Huang *et al.*, 2017).

However, the experiential perspective has yet been ignored. This holistic perspective is important since it focuses on multiple internal responses from consumers at various brand touch points (Alloza, 2008; Brakus *et al.*, 2009), resulting in complex consumer journeys with the brand (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Professional studies suggest that providing experiences to consumers is a top business priority (Accenture, 2015), and that experiences driven from brands may favor attachment (Daniel Newman, 2016). Thus, brand attachment may be affected by these multiple touch points with the brand and by the resulting positive experience consumers enjoy.

From an academic perspective, the fact that brand experience may favor brand attachment was established through two empirical studies. In a context of fashion brands, positive in-store brand experience leads shoppers to develop brand attachment (Dolbec and Chebat, 2013), and in a context of hotel brands, travelers who live a positive experience with brands are more likely to be attached (Kang *et al.*, 2016). However, these studies did not explore the process through which this effect might occur. Research in psychology shows that trust plays a role in the development of attachment (Burke and Stets, 1999; Fraley and Shaver, 2000; Hazan and Shaver; 1994). Other studies established both the influence of trust on commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1984) and the influence of attachment on commitment (Louis and Lombart, 2010). Therefore, brand experience may not only have a direct effect on brand attachment but also an indirect effect on attachment through brand trust. Moreover, past research on the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment focused on specific brand categories and within countries such as the US and Malaysia. Further studies focusing on a wider range of brand categories and in other contexts will strengthen external validity of the established relationships.

Also, past studies lacked to explore potential moderating effects on the relationship of brand experience to brand attachment such as the role of individual variables. It could be that the established relationship is stronger or weaker depending on specific individual conditions such as age or income. Recent research revealed the role of age in the emotional aspect of consumption (e.g. emotion in retailing, Loureiro and Roschk, 2013; emotion in advertisement, Drolet *et al.*, 2007; McKay *et al.*, 2011; Williams and Drolet, 2005) and studies on the relationship between age and brand attachment are scarce and focused on adolescents (Bidmon, 2016) or perfume brands (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent, 2010). Because age influences how individuals experience affect (Birditt and Fingerman, 2003; Diener *et al.*, 1985; Lawton *et al.*, 1992) or display proactive behavior to external stimulation (Gross *et al.*, 1997; Lubin *et al.*, 1988; Steinberg *et al.*, 2008), further attention to the role of age on the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment is warranted. Knowing what consumer age groups are more prone to attach to experiential brands will allow managers to segment the market and better manage consumer behavior.

In addition, research on the influence of income mainly focused on price (Gaston-Breton and Raghubir, 2013; Mulhern *et al.*, 1998; Rosa-Diaz, 2004; Wakefield and Inman, 2003) or materialism (Ponchio and Aranha, 2008), without considering the context of consumer-brand relationships. While income impacts satisfaction and brand loyalty (Homburg and Giering, 2000, Mishra, 2014), no consideration for brand experience, brand trust or brand attachment was given. The potential effect of income on relationships between brand trust, brand experience and brand attachment deserves attention since individuals of higher income are more likely to behave selfishly (Dubois *et al.*, 2015), and have a general tendency to distrust. Similar to age, income is susceptible to influence the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment, since trust is negatively related to income (Judge *et al.*, 1999; Ng *et al.*, 2005).

Covering these research gaps should allow marketers to better understand through what process brand experience influences brand attachment and to better understand how individual variables may influence the process.

In the current research, we firstly aim at demonstrating that brand experience is positively related to brand attachment. Secondly, we examine the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment through the mediation of brand trust. Thirdly, we investigate the moderating role of age and income on direct or mediated relationships between brand experience and brand attachment.

## **Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

### *Brand Experience*

The notion of experience appears within multiple marketing or consumer contexts: customer experience (Homburg *et al.*, 2017; Jain *et al.*, 2017 for a review; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), service experience (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Helkkula, 2011), consumption experience (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Lanier and Rader, 2015), online customer experience (McLean and Wilson, 2016), and brand experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). In the context of branding, the brand becomes a moving target in the experience, subject to the whims of the touchpoints between the consumer and the brand (Merrilees, 2017).

Consumers experience brands in any situation of direct or indirect interaction with a branded product or service (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Kruger, 2018; Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Schmitt *et al.*, 2015, Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016). Direct interaction refers to the search for a product or service information, the purchase process, the service or product usage, whereas indirect interaction principally involves advertisement (Japutra and Molinillo,

2017; Nysveen *et al.*, 2013). In such interactions, brand-related stimuli elicit subjective and internal responses to the consumer's experience. Brand experience is thus defined as the set of responses that consumers evoke at every touch point with brands (Alloza, 2008; Klein *et al.*, 2016) and are stored in long-term memory (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014).

Brand experience refers to sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioral responses (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Ding and Tseng, 2015; Gabisch, 2011; Kang *et al.*, 2016; Merrilees, 2016; Nysveen *et al.*, 2013; Shamim and Butt, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2017; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010, 2013). Sensory brand experience involves the stimulation of senses through exposition to brands (e.g. visual, taste, smell, sound, and touch) (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Tafesse, 2016). The visual aspect is considered as the most important element of sensory experience because images captured as information are easily stored in consumers' minds (Schifferstein, 2006) and are at stake in any experience with products or services (Beckman *et al.*, 2013; Huang *et al.*, 2015). Visual brand experience provides consumers with an esthetic sense of brands (e.g. brand logos, brand slogans, brand imageries) and their surroundings. However, the relevance of taste, smell, sound, and touch for brand experience depends on the type of product or service offered. Taste and touch are linked to a direct experience with products whereas smell and sound may also be indirectly experienced through the atmosphere created by companies and their brands (Beckman *et al.*, 2013). Affective brand experience includes inner feelings towards brands and emotions evoked when interacting with them (Beckman *et al.*, 2013; Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Huang *et al.*, 2015). This experience is embedded in consumers' minds and generates either positive (e.g. brand love, brand passion) or negative reactions (e.g. brand hate, disgust) (Kang *et al.*, 2016). Intellectual brand experience involves the occurrence of imaginative or analytical thinking by consumers stimulated by brands (Beckman *et al.*, 2013; Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Imaginative thinking entails spontaneity and

creativity in the generation process of ideas, and analytical thinking emphasizes accuracy and logic in the search for answers to questions (Huang *et al.*, 2015). Behavioral brand experience refers to physical actions elicited by the exposition to brands (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), physical actions representing the use of the body to complete activities triggered by specific stimuli of brands (Kang *et al.*, 2016). The body can thus be used as a source of well-being or health (e.g. sport), as a recreation or expression of emotions (e.g. dancing, jogging), and as a source of symbolic representation (e.g. performances) (Beckman *et al.*, 2013).

Finally, there is a social aspect to brand experience following the experiential marketing framework of Schmitt (1999). Social brand experience refers to a relational component such as relationship with others, and with the ideal self (Gentile *et al.*, 2007, Huang *et al.*, 2015). Relationship with others involves the fact that brands encourage the consumption of products or services together with other individuals, thus creating a link between them through the sharing of space and time (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Schmitt, 1999; Shamin and Butt, 2013; Tafesse, 2016). The ideal self refers to the assertion of a social identity, generating a sense of social acceptance and distinction from other social groups by means of brands (Gentile *et al.*, 2007).

### *Brand Experience and Brand Attachment*

The notion of brand attachment is based on Bowlby's (1979) attachment theory, and its definition refers to "*an emotion-laden target-specific bond between a consumer and a specific brand*" (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). It refers to the emotional bond between a consumer and a brand (Japutra *et al.*, 2016; 2018b; Malar *et al.*, 2011), just as in the relationship between a child and his or her caregiver where attachment is essentially created through strong feelings (Bowlby, 1979). The cognitive dimension introduced by Park *et al.* (2006, 2010) based on the

use of brands to create self-image or enhance self-concept refers more to the concept of consumer-brand identification (Escalas and Bettman, 2000, 2003), as indicated by Japutra *et al.* (2014a), and will not be considered in this research. We follow the view that brand attachment is an effect of the belief that consumers connect with brands (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008), and being aware that a brand reflects the self leads individuals to develop over time an emotion-laden bond with it (Japutra *et al.*, 2018a,b; Malar *et al.*, 2011)

Brand attachment is composed of three dimensions: affection, passion, and connection (Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Japutra *et al.*, 2017; Japutra *et al.*, 2018a,b). First, brand affection refers to the warm feelings that a brand creates. This concept is related to Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) brand affect which is defined as the brand's potential to elicit positive emotional response. Brands that render consumers pleasant, joyful and affectionate have an effect on consumer behavior (Matzler *et al.*, 2006). Second, brand passion refers to intense positive feelings that a brand arouses. This concept is in line with subsequent studies that refer to passion as a strong feeling toward the brand (Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Matzler *et al.*, 2007). A passionate consumer becomes involved in an emotional relationship with the brand filled with excitement and obsession (Albert *et al.*, 2013). Third, brand connection involves the feeling of “*being linked*” to the brand, the feeling of being bonded or joined with the brand.

The fact that consumers are involved in multiple positive brand experiences might increase their attachment to brands. Since the development of attachment is based on interactions between individuals and objects (Baldwin *et al.*, 1996), brands that favor internal responses from consumers at various brand touch points should induce the development of an emotion-laden bond with them. Consumers become attached to brands because of multiple positive experiences (Dolbec and Chebat, 2013; Japutra *et al.*, 2014b; Kang *et al.*, 2016), and brands play a powerful role when being consistently relied upon to provide gratification through experiential elements. Experiencing brands engenders positive responses such as

contentment and satisfaction (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Khan *et al.*, 2016a,b; Khan and Fatma, 2017), and this gratification will boost a link between the brand and the consumer since consumers maintain emotional consistency when a brand provides satisfactory experiences (Kang *et al.*, 2016). Finally, since positive experiences lead to good memories (Alloza, 2008; Pine and Gilmore, 1999), living multiple positive brand experiences develops favorable brand memories, which in turn create an attachment toward brands (Cardinale *et al.*, 2016). Based on these arguments, we propose:

*H1: Favorable brand experience is positively linked to brand attachment.*

#### *The Role of Age in the Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Attachment*

We propose that the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment is stronger for younger consumers for several reasons. First, age influences the way individuals experience affect. Because of emotional maturity, older individuals experience emotions less intensively than younger individuals (Diener *et al.*, 1985; Lawton *et al.*, 1992). Older individuals have a perception that life taught them to moderate their feelings and to control situations which may lead to emotional overload. In addition, older individuals have a tendency to adapt more easily to emotional events because of repeated exposure (Diener *et al.*, 1985; Larsen and Diener, 1987). The fact of having been exposed to more emotional events leads older individuals to be more habituated and therefore experience affect less intensely. Thus, age may play a role in how brand experience leads to brand attachment.

Second, age influences the proactive behavior displayed to receive external stimulation. Sensation or experience seeking decreases with age (Gross *et al.*, 1997; Lubin *et al.*, 1988; Steinberg *et al.*, 2008), because younger individuals search for stimuli that produce excitement and emotions (Costa and McCrae, 1986). They are more change-oriented and

carry less conservative propensities (Zuckerman, 1979). Also, younger individuals have higher levels of extraversion, which implies sensation seeking and openness to experience (Costa *et al.*, 1986). Thus, preference for sensory stimulation linked to age may influence the effect of brand experience on brand attachment.

Third, age influences emotional control or regulation (Birditt and Fingerman, 2003; Kessler and Staudinger, 2009; Gross *et al.*, 1997; Lawton *et al.*, 1992; Orgeta, 2009). Older individuals 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 younger consumers since 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. Since younger consumers seek more interactions with brands and enjoy them more, they should develop more intense attachment toward brands. Based on these arguments, we propose:

*H2: The positive link between brand experience and brand attachment is stronger for younger consumers than for older consumers.*

### *The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in the Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Attachment*

We define brand trust as the expectation that consumers have that a brand will consistently deliver its promise. This is based on the evaluative aspect of trust (Mayer *et al.*, 1995) which refers to trust as “*the expectations of the trustor that the trustee will perform a particular action important to him or her.*” The trustor expects that the trustee will accomplish actions for his or her benefit (Doney and Cannon, 1997; Mayer *et al.*, 1995).

Trust is often modeled as a tri-dimensional concept composed of ability, integrity, and benevolence (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Schoorman *et al.*, 2007). In our research we focus on ability and benevolence in order to emphasize the cognitive and affective aspects of brand trust (Li *et al.*, 2008). Ability, or competence, is related to the capacity that the trustee has to respond to the needs of the trustor (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2001; Mayer *et al.*, 1995). The trustee is evaluated by the aptitude to hold promises, and consumers evaluate the ability of a brand to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Benevolence involves the positive intentions of the trustee. The trustor evaluates whether the trustee genuinely wants to do good to him or her. The trustee should demonstrate concern about the welfare of the trustor (Doney and Cannon, 1997), and avoid relying on egocentric motivations for making business with the trustor (Mayer *et al.*, 1995).

Despite the fact that some empirical studies show that concepts linked to brand trust (i.e. brand credibility, partner quality) arise as a consequence of brand experience (Francisco-Maffezzoli *et al.*, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017; Shamim and Butt, 2013), the relationship between brand experience and brand trust lacks empirical evidence. We propose that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment, for two reasons. First, positive experiences with brands should reinforce the expectation that these brands offer the benefits expected. We argue that since multiple brand experiences provide value and gratification (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), repeated positive brand encounters should reinforce the belief in the capacity of brands to consistently deliver what is expected from them, or even to exceed expectations. Positively experiencing brands should create a perception of certitude, relief, and security (Ha, 2004), thus boosting a feeling of confidence in the brand. Multiple positive brand experiences should also reinforce the feeling that the brand is sincere, consumer-centered, benevolent, and pursues positive goals.

Second, brand trust may promote an emotional-laden bond between consumers and

brands. In psychology, the role of trust as an antecedent of emotional attachment is explained for three reasons. First, trust induces a positive emotional attachment because a trustworthy person is perceived as signaling care, concern, and connection. Burke and Stets (1999) show that trust in a partner is central to the subjective development of an emotionally based interpersonal connection. Second, the development of attachment depends on the satisfaction of one's needs (Hazan and Shaver, 1994) which relies on the existence of trust. A sense of attachment is based on expectations that key people will be available and responsive in times of need (Bowlby, 1982; Shaver *et al.*, 2018). For instance, trust in an organization facilitates attachment through the satisfaction of employees' needs and interests, and the anticipation of favorable employment outcomes (Thau *et al.*, 2007). Third, attachment to a partner depends on the way the partner is used as a source of safety and comfort (Fraley and Shaver, 2000). In the context of consumer-brand relationships, brand attachment is principally based on brand trust because it creates a comfort zone for consumers (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011; 2013). Thus, personal brand experiences that build trust enable the development of attachment (Park *et al.*, 2006), as demonstrated both in retail where trust towards the brand is related to brand attachment (Frasquet *et al.*, 2017; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010), and in consumer goods where consumers' trust is related to attachment to brand Coca-Cola (Louis and Lombart, 2010). In summary, we suggest that multiple positive brand experiences are related to brand trust, which in turn is related to brand attachment. Based on these arguments, we propose:

*H3: The positive link between brand experience and brand attachment is partially mediated by brand trust.*

*The Moderating Role of Income in the Relationship between Brand Experience, Brand Trust*

### *and Brand Attachment*

The mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment should be weaker for individuals of higher income. Literature on human personality traits and career success suggests that agreeableness, of which trust is a component, is negatively related to income (Judge *et al.*, 1999; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Spurk and Abele, 2011). This is expressed by the fact that workers are required to be tough-minded and competition-oriented in order to climb the career ladder (Spurk and Abele, 2011). Thus, trust is felt in a lesser extent for individuals with higher income. Therefore, positively experiencing brands may boost a lesser degree of trust in the brand and it, in turn, promote a lesser degree of brand attachment for consumers of higher income.

Moreover, individuals of higher income are disposed to behave more selfishly (Dubois *et al.*, 2015), which is contrary to expected reciprocity in a condition of trust (Rubin, 1975). The higher concern with one's own personal profit may limit the tendency to trust. Hence, higher income consumers could be less affected by the concept of trust, and its mediating role in the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment should be weaker than for other consumers. Based on these arguments, we propose:

*H4: The mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment is weaker for high-income consumers than for low-income consumers.*

The model is presented in Figure 1.

## **Method**

### *Data Collection and Sample*

We collected the data on a convenience sample of 334 individuals composed of both students (38.4%) and graduates from a large University in Lima, Peru. We focused on the city of Lima because it is one of Latin America's most important financial centers<sup>1</sup>, home to many national and international companies selling strong brands. We used online questionnaires and a snowball method on Facebook during three weeks. The virtual snowball sampling method enabled expanding rapidly the sample size and accessing "hard to reach" individuals (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). The questionnaire was designed and self-administered through Google docs which helped ensure anonymity. The profile of respondents is shown in Table 1.

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Table 1 about here  
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We exposed informants to a list of ten brands selected through a pre-test, and asked participants to choose the one with which they had a highly positive experience. If no brand from the list fulfilled this condition, participants had the option of proposing another brand. Then, study participants answered questions concerning brand experience, brand trust, and brand attachment, as well as demographics. The pre-test was conducted with 21 individuals (11 males, aged 20 to 30), and enabled selecting ten brands potentially generating positive experiences. Six brands were previously identified by a marketing professional because of their positive experiential offer and were submitted to the study participants who confirmed they generate positive experiences. Participants also proposed other brands favoring positive experience, and four brands generating a consensus were added, leading to a list of ten brands perceived as potential providers of positive experiences. The ten brands used in the main

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/lima-city-peru.html>

study included McDonald's and several local brands in different service categories: Play Land Park (leisure activity brand), Los Delfines (hotel brand), Pardos Chicken (restaurant), Wong, Tottus, and Ripley (retail), Cruz del Sur (travel), Banco de Credito del Peru (bank), and Cineplanet (movie theater).

### *Measures*

Existing scales were adapted for each construct. Following the well-established back-translation technique, a bilingual Spanish-English Peruvian first translated the questionnaire from English to Spanish which was then back-translated from Spanish to English by another bilingual Peruvian who lived in the United States for ten years. Four of the translated statements pertaining to brand experience were excluded due to difficulties of translation and understanding in Spanish.

*Brand experience* is measured through the scale of Brakus *et al.* (2009) composed of four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. In addition, we included the social dimension of brand experience, eliminated in the purification process of Brakus *et al.* (2009). We wish to test whether this social dimension plays a role since the purification operated by Brakus *et al.* (2009) is linked to their data rather than resting on a theoretical perspective (Shamin and Butt, 2013). The dependent variable, *brand attachment*, is measured through the three dimensional scale (Affection, Passion, and Connection) of Thomson *et al.* (2005). The scale developed by Li *et al.* (2008) was employed to measure *brand trust*. All items were rated on a seven-point Likert agreement scale (from 1: "strongly disagree" to 7: "strongly agree"), see Table 2.

To test whether a common method bias is present in the data (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), we conducted the Harman's one factor test. We identified the underlying factors through an

un-rotated principal component analysis of the 30 items (12 items for brand experience, 9 items for brand trust, and 9 items for brand attachment). The analysis revealed the presence of 3 distinct factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 accounting for 63.1% of total variance. No single factor emerged from the analysis, and the first factor accounted for limited variance (24.1%). Therefore, with no general factor identified, common method bias represents no threat for the data.

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Table 2 about here  
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To estimate the measurement and structural models, we used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM, Hair *et al.*, 2016) through SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). PLS-SEM analysis is justified because some sub-samples are relatively small (e.g. n=100 for the medium income group), and some variables (e.g. competence) do not follow a normal distribution (kurtosis > 1.5). PLS maintains the assumption of the quality of the model with non-normal data (Henseler *et al.*, 2016) and analyzes complex models with scarce data (Rigdon, 2016). In addition, compared to covariance-based SEM, PLS is notably justified because our research entails theory development (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014), and a first effort to explore the indirect effect of brand experience on brand attachment through brand trust is made here. Likewise, the moderating effect of age and income allows for theory development. Second, PLS-SEM analysis allows for a predictive focus through the estimation of the path model relationships that maximize the R<sup>2</sup> values of constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2017). In this regard, we could identify the impact of brand experience on brand trust and of the latter on brand attachment.

## Results

### *Measurement Scales' Psychometric Properties*

Reliability and convergent validity were respectively assessed by composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), both suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Discriminant validity was assessed through the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) because of its superior performance compared to more traditional methods (Henseler *et al.*, 2015), and standardized loadings ( $\lambda$ ) were used to assess indicator reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The thresholds for CR, AVE, and  $\lambda$  are 0.7, 0.5, and 0.7, respectively, and for the HTMT criterion, we use the 0.9 threshold level (Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

The measurement model includes three multidimensional constructs: brand experience, brand trust, and brand attachment. Table 3 indicates that all indicator loadings on their corresponding constructs are higher than 0.7. CR and AVE of all the constructs are higher than 0.7 and 0.5 respectively. Discriminant validity is established since all HTMT criteria are below 0.9 (Table 4). Therefore, the measurement model possesses clear evidence of reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

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Table 3 and Table 4 about here  
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### *Direct and Indirect Effects*

We tested the hypotheses using 5000 bootstraps resamples (Table 5). The results show that brand experience has a positive direct effect on brand attachment ( $\gamma=0.550$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in support of H1. In addition, brand experience has a positive effect on brand trust, which in turn has a positive effect on brand attachment. In order to test the partial mediating hypothesis (H3:

mediation of brand trust between brand experience and brand attachment), we examine the indirect effect of brand experience on brand attachment through brand trust. The product of the coefficients using the bootstrapping resampling method (Nitzl *et al.*, 2016) demonstrates the significant partial mediating role of brand trust ( $\gamma=0.180$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), in support of H3. It appears that the direct effect of brand experience on brand attachment is stronger than the indirect effect through brand trust ( $\gamma=0.550$  and  $\gamma=0.180$  respectively), and that brand experience through both direct and indirect effects explains the formation of brand attachment ( $R^2= 63.2\%$ ). Brand experience also explains brand trust ( $R^2= 24.5\%$ ) justifying the inclusion of brand trust in the model.

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Table 5 about here  
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*Moderation by Age*

We contrast two age groups of similar size: younger consumers (18 to 25 years old, 48.2% of study participants) and older consumers (over 25 years old), and conducted a multigroup analysis which first requires to establish measurement invariance (Henseler *et al.*, 2016; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2011). We tested the measurement invariance of composites (Henseler *et al.*, 2016), which implies configural invariance, compositional invariance, and equal means and variances for the groups. Table 6 indicates full measurement invariance between the groups.

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Table 6 about here  
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We separately bootstrapped parameters for each group to verify a probable difference between these parameters (Henseler, 2007). Compared with the parametric approach of Keil *et al.* (2000), the Henseler's bootstrap method does not need any distributional assumptions, thus being compatible with the PLS-SEM method. The results of the multigroup analysis indicate a significant difference between younger and older consumers in the effect of brand experience on brand attachment ( $\Delta\gamma=0.145$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), with a stronger link between the two concepts for younger consumers, in support of H2 (Table 7).

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Table 7 about here  
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#### *Moderation by Income*

We composed three income groups of equal size (low, medium, high income groups) and first controlled for measurement invariance through single pairwise comparisons. Full measurement invariance between groups 1 and 2 is established for all constructs (except for one item) (Appendix 1). Full and partial measurement invariance of the other group comparisons is established for all constructs (Appendix 2 and 3). Partial measurement invariance is a minimum requirement for interpreting differences between groups (Henseler *et al.*, 2016).

The results of single pairwise comparisons indicate no differences between consumers of low and medium income) in the indirect effect of brand experience on brand attachment ( $\Delta\gamma=0.021$ ,  $p>0.05$ , Table 8). There are however significant differences between consumers of low and high income ( $\Delta\gamma=0.192$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and between consumers of medium and high income ( $\Delta\gamma=0.171$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The link between brand experience and brand attachment (mediated by brand trust) is weaker for consumers of high income in support of H4 (Table 8).

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Table 8 about here  
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*Analysis by brand type*

The results we obtained on pooled data (10 brands) may vary across brand types. To determine the robustness of the model to variations among specific groups of brands, we clustered brands into utilitarian and hedonic brands, and tested our model across the two brand types.

Although all brands were chosen by study participants because they offer great experience to consumers, the main value for which they are consumed varies. For instance, Banco de Credito is principally used for its utilitarian purpose such as service of transactional accounts. On the other hand, Play Land Park's main purpose is hedonic because of the entertainment it provides, and the experiential aspect of this brand is the essence of its offer. The data was split into two groups of brands differentiated by their main purpose: brands mainly consumed because of their hedonic purpose (Los Delfines, Play Land Park, Wong, Pardos Chicken, Ripley, and Cineplanet) and brands with a more utilitarian purpose (Banco de Credito, Cruz del Sur, McDonald's, and Tottus).

In order to separate these two types of brands based on data collected, we conducted a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis based on the mean scores for the five experiential dimensions. This cluster analysis method is justified since an exact number of clusters was expected. Table 9 shows the difference of mean scores between brands with a more hedonic purpose (Cluster I) and brands with a more utilitarian purpose (Cluster II) on each experiential dimension. Brands with a more hedonic purpose exhibit a higher level of experience than

brands with a more utilitarian purpose on four of the five dimensions (the ANOVA demonstrates significant differences except for the intellectual dimension). Cluster I (172 respondents) contains Los Delfines, Play Land Park, Ripley, Wong and Pardos Chicken, whereas Cluster II (135 respondents) contains Cineplanet, Banco de Credito, Tottus, Cruz del Sur and McDonald's. These two types of brands were analyzed separately to re-test our hypotheses within both groups.

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Table 9 about here

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Measurement invariance was established through the measurement invariance of composites (Henseler *et al.*, 2016), and results indicate full measurement invariance between the two groups of brands (Appendix 4).

After bootstrapping parameters (Table 10), results indicate that hypotheses H1 and H3 are supported for each group of brands. For brands with a more hedonic purpose, brand experience has a direct effect on brand attachment ( $\gamma=0.615$ ,  $p<0.001$ , in support of H1) and indirect effect on brand attachment ( $\gamma=0.365*0.297=0.108$ ,  $p<0.001$ , in support of H3). Similarly, brand attachment is influenced by brand experience directly ( $\gamma=0.440$ ,  $p<0.001$ , in support of H1) and indirectly ( $\gamma=0.635*0.445=0.282$ ,  $p<0.001$ , in support of H3) for brands with a more utilitarian purpose. Also, the total effect of brand experience on brand attachment for hedonic brands is 0.723 and 0.722 for utilitarian brands. Therefore, results indicate that the total effect is the same for both brand types but via different paths. In summary, the robustness of the model is verified for both hedonic and utilitarian brands.

In addition, the results of a multigroup analysis indicate a significant difference between brands with either a utilitarian or a hedonic purpose in the effect of brand experience

on brand attachment ( $\Delta\gamma=0.166$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), with a stronger link between the two concepts for brands with a hedonic purpose. There is a significant difference between brand types in the effect of brand experience on brand trust ( $\Delta\gamma=0.270$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), with a stronger link between the two concepts for brands with a utilitarian purpose. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the effect of brand trust on brand attachment (Table 10).

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Table 10 about here  
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A synthesis of main results is presented in Figure 2.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Conceptual and empirical evidence support our hypotheses. First, contrary to Brakus *et al.* (2009), we demonstrate that the social aspect of brand experience should be considered as a dimension of the concept, based on psychometric properties. These results are in line with the work of Shamin and Butt (2013) who also validate the social dimension of brand experience on the mobile phone category. We extend this result on other brand categories. In addition, contrary to Huang *et al.* (2015) who considered the social dimension as a consequence of brand experience, we show that the social dimension converges with other dimensions of brand experience, forming a second-order construct.

Second, structural analysis showed that brand experience has a positive direct effect on brand attachment both on pooled data and within product types. Evoking positive and multiple internal responses while experiencing brands positively influences the emotional bond between consumers and brands. This confirms the results of the exploratory research

conducted by Japutra *et al.* (2014b) who established that English consumers manifest their attachment to Fatface or Xbox because they enjoyed their experience. Our result is also in line with the results of Dolbec and Chebat (2013) whereby North American female consumers attach more to fashion brands that provide a strong experience, and of Kang *et al.* (2016) who demonstrate that Malaysian travelers attach more to hotel brands when they lived strong positive brand experiences. Therefore, our study generalizes past research to other brand categories, and to Latin American consumers.

Third, in the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment, this study demonstrates the partially mediating role of brand trust. Successful experiences with a brand positively influence the beliefs that the brand delivers quality products or services, and that it takes care of its consumers with integrity and benevolence (Francisco-Maffezzoli *et al.*, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017; Shamim and Butt, 2013). Trust, in turn, positively influences consumers' attachment to the brand because individuals will attach more to brands that fulfill their promise, are benevolent, and provide security and confidence. Unlike past research that proposed brand attachment as an antecedent of brand trust (Belaid and Behai, 2011; Correia-Loureiro *et al.*, 2012; Kang *et al.*, 2016), we present a clear theoretical justification of the direction of the relationship from brand trust to brand attachment based on the field of social psychology.

#### *Theoretical contributions*

This research thus provides a new perspective on the consequences of positive brand experience. Contrasting with past research that principally focuses on satisfaction (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Khan *et al.*, 2016), brand equity (Lin, 2015; Shamim and Butt, 2013), or word of mouth (Klein *et al.*, 2016; Ngo *et al.*, 2016) as consequences of brand experience, we consider a more emotional consequence, i.e. brand attachment which is an expression of affection,

passion, and connection, and which was linked to valuable behavioral consequences such as brand loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). We show how a more cognitive aspect (brand trust) may be impacted by positive brand experience, and that brand trust, in turn, favors brand attachment. Therefore, brand experience favors brand attachment directly through an emotional route and indirectly through brand trust, a more cognitive route.

Concerning the moderating role of individual variables (age and income), multi-group analyses revealed significant differences between younger consumers and older consumers in the direct effect of brand experience on brand attachment. The positive effect of brand experience on brand attachment is stronger for younger consumers. This indicates that younger consumers are more likely to create an emotional bond with brands when multiple and positive internal responses are evoked through brand experience. These results are consistent with Loureiro and Roschk (2013) who showed that age moderates the relationship between positive emotions and loyalty in store brands. This relationship was significant for younger consumers but not for older consumers, and was explained by the fact that older consumers show higher emotional control and maturity in their emotional states. Beyond this interpretation, we argue that age influences the way individuals experience affect. Older individuals have a tendency to adapt more easily to emotional events because of repeated exposure (Diener *et al.*, 1985; Larsen and Diener, 1987). Second, age influences the behavior displayed to receive external stimulation. Younger individuals search for stimuli that produce excitement and emotions because they are more change-oriented and carry less conservative propensities (Zuckerman, 1979). Recent work (McKay-Nesbitt *et al.*, 2011); Sudbury-Riley and Edgar, 2017) confirm that emotional appeal is stronger for younger adults than for older adults. Therefore, our results concerning the influence of age are in line with recent results and further contribute to the understanding of consumer-brand relationships. In addition, it is relevant to notice that

although younger consumers attach more to brands that provide a strong positive experience, they are also less likely to remain attached to the same brands (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent, 2010).

Concerning income, the indirect effect of brand experience on brand attachment mediated by brand trust is positive across the three-income groups (low, medium and high). However, this indirect effect is smaller for consumers of higher income compared to the two other income groups. This indicates that for consumers of low and medium income, brand trust is more likely to create a cognitive path when multiple and positive internal responses stimulated by brand experience form an emotional bond. The fact brand trust plays a less important role for high-income consumers may be explained by the fact that such individuals are more likely to behave selfishly (Dubois *et al.*, 2015), and are required to be tough-minded and competition-oriented to progress up the career path (Spurk and Abele, 2011) leading to a general tendency to distrust. Our results are in line with the results of Homburg and Giering (2000) in the context of consumer-brand relationships, and in which the relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty is weaker for consumers with high income. They are also consistent with those of Mishra (2014), in which the more cognitive path (i.e. utilitarian) of the influence of perceived value on satisfaction is higher for low-income consumers. Since brand experience, brand trust, and brand attachment are important predictors of consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), our results extend the influence of income on consumer-brand relationships.

In summary, we establish an alternative chain of effects from brand experience to brand attachment and identify one partial mediator (brand trust) and two moderating variables neglected in previous research.

The robustness of the results is demonstrated across product types since hypotheses

linking brand experience to brand trust and to brand attachment are supported for both utilitarian and hedonic products. In addition, brand experience is more strongly linked to brand attachment for brands with a hedonic purpose and more strongly linked to brand trust for utilitarian brands. In other words, hedonic brands perceived as more experiential in terms of sensory, affective, behavioral and social responses are more likely to stimulate directly consumers' attachment. In our data, Los Delfines (luxury hotel), Play Land Park (entertainment), Ripley (fashion retail), or Pardos Chicken (casual dining) present a higher level of brand attachment than Banco de Crédito (banking), Cruz del Sur (transport), Tottus (grocery store), because they are more experiential and mainly have a hedonic purpose.

Concerning utilitarian brands, we demonstrate that the relationship between brand experience and brand trust is stronger, and that the direct relationship between brand experience and brand attachment is weaker than for hedonic brands. This results is not surprising since the evaluation of brand trust is mainly characterized by the use of cognitive cues which is more the case for brands with a main utilitarian purpose than for brands with a hedonic purpose.

However, while the paths from brand experience to brand attachment are different across the two brand types, the total effect of brand experience on brand attachment is the same (.723 for hedonic brands and .722 for utilitarian brands). This important result provides evidence that the concept of brand experience is fundamental to brand attachment independent of brand type. This contrasts with past research that puts forward the concept of “experiential brands” which are contrasted with “utilitarian brands” (e.g. Delgados-Ballester and Fernandez-Sabiote, 2015). Even if we confirm that utilitarian brands favor on average less brand experience than hedonic brands, brands with a main utilitarian purpose can also be perceived as experiential through a direct (e.g. store experience) or indirect (e.g. advertising) interaction with consumers. Moreover, stimulating brand experience with utilitarian brands has the same

overall effect on brand attachment than hedonic ones, even though paths to attachment vary.

### *Managerial implications*

The findings of this study have implications for brands that need to strengthen their relationship with consumers, and more specifically for brands seeking to create or improve an emotional bond with consumers. An experiential positioning strategy may help companies increase attachment to their brands both through a direct effect and through the enhancement of brand trust. Reinforcing brand trust in itself will favor brand attachment. Facilitating the interaction of the brand with consumers in order to stimulate multiple and internal responses linked to different dimensions of the experience (sensorial, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and social) will facilitate attachment. For instance, companies may create spaces for brand exposure (e.g. brand museums, factory visits) favoring a direct proximity with the brand and an understanding of what the brand stands for. Brands might also improve their stores, Internet sites, and services to stimulate contentment and gratification. This will lead to positive memories thus creating attachment to the brand. Creating positive consumer experiences in touchpoints other than mere product or service consumption (e.g. witnessing all brand aspects such as the choice of ingredients or raw material, production processes, packaging, employees, and organization during company visits) may help consumers appreciate the positive properties of brands and their effort to produce the best quality, thus influencing attachment through trust. On another hand, brand attachment may be directly stimulated through unusual experiences linked to brands such as creating events or institutions sponsored or fully financed by brands. Famous examples are the Cartier foundation for contemporary arts in Paris, the Frank Gehry designed art museum and cultural center Louis Vuitton sponsored by LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy) or art museums created by

Prada or Max Mara, all occasions to develop indirect brand experiences favoring brand attachment.

### *Limitations and future research*

This study has some limitations that could be overcome in future research. First, data were collected in one specific setting, that of Peru, on both international and Peruvian brands. Although Peru is adopting a western style (especially the younger population), it still has specific cultural aspects that may have influenced results, just like any other specific country in which data are collected. On the one hand, retesting the direct relationship between brand experience and brand attachment in a Peruvian context and confirming previous findings established in Western countries is of interest. On the other hand, the novel contributions linked to the introduction of a mediating variable (trust) and of two moderators (age and income) needs further testing in other economic or cultural contexts.

Second, the cross-sectional nature of our research design forces some limitations regarding the sequence of the constructs. This type of design does not enable to prove causality (Bagozzi and Yi, 2011; Bollen and Pearl, 2013). Although the existence of a path from brand experience to brand attachment is theoretically justified and supported by the data, an experimental design could be used to verify cause to effect inferences. For instance, in order to show the causality of brand trust on brand attachment, future research should manipulate the competence and benevolence of brands and test if this has an effect on brand attachment.

Third, we considered two moderating variables (age and income). Other variables may well be considered for themselves or in interaction with age and income. A potential important moderator of the relationships we examined (between brand experience, brand trust

and brand attachment) is gender. It is established that women are more open to experience (Costa *et al.*, 2001) and are more emotionally dependent (Alonso-Arbiol *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, the effect of brand experience on brand attachment may be stronger for women. Also, women appear to be more trusting than men (Feingold, 1994; Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015), and women believe more in the honesty and benevolence of other individuals because men focus more on instrumentality whereas women are more socially oriented (Buchan *et al.*, 2008; Cross and Madson, 1997). Therefore, because positive brand experience involves interactions between consumers and brands often with a social component, trust might play a bigger role for women in the indirect experience-attachment relationship. In addition, since women are more aware of the feelings of others and more concerned with interdependences rendering relationships more important (Costa *et al.*, 2001), trust might be more relevant for women. For instance, the influence of trust on the desire to maintain a relationship with internet service providers is stronger for women (Sanchez-Franco *et al.*, 2009). Finally, future research should focus on the effect of each brand experience type (i.e. sensorial, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and social) on brand attachment. How the interactions of these experiences could differently impact the direct and indirect relationships to brand attachment would be an important contribution both at the academic and at the managerial levels.

Fourth, following the arguments proposed above, the slight overrepresentation of men (62%) in our sample might have mitigated the effect of brand experience on brand trust and the latter on brand attachment. Future research should analyze samples equally represented in terms of gender in order to avoid any potential bias or formally contrast results across genders.

Fifth, despite the fact that the Harman' one factor test is the most common technique used by researchers for identifying common method variance, it suffers some limitations (Hulland *et al.*, 2017, Kemery and Dunlap, 1986). Future research should use supplemental

techniques such as the marker variable technique (Lindell and Whitney, 2001).

Sixth, the reduced representativeness and the selection bias of the snowball sampling method may limit the generalizability of results (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). Future research should consider probability sampling methods to generate more representative samples or make ex-post adjustments to the snowball sampling method in order to compensate for unequal selection probabilities or non-coverage (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2018).

Seventh, incorporating an experiential perspective to the study of negative brand relationships (i.e. brand hate (Zarantonello *et al.*, 2016), brand avoidance (Lee *et al.*, 2009)) should be encouraged. Fournier and Alvarez (2013) express that negative relationships, compared to positive ones, are more problematic because negative outcomes are more memorable, more diagnostic and evoke more important psychological response. On the basis of an experiential perspective, future research should study how negative sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and social brand experience influence negative consumer/brand relationships such as brand hate or brand avoidance. Furthermore, how a negative experience in one dimension could influence the global evaluation of brand experience or interact with a positive experience linked to other dimensions may be an interesting area for future research. For instance, a negative social experience could diminish or even reverse the positive sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral or global experience with a brand which in turn would negatively influence brand trust or brand attachment.

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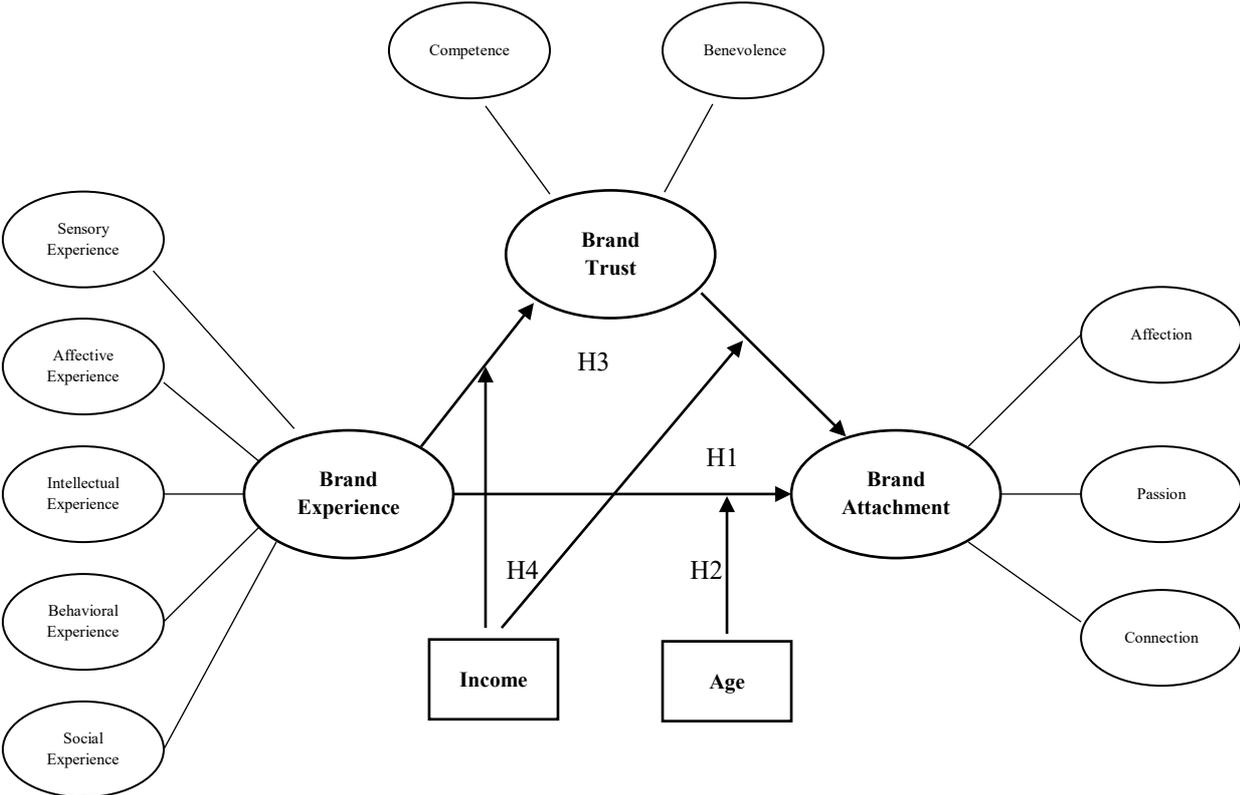
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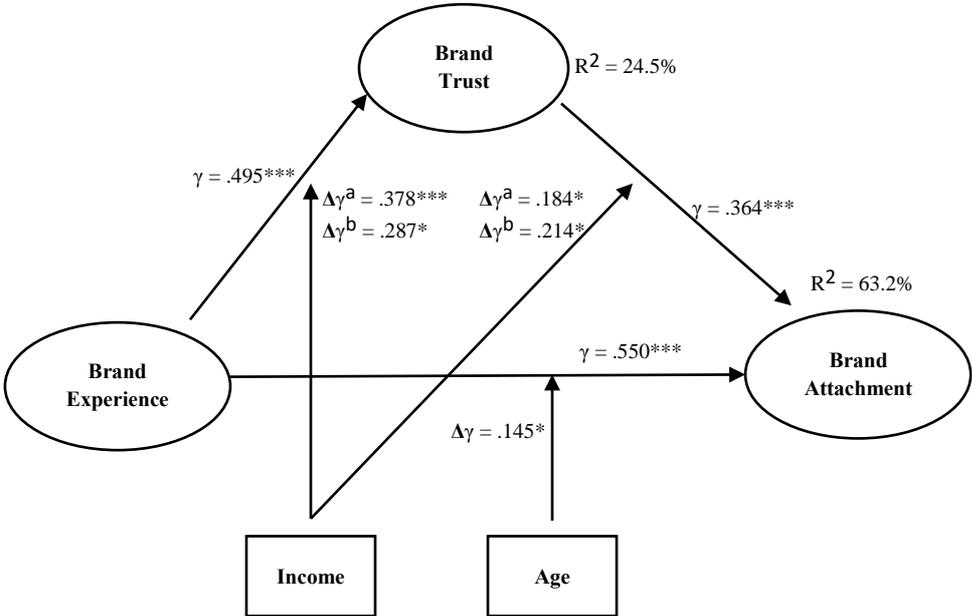
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**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**



**Figure 2: Synthesis of results**



\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; <sup>a</sup> low income versus high income; <sup>b</sup> medium income versus high income

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 334)**

Categories	<i>N</i>	%
Age		
18–25	161	48.2
26–34	144	43.1
35–45	29	8.7
Gender		
Male	207	62.0
Female	127	38.0
Monthly Household Income		
Low (<S/2000)	128	38.4
Medium (S/2000-S/4000)	100	29.9
High (>S/4000)	106	31.7
Occupational category		
Undergraduate	128	38.4
Engineer	109	32.5
Employee	44	13.2
Manager	20	6.0
Others	33	9.9

**Table 2: Measurement Items and Variable Sources**

Construct	Measurement items	Sources
Brand Experience	Sensorial	Adapted from Brakus <i>et al.</i> (2009)
	This brand makes a positive impression on my visual sense or other senses. (ESen1)	
	I find this brand interesting in a sensory way. (ESen2)	
	Affective	
	This brand induces agreeable feelings and sentiments. (EAff1)	
	I have positive emotions for this brand. (EAff2)	
	Intellectual	
	I engage in thinking when I encounter this brand. (EInt1)	
	This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving. (EInt2.)	
	Behavioral	
	I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand. (EBeh1)	
	This brand is action oriented. (EBeh2)	
	Social	
	This brand makes me feel accepted. (ESoc1)	
This brand makes me feel special in comparison to users of other brands. (ESoc2)		
This brand stimulates me to share emotions and passions with other brand users. (ESoc3)		
This brand makes me feel a strong connection towards other brand users. (ESoc4)		
Brand Trust	Competence	Adapted from Li <i>et al.</i> (2008)
	This brand does a good job. (TCom1)	
	I expect the brand to deliver on its promise. (TCom2)	
	I am confident in the brand's ability to perform well. (TCom3)	
	The quality of this brand has been very consistent. (TCom4)	
	Benevolence	
	The brand has good intentions towards its consumers. (TBen1)	
	It will respond constructively if I have any product-related problems. (TBen2)	
	It would be do its best to help me if I had a problem. (TBen3)	
	It cares about my needs. (TBen4)	
This brand gives me a sense of security. (TBen5)		
Brand Attachment	Affection	Adapted from Thomson <i>et al.</i> (2005)
	Affectionate. (AAff1)	
	Friendly. (AAff2)	
	Loved (AAff3)	
	Passion	
	Passionate. (APas1)	
	Delighted. (APas2)	
	Captivated. (APas3)	
	Connection	
	Connected (ACon1)	
Bonded (ACon2)		
Attached (ACon3)		

**Table 3: Measurement Properties (N = 334)**

Constructs	Items	Means (SD)	Standardized loading	Reliability and validity
Brand Experience	Sensorial			CR = .935
	ESen1	4.76 (1.51)	.940	AVE = .878
	ESen2	4.78 (1.53)	.934	
	Affective			CR = .943
	EAff1	4.25 (1.58)	.942	AVE = .892
	EAff2	4.41 (1.59)	.947	
	Intellectual			CR = .894
	EInt1	3.63 (1.65)	.880	AVE = .808
	EInt2	3.78 (1.72)	.917	
	Behavioral			CR = .869
	EBeh1	4.06 (1.58)	.884	AVE = .769
	EBeh2	4.76 (1.58)	.870	
	Social			CR = .877
	ESoc1	4.18 (1.69)	.813	AVE = .641
Brand Trust (R <sup>2</sup> = 24.5%)	ESoc2	3.80 (1.71)	.706	
	ESoc3	4.41 (1.63)	.857	
	ESoc4	4.41 (1.46)	.819	
	Competence			CR = .947
	TCom1	5.79 (1.09)	.917	AVE = .817
	TCom2	5.56 (1.14)	.898	
	TCom3	5.64 (1.13)	.907	
	TCom4	5.68 (1.10)	.894	
	Benevolence			CR = .930
	TBen1	5.69 (1.17)	.839	AVE = .727
	TBen2	5.41 (1.18)	.863	
	TBen3	5.23 (1.26)	.885	
	TBen4	5.15 (1.27)	.845	
	TBen5	5.48 (1.29)	.830	
Brand Attachment (R <sup>2</sup> = 63.2%)	Affection			CR = .908
	AAff1	4.63 (1.45)	.886	AVE = .768
	AAff2	5.16 (1.31)	.906	
	AAff3	5.25 (1.39)	.836	
	Passion			CR = .933
	APas1	3.99 (1.58)	.906	AVE = .823
	APas2	4.61 (1.51)	.901	
	APas3	4.29 (1.51)	.914	
	Connection			CR = .941
	ACon1	4.70 (1.42)	.912	AVE = .843
	ACon2	4.36 (1.51)	.939	
ACon3	4.42 (1.58)	.903		

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity Results**

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Sensorial									
2. Affective	.688								
3. Intellectual	.589	.662							
4. Behavioral	.680	.881	.728						
5. Social	.591	.651	.826	.809					
6. Competence	.369	.569	.262	.569	.429				
7. Benevolence	.367	.624	.354	.624	.517	.881			
8. Affection	.560	.660	.466	.778	.613	.759	.779		
9. Passion	.577	.763	.579	.802	.661	.505	.551	.855	
10. Connection	.549	.677	.543	.729	.623	.519	.592	.849	.836

**Table 5: Results of Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationships	Path coefficient ( $\gamma$ )	CI's (Bias corrected)	Supported
<b>H1</b>	Brand Experience -> Brand Attachment	.550***	[.458, .631]	Yes
	Brand Experience -> Brand Trust	.495***	[.396, .582]	
	Brand Trust -> Brand Attachment	.364***	[.268, .458]	
<b>H3</b>	Brand Experience -> Brand Trust -> Brand Attachment	.180***	[.128, .240]	Yes

All coefficients are significant at  $p < .01$

**Table 6: Results of Measurement Invariance Testing for the Two Age Groups**

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithms for both groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Equal mean value		Equal variance	
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.037	[-.220, .206]	.048	[-.321, .302]
<b>Sensorial</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.142	[-.217, .209]	.025	[-.332, .324]
<b>Affective</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	.008	[-.217, .209]	.125	[-.282, .266]
<b>Intellectual</b>	Yes	1.000	[.998, 1.000]	.049	[-.210, .213]	-.123	[-.246, .247]
<b>Behavioral</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.047	[-.220, .211]	.030	[-.308, .307]
<b>Social</b>	Yes	.999	[.998, 1.000]	-.025	[-.214, .213]	.088	[-.316, .304]
<b>Brand Trust</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.032	[-.213, .204]	-.164	[-.474, .470]
<b>Competence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.023	[-.211, .203]	-.191	[-.513, .501]
<b>Benevolence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.037	[-.211, .210]	-.141	[-.397, .397]
<b>Brand Attachment</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.016	[-.217, .211]	-.005	[-.362, .361]
<b>Affection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.009	[-.217, .211]	.008	[-.392, .382]
<b>Passion</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.125	[-.222, .211]	.044	[-.311, .310]
<b>Connection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.074	[-.220, .211]	.079	[-.329, .309]

**Table 7: Results of Hypothesis Testing – Moderation by Age**

Hypothesis	Relationships	Path coeff. Younger	Path coeff. Older	CI (Bias corrected) Younger	CI (Bias corrected) Older	Path coeff. Diff.	p-value Henseler's bootstrap	Supported
<b>H2</b>	Brand Experience -> Brand Attachment	.624***	.480***	[.519, .721]	[.347, .605]	.145	.025*	Yes
	Brand Experience -> Brand Trust	.516***	.476***	[.378, .624]	[.315, .595]	.040	.335	
	Brand Trust -> Brand Attachment	.312***	.412***	[.195, .425]	[.275, .547]	.101	.862	
	Brand Experience -> Brand Trust -> Brand Attachment	.161***	.196***	[.092, .243]	[.127, .284]	.035	.739	

\* p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

**Table 8: Results of Hypothesis Testing – Moderation by Income**

Hypothesis	Relationships	Path	Path	CI (Bias	CI (Bias	Path	p-value Henseler's MGA	Supported
		coeff. Low	coeff. Medium	corrected) Low	corrected) Medium	coeff. Diff.		
<b>1 (Low income) vs. 2 (Medium income)</b>	BE -> BA	.526***	.506***	[.394, .656]	[.358, .654]	.020	.422	No
	BE -> BT	.596***	.205*	[.461, .691]	[.323, .636]	.091	.175	
	BT -> BA	.403***	.433**	[.271, .532]	[.270, .590]	.030	.613	
	<b>BE -&gt; BT -&gt; BA</b>	.240***	.219**	[.153, .337]	[.123, .329]	.021	.379	
<b>1 (Low income) vs. 3 (High income)</b>	BE -> BA	.526***	.603***	[.382, .652]	[.417, .734]	.077	.766	Yes
	BE -> BT	.596***	.219*	[.474, .695]	[-.015, .442]	.378	.001***	
	BT-> BA	.403***	.219**	[.265, .530]	[.048, .413]	.184	.050*	
	<b>BE -&gt; BT -&gt; BA</b>	.240***	.048	[.155, .339]	[.004, .133]	.192	.001***	
<b>2 (Medium income) vs. 3 (High income)</b>	BE -> BA	.506***	.603***	[.356, .652]	[.404, .727]	.097	.809	Yes
	BE -> BT	.505***	.219*	[.341, .642]	[-.019, .429]	.287	.021*	
	BT -> BA	.433***	.219**	[.272, .577]	[.044, .419]	.214	.045*	
	<b>BE -&gt; BT -&gt; BA</b>	.219***	.048	[.128, .341]	[.005, .130]	.171	.002***	

\* p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001; BE: Brand Experience; BA: Brand Attachment; BT: Brand Trust

**Table 9: Means Scores between Hedonic Brands and Utilitarian Brands**

Experience dimensions	Cluster I (5 hedonic brands)	Cluster II (5 utilitarian brands)	F-ratio	Sig.
Sensorial	5.07	4.31	19.575	.002
Affective	4.60	3.74	14.214	.005
Intellectual	3.95	3.65	1.165	.312
Behavioral	4.65	3.96	5.166	.050
Social	4.38	3.85	7.127	.028

**Table 10: Robustness of the model – Type of Brands**

Relationships	Path coeff. Utilitarian	Path coeff. Hedonic	CI (Bias corrected) Utilitarian	CI (Bias corrected) Hedonic	Path coeff. Diff.	p-value Henseler's bootstrap
Brand experience -> Brand attachment	.440***	.615***	[.304, .597]	[.490, .722]	.166	.040*
Brand experience -> Brand trust	.635***	.365***	[.502, .732]	[.210, .487]	.270	.004***
Brand trust -> Brand attachment	.445***	.297***	[.297, .569]	[.160, .441]	.141	.146
Brand experience -> Brand trust -> Brand attachment	.108***	.282***	[.063, .173]	[.166, .382]	.174	.997**

\* p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

## Appendix 1

### Results of Invariance Measurement Testing using Permutation–Income (1vs2)

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithms for both groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Equal mean value		Equal variance	
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.185	[-.262, .263]	.091	[-.364, .374]
<b>Sensorial</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.111	[-.253, .264]	.197	[-.376, .365]
<b>Affective</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.188	[-.262, .259]	.232	[-.334, .342]
<b>Intellectual</b>	Yes	.999	[.997, 1.000]	.001	[-.263, .256]	-.167	[-.301, .311]
<b>Behavioral</b>	Yes	1.000	[.998, 1.000]	-.237	[-.265, .256]	.151	[-.363, .366]
<b>Social</b>	Yes	.999	[.998, 1.000]	-.184	[-.264, .260]	-.027	[-.335, .353]
<b>Brand Trust</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.240	[-.259, .262]	-.236	[-.531, .558]
<b>Competence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.166	[-.257, .260]	-.259	[-.579, .600]
<b>Benevolence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.286	[-.259, .266]	-.141	[-.443, .459]
<b>Brand Attachment</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.160	[-.253, .260]	.098	[-.442, .446]
<b>Affection</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.210	[-.259, .257]	.008	[-.466, .479]
<b>Passion</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.154	[-.253, .271]	.181	[-.373, .387]
<b>Connection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.083	[-.254, .258]	.044	[-.383, .398]

## Appendix 2

### Results of Invariance Measurement Testing using Permutation–Income (1vs3)

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithms for both groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Equal mean value		Equal variance	
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	Yes	.998	[.999, 1.000]	-.347	[-.255, .261]	.236	[-.368, .358]
<b>Sensorial</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.260	[-.249, .262]	.328	[-.387, .407]
<b>Affective</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.289	[-.259, .250]	.135	[-.317, .318]
<b>Intellectual</b>	Yes	.997	[.997, 1.000]	-.070	[-.262, .250]	-.174	[-.280, .295]
<b>Behavioral</b>	Yes	1.000	[.998, 1.000]	-.437	[-.254, .254]	.167	[-.348, .371]
<b>Social</b>	Yes	.999	[.996, 1.000]	-.025	[-.252, .272]	.217	[-.356, .367]
<b>Brand</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.746	[-.254, .260]	.873	[-.481, .494]

<b>Trust</b>							
<b>Competence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.650	[-.251, .252]	.854	[-.528, .532]
<b>Benevolence</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.749	[-.211, .210]	.697	[-.414, .425]
<b>Brand</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.355	[-.252, .255]	.361	[-.396, .419]
<b>Attachment</b>							
<b>Affection</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.486	[-.259, .247]	.527	[-.467, .484]
<b>Passion</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.214	[-.253, .258]	.310	[-.356, .368]
<b>Connection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.286	[-.252, .254]	.071	[-.366, .393]

### Appendix 3

#### Results of Invariance Measurement Testing using Permutation–Income (2vs3)

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithms for both groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Equal mean value		Equal variance	
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	Yes	.999	[.998, 1.000]	-.168	[-.274, .275]	.142	[-.435, .429]
<b>Sensorial Affective</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.160	[-.282, .274]	.132	[-.464, .473]
<b>Intellectual Behavioral</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.112	[-.276, .274]	-.096	[-.379, .363]
<b>Social Brand</b>	Yes	.999	[.998, 1.000]	-.073	[-.284, .269]	.006	[-.312, .309]
<b>Trust</b>	Yes	1.000	[.997, 1.000]	-.218	[-.268, .274]	.021	[-.431, .444]
<b>Competence</b>	Yes	.997	[.996, 1.000]	-.124	[-.268, .271]	.251	[-.432, .427]
<b>Benevolence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.465	[-.275, .276]	1.106	[-.788, .800]
<b>Brand</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.438	[-.278, .276]	1.112	[-.825, .836]
<b>Attachment</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.443	[-.278, .273]	.843	[-.633, .637]
<b>Affection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.198	[-.277, .273]	.274	[-.477, .487]
<b>Passion</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	-.269	[-.276, .276]	.517	[-.507, .518]
<b>Connection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.062	[-.275, .282]	.127	[-.412, .427]
	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	-.206	[-.275, .275]	.027	[-.417, .449]

### Appendix 4

#### Results of Invariance Measurement Testing using Permutation– High level of brand experience vs. Moderated level of brand experience

Constructs	Configural invariance (Same algorithms for both groups)	Compositional invariance (Correlation = 1)		Equal mean value		Equal variance	
		C = 1	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)	Differ.	Confidence Interval (CIs)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	Yes	.999	[.999, 1.000]	.241	[-.254, .243]	.047	[-.328, .319]
<b>Sensorial Affective</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.194	[-.232, .231]	-.022	[-.343, .381]
<b>Intellectual</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	.306	[-.240, .236]	.073	[-.295, .283]
	Yes	.999	[.998, 1.000]	.022	[-.241, .224]	.126	[-.244, .267]

<b>Behavioral</b>	Yes	1.000	[.998, 1.000]	.341	[-.243, .230]	.066	[-.288, .331]
<b>Social</b>	Yes	.999	[.997, 1.000]	.194	[-.232, .231]	-.119	[-.315, .309]
<b>Brand</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.451	[-.229, .233]	-.183	[-.462, .470]
<b>Trust</b>							
<b>Competence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.445	[-.232, .226]	-.230	[-.498, .507]
<b>Benevolence</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.414	[-.226, .247]	-.141	[-.375, .396]
<b>Brand</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.246	[-.237, .250]	-.250	[-.362, .395]
<b>Attachment</b>							
<b>Affection</b>	Yes	1.000	[.999, 1.000]	.381	[-.232, .227]	-.385	[-.385, .421]
<b>Passion</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.219	[-.261, .223]	-.144	[-.333, .341]
<b>Connection</b>	Yes	1.000	[1.000, 1.000]	.090	[-.234, .229]	-.102	[-.337, .367]