Powerful Connections: Two Essays on How Brands Can Influence and Strengthen their Connections with Consumers

Marilyn Giroux

A Thesis

in

the

John Molson School of Business

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Business Administration) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June, 2016

© Marilyn Giroux, 2016

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared By: Marilyn Giroux Entitled: Powerful Connections: Two Essays on How Brands Can Influence and Strengthen their Connections with Consumers and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Administration) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. Signed by the final examining committee: Chair Dr. M. Sharma **External Examiner** Dr. M. Thomson External to Program Dr. D. Howes Examiner Dr. O. Bodur Examiner Dr. A. Mukherjee Thesis Supervisor Dr. B. Grohmann Approved by Chair of Department or Graduate Program Directeur June 1, 2016 Dean of Faculty

ABSTRACT

Powerful Connections: Two Essays on How Brands Can Influence and Strengthen their Connections with Consumers

Marilyn Giroux, Ph.D.

Concordia University, 2016

Although numerous studies have examined relationships between brands and consumers, how consumers create those connections with brands in their daily lives is not yet well understood. This dissertation consists of two essays that focus on how brands can influence and strengthen their connections with consumers. The first essay examines how brand personality can be associated with consumers' actual and ideal self to create stronger self-brand connections. Using a series of six studies, the author addresses hypotheses related to the importance of congruence between actual and ideal self and the underlying processes (i.e., self-verification and self-enhancement). Results suggest that consumers communicate diverse parts of their identities through different brand personality traits, and that this matching mechanism stimulates selfbrand connections. Different boundary conditions (i.e., identity threat, public vs. private threat) are examined. The second essay investigates the effect of identity conflict and ambiguity on selfbrand connections in the context of self-expression. It investigates how brands can serve as coping mechanisms to reduce uncertainty during periods of identity conflict and ambiguity. Across six studies, the author examines how identity conflicts and identity ambiguity can lead to different strategies for consumers in terms of their rebranding strategies and communicating their identities to other consumers. Taken together, the two essays suggest that identity processes have an important effect on how connections between brands and consumers evolve and strengthen over time

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Bianca Grohmann, for her constant support. She guided me through this tough journey and inspired me to become a better researcher. Her continuous guidance, her availability and her kindness were essential to the elaboration and completion of this thesis. She played a crucial role by providing important feedback and supporting me through good times and bad times. Our contacts throughout the last years helped me grow both personally and professionally. I am extremely honored and fortunate to have worked with her.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Onur Bodur and Dr. Ashesh Mukherjee. They provided me with extremely valuable feedback throughout my doctoral years. Their comments and suggestions were much appreciated and improved the quality of the work. I would also like to thank Dr. David Howes and Dr. Matthew Thomson, members of my examining committee, for their insightful questions and comments during my defense. Their interventions made this work more relevant for the future steps of publication.

I am profoundly grateful to my coauthor Dr. Frank Pons for his help throughout this Ph.D. adventure. His support and encouragement meant the world to me. Meeting him as a coauthor and friend has been one of the best things that happened to me during the Ph.D. I cannot thank him enough for believing in me, supporting me in tough times, and giving me opportunities to work on interesting projects. I also want to thank my coauthor Dr. Mehdi Mourali for his support during the job market and for working on several research projects together, as well as Dr. Lionel Maltese for his help in numerous data collections. I am also thankful to Dr. Kamila Sobol for her

help throughout the diverse steps of my dissertation. Her high quality advice and her incredible guidance were very much appreciated. I am very grateful for her precious support and the different project opportunities.

My sincere thanks go to all administrative employees at Concordia University, for helping me whenever necessary. In particular, I would like to thank Karen Fada and Karen Fiddler for their help throughout the first years of the program.

I would like to thank the colleagues in the joint program. I had a lot of fun during the different courses we had together as well as meeting you for lunch or coffee to discuss research. Many of you became friends and I want to thank you for your motivational speeches and for making me laugh in the most difficult times.

My gratitude also goes to my family (Giroux, Aubé, Touchette), old friends from Quebec City and new friends from Montreal and around the world (you know who you are!) for supporting me through rough times and believing in me when I didn't believe in myself. I am extremely grateful to my parents and my brother. Your unconditional love, support and encouragement represent everything to me. Merci infiniment pour tout ce que vous avez fait pour moi! Vous m'avez aidé à réaliser mes rêves et pour cela, je vous serez à tout jamais reconnaissante. Vos conseils, vos bons mots et votre sens de l'humour m'ont souvent aidé à continuer ce projet. Je vous aime très fort!

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

This section discusses the author contributions for each of the papers contained in this thesis, as required by thesis regulations.

I contributed extensively to both papers. For paper one, I came up with the idea for the paper as part of Dr. Bianca Grohmann class at Concordia University. Dr. Grohmann provided some initial feedback on the initial 41-page draft (including references and appendices) that I submitted as a final term paper. I then worked with Dr. Grohmann through multiple rounds of revisions to improve and expand it into a dissertation essay. I came up with the experimental design for the six studies via several discussions with Dr. Grohmann. I constructed the online surveys and experiments using Qualtrics. I ran the six online data collection processes on Crowdflower. I analyzed the results for all the studies. Dr. Grohmann provided detailed feedback and revisions, while I implemented her feedback by reorganizing the paper and adding substantial parts.

For essay 2, I came up with the idea after my comprehensive exam and sent a brief description to Dr. Grohmann. I developed a full document for my dissertation proposal and received feedback on the methodology from my committee members (Dr. Ashesh Mukherjee, Dr. Onur Bodur and Dr. Bianca Grohmann). I planned the experimental design for the six studies via numerous discussions with Dr. Grohmann. I constructed the online experiments using Qualtrics. I ran one experiment in Dr. Frank Pons class (Université Laval) and five online data collection processes on Crowdflower. I analyzed the results for all the studies. I received feedback from Dr. Grohmann and I implemented her feedback by reorganizing the introduction of the constructs and the organization of the hypotheses.

Table of Contents

Chapt	er 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
The	Development of Brand Relationships	2
Hov	w Consumers Develop and Express their Sense of Identity	3
Ove	erview of Essays	4
Chapt	er 2 – 1 st ESSAY	6
Abs	stract	6
Intr	oduction	7
Cor	nceptual Development	9
lo	dentity and the Self	9
N	Multiple and Flexible Facets of the Self-Concept	11
S	Self-Expression and Brands	13
S	Self-Brand Connections	15
C	Conceptual Model	15
R	Relationship between the Self-Concept and Brand Personality	17
Т	hreats to the Self-Concept	19
Р	Public versus Private Self-Threat	22
Me	thodology	24
Pre	liminary Study	24
Stu	dy 1	25
F	irst pretest	25
S	Second pretest	25
N	Method	26
R	Results	28
C	Discussion	30
Stu	dy 2	30
N	Method	30
R	Results	33
D	Discussion	34
Stu	dy 3	35
N	Method	35

Results	36
Discussion	38
Study 4	38
Method	38
Results	40
Discussion	43
Study 5	43
Method	44
Results	45
Discussion	47
Study 6	48
Method	49
Results	51
Discussion	53
General Discussion	54
Theoretical Contributions	55
Substantial Implications	56
Future Research	57
References	59
Appendix A- Measures	73
Appendix B- Word Search Puzzle	76
Appendix C- Brand Personality	78
Appendix D- Threat Conditions	80
Appendix E- Public vs. Private conditions	81
Appendix F- Sentence Rearrangement Task	82
Appendix G- Instrument Depicting Levels of Identification with Brand	83
Appendix H- Summary Statistics Study 2	84
Appendix I- Summary Statistics Study 3	85
Appendix J- Summary Statistics Study 4	86
Appendix K- Summary Statistics Study 5	87
Appendix L- Summary Statistics Study 6	88
anter 3	29

Chapter 4 - ESSAY 2	90
Abstract	90
Introduction	91
Conceptual Development	93
Identity	93
Identity Deficit and Ambiguity	95
Identity Conflicts	96
Uncertainty Reduction	98
Identity Construction and its Impact on Connections with Brands	100
Brand Personality Clarity	102
Validating the Impact of Self-Clarity	105
The Effect of Uncertainty Avoidance	106
Methodology	107
Study 1	107
Method	107
Pretest	109
Results	110
Discussion	111
Study 2	112
Method	112
Results	114
Discussion	116
Study 3	117
Method	118
Pretest	119
Results	120
Discussion	122
Study 4	122
Method	123
Results	125
Discussion	128
Study 5	128

	Method	129
	Results	130
	Discussion	132
	Study 6	132
	Method	133
	Results	134
	Discussion	137
	General Discussion	138
	Theoretical Contributions	139
	Substantial Implications	140
	Future Research	141
Cl	HAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	143
	Limitations	146
	References	148
	Appendix A- Measures	160
	Appendix B- Identity Crises	162
	Appendix C- Brand Personality Clarity	163
	Appendix D- Identity Conflict Scenarios	165
	Appendix E- Uncertainty	166
	Appendix F- Summary Statistics Study 1	167
	Appendix G- Summary Statistics Study 2	168
	Appendix H- Summary Statistics Study 3	169
	Appendix I- Summary Statistics Study 4	170
	Appendix J- Summary Statistics Study 5	171
	Appendix K- Summary Statistics Study 6	172

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

"Products are created in the factory. Brands are created in the mind."

- Walter Landor, creator of Landor Associates

"In this age of the customer, the only sustainable competitive advantage is knowledge and engagement with customers."

- Forrester

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of cultivating positive brand relationships (Fournier 1998; Park et al. 2010). Brand relationships are portrayed as the outcomes of several interactions between the brand and the consumer that result in strong emotional ties (Fournier 1998). Consumers engage in different types of relationships with brands as they do with other people (Fournier 2009). Brand relationships are charged with meanings that support people to live their lives. This relationship mechanism generates positive cognitive, affective, and emotional benefits that emerge for the connections between the brand and the consumer (Fournier 1998).

With the importance of these positive relationships for brands, understanding how consumers create connections with brands has become even more important for marketers and managers in the past decade (Escalas and Bettman 2003; 2005). The significantly increased interest in customer relationships with brands and the development of branding metrics such as brand attachment, brand love and self-brand connections suggest that focusing on these connections may have significant value for brands (Batra et al. 2012; Escalas and Bettman 2003; Thomson et al. 2005).

This dissertation consists of two essays that examine how brands can influence and strengthen their connections with consumers. The first essay examines how brand personality can be associated with consumers' actual and ideal self to create stronger self-brand connections. The second essay investigates the effect of identity conflicts on self-brand connections in the context of self-expression. It investigates how brands can serve as coping mechanisms to reduce uncertainty during periods of identity conflict and ambiguity. To provide a theoretical background for this dissertation, the author will first review the previous literature. This chapter will begin with an introduction to the concept of brand relationships. Then it will move to explaining the current knowledge about identity, self-expression and self-brand connections.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

Consumers want brands to provide more than just functional benefits or a product (Babin et al. 1994). For example, people are not just purchasing Apple products, but they are buying the whole experience with the brand and other members of the brand community with common interests and desires. Consumers strive to create strong emotional connections with brands (Veloutsou 2007). An emotional bond is essential in order to create relationships between consumers and brands. Relationships between brands and consumers can be illustrated as the emotional connections that are formed through their diverse interactions (Fournier 1998; 2009).

From an early age, consumers forge and develop emotions and affection for brands (Albert et al. 2008; Chaplin and John 2005) that can last for a lifetime (Braun-La Tour et al. 2007). Individuals attach great importance to their possessions and often choose products that represent crucial aspects of their selves (Belk 1988; Kleine et al. 1995). Consumers-brand relationships have been positively linked to brand loyalty intention (Algesheimer et al. 2005), repurchase intentions, and positive word-of-mouth (Maxham and Netemeyer 2002).

HOW CONSUMERS DEVELOP AND EXPRESS THEIR SENSE OF IDENTITY

In psychology and sociology, the notion of identity defines how a person perceives and expresses himself or herself in terms of both personal characteristics and social memberships (Brewer 1991; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Individuals possess a diversity of possible identities that are organized in terms of importance (Markus and Kunda 1986). In addition, self-concept is flexible and predisposed to be modified depending on surrounding contexts (Swann and Hill 1982). Aspects of identity can vary relying on the situation or individual needs (Stryker and Burke 2000).

The development and the maintenance of identity are quite important and crucial parts in people's lives (Erikson 1970). Having a clear sense of identity is generally regarded as a desired end state (Marcia 1966). The lack of identity definition, on the other hand, can have negative consequences such as increased uncertainty, stress and anxiety (Carver and Scheier 1988).

Because of its pertinence and importance in terms of consumption, marketing academics and practitioners have investigated identity in terms of its potential applications for brands and products (Gilmore and Pine 2007; Malär et al. 2011). Consumers have the desire to express their identities and they find different ways to fulfill this human need (Chernev et al. 2011). Past research demonstrated the importance of self-expression and that individuals use brands to construct and communicate their identity (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Consumers are inclined to buy products that reaffirm their self-image (Dunning 2005). This process can be accomplished through brand personality. Brand personality is described as the human characteristics that are attributed to a brand (Aaker 1997). Choice of a brand with a particular personality can be a tool for consumers to express their actual self, aspirational self or other distinct components of the

self (Belk 1988; Swaminathan et al. 2007). Consumers relate and create connections with brands through its brand personality (Aaker et al. 2004; Fournier 1998).

Consumers often choose and cherish brands that allow them to claim their sense of identities (Kleine et al. 1993). Self-brand connection is the degree to which an individual has incorporated a brand into his or her self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2003). When brands are used to define or affirm one's self to others, individuals establish a strong connection between their self-concept and the brand (Escalas and Bettman 2005). This process more likely happens when the brand is closely connected to the consumer's personal experiences or specific psychological needs (Escalas 2004). Self-brand connections have been important for researchers and managers since they have been positively linked to brand evaluations and attitude strength as well as behavioral intentions (Escalas 2004; Moore and Homer 2008).

OVERVIEW OF ESSAYS

Despite the increasing managerial relevance of and interest in this topic, we do not know enough about how consumers create those connections with brands in their daily lives. Existing research examines the nature and functions of consumers' relationships with brands and various mechanisms through which those relationships develop. However, little is known about the process by which brand relationships evolve and change over different circumstances and situations.

Questions that remain unanswered include: How do consumers use diverse brand personalities to express different aspects of their identities? How are emotional connections between consumers and brands created? How does the formation of identity influence the connections with brands? To capture the richness of this topic, this dissertation aims to answer these questions via exploring the influence of identity and identity processes on self-brand

connections. More specifically, the first essay investigates how brand personality can be linked to consumers' self-concept (i.e., actual and ideal self-concept) in order to connect emotionally with brands and under which circumstances congruence matters most. Using a series of six studies, this paper examines the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of stronger brand connections. This chapter investigates the effects of the prime self-concept on the self-brand connections for different brand personalities to determine how brands can concentrate on the bonding between the brand and the self-concept. The second essay shows that brands can serve as coping mechanisms to reduce uncertainty during periods of identity crises. This section examines how identity conflicts and identity ambiguity can lead to stronger self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality in order to bring certainty to consumers during those episodes.

Brand managers and marketers are constantly looking for useful ways to create deeper and stronger relationships with consumers. Overall, this dissertation provides guidance to managers and marketers who would like to enhance the brand connections with their consumers. The first essay helps marketers understand how relating brand personality to the different aspects of consumers' self-concept can enhance self-brand connections. The second essay benefits marketers by demonstrating how reducing the feeling of uncertainty towards periods of identity crises can influence the connections with consumers.

This dissertation as a whole aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by exploring how connections between consumers and brands are created across a variety of contexts. The dissertation includes two essays that are described in detail in Chapters 2 and 4.

Chapter 2 – 1st ESSAY

Activating Multiple Facets of the Self: Identity-Signaling and Brand Personality

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how brand personality can be associated with consumers' self-concept to create stronger self-brand connections and under what conditions congruence matters most.

Specifically, this research examines how brand personality can be associated with consumers' actual and ideal self in order to create stronger self-brand connections. It argues that consumers communicate diverse parts of their identities through different brand personality traits and that this matching mechanism can stimulate self-brand connections. Using a series of six studies, the author addresses the hypotheses related to the importance of congruence between actual and ideal self and brand personality. Results demonstrate the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of stronger emotional connections. Different boundary conditions (i.e. identity threat, public vs. private threat) are examined. This paper reveals the importance of congruence between self-concept and brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections and how this congruity influences consumers' response to identity threats. The findings allow brands to build more effective strategies to attract new consumers and strengthen the connections with their current ones.

Keywords: Self-Expression, Brand personality, Identity, Brand Image, Self-Brand Connections, Identity Threat

INTRODUCTION

With the growing importance of branding strategies and positioning, it is important for companies to create emotional brand connections (Malär et al. 2011). A crucial strategy to increasing firm performance and to building segments with high loyalty is to create brand relationships that have significance and importance (Park et al. 2010). In order for brands to create a relationship with consumers, brands should try to develop two-way communication with them (Veloutsou 2007; Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013) and create emotional and functional connections through their diverse interactions (Fetscherin and Heinrich 2014; Fournier 1998; 2009). From an early age, consumers forge relationships, develop feelings towards and engage with brands (Albert et al. 2008; Chaplin and John 2005; Fournier 1998). Many consumers have a strong relationship with brands such as Apple, Starbucks or Harley-Davidson. This relationship is represented by their affection towards and commitment to the brand, as well as the degree to which they feel that the brands represent an important aspect of who they are.

Consumer-brand relationships often rely on the symbolic and self-expressive functions of brands. Consumers use and buy brands to construct, confirm and express their personal and social self-concepts (Kleine et al. 1993). Relevant branding literature provides evidence that self-expression can be a key driver of consumer preference and choice (Belk 1988; Richins 1994). Past research has demonstrated that individuals can use brands to identify with a specific reference group (Escalas and Bettman 2005), to differentiate themselves from undesired groups (Berger and Heath 2007; White and Dahl 2006) and to boost their self-esteem (Sirgy 1982).

For brand managers, it is important to understand how people can express themselves and reflect their identities through their product consumption. In this perspective, it is essential to understand how brand personality can relate to the different facets of the individuals to increase

the self-brand connections for the company. This research explores what is the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. For example, does the sincere, wholesome and truthful brand personality of Dove reach more the actual self of consumers with its endearing aspect, while the glamorous, sexy and charming aspect of Victoria's Secret trigger more the ideal self of consumers?

In the current research, two major questions will be asked: How do consumers use diverse brand personalities to express the different parts of their identities in order to create connections with brands? Also, how can companies utilize this relationship to better position their brands, communicate with the consumers and create a stronger attachment and loyalty toward their brands? The first objective of this essay is to determine the significance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. More specifically, this research investigates how brand personality can be associated with the actual and ideal self of consumers to create stronger self-brand connections. Previous research on brand associations demonstrates that it is highly important for marketing academics and practitioners to understand how brands can use the associations between the brand and the self-concept to their advantages (Escalas and Bettman 2003). Although research shows that self-expression motives positively affect consumer responses to brands, it could be relevant to investigate the importance of the congruence between identity and brand personality in the creation of stronger emotional connections between consumers and brands. The second objective of this paper is to determine the mechanisms underlying this congruence between personal identity and brand personality and its effects on self-brand connections. To accomplish this goal, the author investigates conditions that can moderate the relationship to help managers design their different strategies and help corporations to build their positioning tactics and communication approaches.

This essay is structured as follows: Based on 10 existing brands, Study 1 demonstrates that the congruence between self-concept and brand personality relate positively to self-brand connections. Study 2 examines this relationship by manipulating both the self-concept (i.e., actual and ideal self-concept) and the brand personality. Study 3 to 6 investigate conditions under which this relationship can be altered and examine social psychological mechanisms that could explain the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. This research contributes to the branding literature by understanding the relationship between brand personality and consumer identity. Furthermore, by identifying mechanisms by which this congruence influence connections with brands, the findings will allow companies to build more efficient strategies to attract new consumers and increase the connections with their current ones.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Identity and the Self

The concepts of self and identity provide an important point of contact between theories of personality and theories of social behavior. Identity relates to the different subjective meanings associated to oneself as a person by the self and others (Gecas and Burke 1995; Vignoles et al. 2006). The concept of identity refers to two important concepts related to the self, which is probably one of the most complex memory structure (Baumeister 1998). First, identity brings out the common identification with a social category or with the collectivity (Tajfel 1982). It also refers to the part of the self that is composed of the importance and the meaning that individuals attach to the multiple roles they play in the society (James 1890; Stryker 1980; Turner 1978).

Social identity theory suggests that people vary along a continuum between the personal identity and the social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987). Brewer describes the

personal identity as the "individuated self—those characteristics that differentiate one individual from others" whereas *social identities* are "categorizations of the self into more inclusive social units that depersonalize the self-concept" (Brewer 1991: 476). Personal identity is developed from an individual perspective with distinctive characteristics and serves human need for uniqueness, while social identity communicates the different memberships and group classifications and satisfies the need for affiliation and similarity (Ashforth et al. 2008; Brewer 1991; Brewer and Gardner 1996).

Toward their diverse life experiences, people build their self-concepts from different information they receive (Markus 1983). The development and the maintenance of identity are quite important and crucial parts in people's lives (Erikson 1970). Individuals gain awareness and expertise about their abilities, preferences, values and goals that help establish their self-concept (Markus 1983). Self-concept is defined as a "mental representation of oneself" which includes his or her characteristic traits, motives, beliefs, attitudes and values (Kihlstrom and Cantor 1984). In this perspective, the self-concept relates to the representation of personal and social characteristics, a perception of what a person represents.

Self-concept represents an active, forceful and interpretive notion that is capable of change (Markus and Wurf 1987). The highly dynamic and malleable properties of the self-concept are driven primarily by its social environment and guide strategies to control and monitor behaviors (Markus 1983). Thus, an identity process is always adjusting, reacting like a feedback loop (Burke 1991). Individuals constantly adapt and regulate their behaviors to fit with their identity standards or attributes (Burke 1991).

Multiple and Flexible Facets of the Self-Concept

This flexible aspect of the self-concept makes it extremely inclined to change with the numerous social interactions (Swann and Hill 1982). Different contexts and situations can directly influence and cause modifications in the expression of the self (Tajfel and Turner 1986; White and Dahl 2007). Furthermore, the social psychology literature on identity acknowledges that individuals have multiple identities (Markus and Kunda 1986) and that conflicts can emerge from those different individual facets (Turner et al. 1987). Individuals have diverse aspects of their identity appearing at different times relying on their individual needs or the context of the environment (Crawford 2007; Markus and Kunda 1986; Turner 1985).

The first reason that can explain this interchangeability in individuals' identities is the "situated identity" (Alexander and Weil 1969). The situated identity refers to the different available factors that could be imputable of the person's actions in a particular social context (Alexander and Weil 1969). Thus, this concept is dependent of situational identity cues (Ashforth et al. 2008; Meyer et al. 2006). First, identity cues can prime or evoke a certain identity to a person. It can also present descriptive and normative information about an identity (Ashforth et al. 2008). Certain situations can result in the choice of different actions that are more socially desirable or accepted. In those circumstances, individuals are susceptible to social desirability and are expected to choose the most favorably evaluated facet of their identity (Meyer et al. 2006; Rousseau 1998).

In addition, the notion of identity salience can explain this probability that an identity is activated. The identity salience refers to "the probability that an identity is evoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation" (Stryker and Burke 2000: 286). According to the identity theory, individuals have multiple identities that are organized hierarchically representing the probability that each identity would be activated. The

logic is that the more salient an identity is compared to other identities in relation to the self-concept, the greater the probability that individuals make behavioral choices that correspond to the expectations related to that identity (Stryker and Burke 2000). The importance for the self of a specific identity may vary from person to person (Reed 2004; Stryker 1980). This ordering is also flexible as some identities are more pertinent in certain contexts (Pratt and Foreman 2000). Also, identities that provoke positive feeling are evoked more often and move up the salience hierarchy, while the contrary happens to identities that create negative feelings (Stryker 1987).

Individuals hold stable references for the set of meanings and expectations that each identity represents (Burke 1980; 1991). When an identity is activated, those standards guide the appropriate behaviors that convey the desired meanings. People behave consistently with the identity that they have (Burke 1980; Burke and Stets 1999). When there is some disturbance between the situational meanings and their representation of who they are, people tend to operate in congruent ways to restore this discrepancy (Swann 1983).

A change in context or the surrounding environment can make a particular identity or part of the self-concept more salient for an individual. Situational context could increase the salience of a relevant identity (McGuire et al. 1978). For example, seeing a Victoria's Secret ad can increase the salience of the ideal body type of women. Indeed, an advertising campaign with the perfect body image can make the discrepancy between our actual and ideal body image more salient.

Another situation that is particularly relevant is the social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) presentation. Research tends to demonstrate that people have self-presentational concerns when they interact on social media (Bazarova et al. 2013). This situation can once again raise the relevance of the ideal self-concept to manage impressions. Thus, specific situations can make an identity salient and more relevant for individuals.

In conclusion, these multiple dimensions of the identity demonstrate that individuals have diverse aspects of their identities to express, that some dimensions are more significant for the self than others and that situations and social interactions can increase the importance of a specific characteristic of the person's identity (Ashworth et al. 2008; Pratt and Foreman 2000).

Self-Expression and Brands

With the emphasis on brand equity and the necessity to build strong brands, companies realize more than ever the importance of creating emotional brand connections with consumers (Malär et al. 2011). One crucial aspect of branding is to get individuals to connect the brand to their self-concept to express a part of who they are (Evans 2013). Previous literature agrees that products can have both a utilitarian and a hedonic meaning (Babin et al. 1994; Belk 1988; Fischer and Arnold 1990). The hedonic (or experiential) meanings are related to the symbolic aspects of the products (Belk 1988; Levy 1959). Products are not just evaluated in terms of tangible and functional aspects, but also more subjective characteristics such as symbolize and mean to consumers (Belk 1988; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Levy 1959).

Past research investigated the aspect of self-expression and how attitude objects, such as brands, can be associated with different personality traits that provide self-expressive or symbolic benefits to the consumer (Aaker 1997; Plummer 1985). Creating a unique and distinct brand personality is a crucial element in the success of a brand (Doyle 1990). Brand personality can be a tool for consumers to express their actual self, aspirational self or other distinct components of the self (Belk 1988; Swaminathan et al. 2007). Those aspects allow individuals to create connections and maintain relationships with brands (Aaker et al. 2004; Fournier 1998).

Three sources help in the creation of brand personality: the association consumers form with a brand, the image a company tries to create and the product attributes (Lin 2010). Companies

can develop this brand personality through different marketing variables and tactics, such as brand name, user imagery, package design, sponsorships, celebrity endorsements, symbols, and advertising (Aaker and Biel 1993; Ang and Lim 2006; Batra et al. 1993).

Thus, brand personality can be formed throughout diverse factors and these elements contribute to building the brand image and the brand equity (Fitzsimons et al. 2008). Research shows the importance of brand personality in the judgment and the consumption of brands (Grohmann 2009; Mathur et al. 2012; Swaminathan et al. 2007). Brand personality helps in the process of brand differentiation (Aaker 1992), increases consumers' preference and usage (Sirgy 1982), raises emotions in consumers (Biel 1993) and augments trust and loyalty (Fournier 1998). Past research demonstrated that consumers of a given culture have consistent perceptions of the personality of famous brands (Aaker et al. 2001).

People consume and use the symbolic nature of products to communicate an image to themselves and others (Belk 1988; Berger and Heath 2007; Escalas and Bettman 2003). These communication strategies can be used to make a good impression or help social contact with other people (Argo et al. 2006; White and Dahl 2006). Material items are also used as extensions of the self and help to communicate personal and group level identities (Belk 1988). The different products are bought carefully to communicate what the person perceives herself to be. Self-expression represents the "manipulation of goods, symbols and services to communicate consumer identities generated within the imagination" Schau (2000: 53). Individuals use brands to express who they are and to build their identity (Aaker 1997; Escalas and Bettman 2005). Self-expression allows people to differentiate themselves from others, to reflect their own beliefs and needs, and validate their own self-concepts (Prentice 1987). Consumers learn, define, and

remind themselves who they are by their possessions (Belk 1988). For individuals, expressing their identity is a crucial and central need that they have to satisfy.

Self-Brand Connections

In this sense, consumers often value brands in terms of what they can bring to their selves and how they can help individuals reaffirm important aspects of their identities such as their values, beliefs or principles (Kleine et al. 1993; Levy 1959). Consumers construct their self-identity and present themselves to others through their brand choices based on the congruency between brand-user associations and self-image associations (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Self-brand connection is the degree to which an individual has incorporated a brand into his or her self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2003). In these cases, consumers feel that the brand is deeply connected to their self-concept and that it symbolizes who they are or who they want to be (Chaplin and John 2005; Cheng et al. 2012; Escalas 2004). When consumers associate themselves with a brand to construct or communicate the self to others, they form a connection with the brand (Escalas and Bettman 2003; 2005).

This measure is an important factor in terms of the brand management since it involves both significant cognitive and emotional connections between the self and the brand (Park et al. 2010). Self-brand connections represent a crucial driver of emotional connections with brands (Ferraro et al. 2011), brand evaluations (Cheng et al. 2012), attitude strength (Moore and Homer 2008; Park et al. 2010) and behavioral intentions (Escalas 2004).

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 introduces the conceptual framework tested in this research. Building on this literature review, this research establishes the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. More specifically, this essay investigates how brand

personality can be associated with the actual and ideal self of consumers to create stronger selfbrand connections. In addition, certain boundary conditions (i.e., identity threat, public vs. private threat) are examined to examine their impact on this relationship and uncover social psychological mechanisms that explained this positive association.

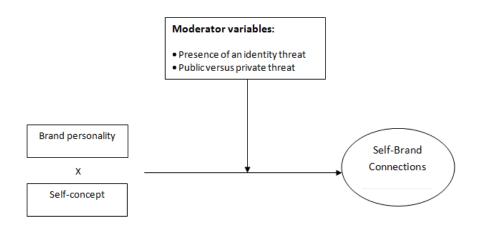


FIGURE 1: Proposed Framework

The self-concept refers to how individuals perceive themselves. This construct is the primary determinant of what people try to project to others (Shavelson and Bolus 1982). The first assumption is that individuals consume brands to build and define their self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2005) and choose brands with a personality that is relevant to their identity (Aaker 1999; Kleine et al. 1993; Richins 1994). Consumers choose brands with an image that could help them achieve those motives. The identity process guides the preferences for a specific brand personality. The main prediction is that the different identity aspects and motives are related to diverse brand personalities. Indeed, different facets of the identity elicit identity-relevant brands.

The second assumption is that the congruence between the identity and the brand personality leads to positive relationships. Similarity between the user and the brand has been linked to brand attitude and choice, purchase intention and loyalty (Sirgy 1982). In addition, people favor

products, activities and organizations that represent aspects that are compatible with salient aspects of their identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Self-brand connections are created when individuals use brand associations to construct or communicate themselves to other people (Escalas and Bettman 2003). In this case, the congruence between the identity facets and the brand personality leads to greater brand self-connections.

Relationship between the Self-Concept and Brand Personality

Furthermore, this research explores the effects of the actual self and ideal self on the brand self-connections for sincere and sophisticated brands. Self-concept refers to the comprehension and the perception of what a person is (Malär et al. 2011). The self-concept includes an actual and an ideal self. The actual self is an individual's basic self-concept and relates to how a person perceives herself and a representation of the attributes that she believes she actually possesses (Higgins 1987; Sirgy 1982). Ideal self expresses how the person would like to perceive herself or the attribute the person would like to possess (Higgins 1987). The ideal self is composed by individuals' hopes and desires, components that the environment (e.g., society, parents) promotes and aspects that they admire or aspire to become (Markus and Nurius 1986). This aspect of the self is often related to the desire to change, improve or achieve something (Higgins 1987).

To understand how the selves interact with connections with brands, the author draws on the identity motivations and goals (i.e., self-consistency/continuity motive and self-esteem motive), which state that individuals are influenced by identity goals. These principles guide how people build and defend their identities and when they cannot be attained, individuals use several methods and approaches to restore those vital aspects (Droseltis and Vignoles 2010).

People have a strong desire to consume brands that are internally consistent with their selfconcepts. In the case of actual self, people want to achieve a match between the image associated with the product and its perceived self-image. The self-congruity theory implies that the greater the consistency between the consumer's actual self-image and the image of the perceived buyer of the product, the greater is the intention to buy the product (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy et al. 1997). Individuals are stimulated to choose compatible products in order to confirm their perceptions (Swann 1990). Since this process is more related to internal and important values, people use more sincere brands to achieve this goal. Sincere brands are perceived as more caring, warmer and family-oriented than other brands (Aaker et al. 2004). Sincere brands are preferred to establish an honest relationship. This dimension of trustworthiness often generates feelings of vulnerability and helps having a strong relationship with consumers. Sincere brands have three important notions for interpersonal relationships which are warmth, vitality and status. Since sincerity and warmth are perceived to be important features for relationship quality, one expectation is that people use sincere brands to behave consistently with those important traits.

In the case of "ideal self", consumers tend to seek positive feedback and information that make them feel good and contribute to their self-esteem (Sedikides and Strube 1995). Self-enhancement involves a preference for positive self-views and a motivation to enhance the sense of personal worth (Sedikides and Gregg 2008). Literature demonstrates that individuals work hard to maintain high levels of self-esteem and promote themselves in terms of higher value (Swann 1990). Diverse strategies could be used by consumers to increase their self-esteem and a brand with an appealing personality could be part of this desire for positive feedback. This self-constructive presentation is developed in order to impress others in general and is motivated by ideal personal goals (Baumeister 1982). Sophisticated brands have upper class and charming personalities. They are related to higher status, luxury products and celebrities and they could be utilized by individuals to boost their self-esteem and have the impression to be closer to their

ideal self (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967; Malär et al. 2011). Furthermore, expectations are that individuals will connect more deeply with brands that are congruent with their self-concept. Thus, the author predicts:

H1: The congruence between self-concept and brand personality leads to stronger self-brand connections.

- H1a: The influence of the actual self on self-brand connections is stronger for sincere brands.
- H1b: The influence of the ideal self on self-brand connections is stronger for sophisticated brands.

Threats to the Self-Concept

Threats to identity can take numerous forms and can be composed of several events and experiences. The cause of the threat can originate internally or externally. A threat to identity happens "when the processes of identity, assimilation-accommodation and evaluation are, for some reason, unable to comply with the principles of continuity, distinctiveness and self-esteem, which habitually guide their operation" (Breakwell 1986: 36-37). Certain identity motives seem to be generally associated with threatened identity. Past literature demonstrates that threatened identities are characterized by a lack of continuity, by a lack of self-esteem and problems related to distinctiveness such as not enough or too much distinctiveness (Breakwell 1986).

In case of an identity threat, people often use different coping strategies to remove or modify the threat to identity (Breakwell 1986). A coping strategy can be defined as any idea or reaction that achieves the elimination or the improvement of a threat (Breakwell 1986). Often, to achieve an identity goal, individuals can use diverse identity symbols in order to reprove themselves (Gollwitzer and Wicklund 1985; Longoni et al. 2014). One coping strategy that could be utilized is to consume products or material symbols that can confirm their identities (Longoni et al. 2014;

Swann 1990). Thus, consumers who experience an identity threat are more motivated to use products that confirm their existing self-conceptions and provide them with self-confirmatory feedback. When people face an obstacle in the pursuit of their desired identity, they use identity symbols to convince themselves and others that they possess this identity (Longoni et al. 2014).

When individuals experience a threat related to their self-concept, we expect that individuals are more likely to attempt to associate themselves with a consistent brand personality through upgrading their connections with the relevant brand. More formally:

H2: The presence of identity threat leads to stronger self-brand connections for the corresponding brand personality (sincere and sophisticated). When people face an identity threat, they will connect more to brands that confirm their threatened identity.

- H2a: A continuity threat (vs. self-esteem threat) leads to stronger self-brand connections for sincere brands.
- H2b: A self-esteem threat (vs. continuity threat) leads to stronger self-brand connections for sophisticated brands.

Since the congruence between self-concept and brand personality influences the strength of the connections between the brand and the self, the author argues that the type of identity threat will moderate this relationship. After experiencing a threat, consumers do not necessarily connect more deeply with the related brand. The author proposes that when consumers encounter an identity threat, the outcome is determined by what aspects of the self-concept was made salient. Thus, self-brand connections vary in terms of the relevance to the identity of the threat.

The continuity motive relates to the desire to preserve a sense of "continuity across time and situation" within identity (Breakwell 1986: 24). One important motivation for individuals is to have consistency and continuity across different time periods to have a significant and meaningful identity (Easterbrook and Vignoles 2012; Taylor 1989). It motives people to promote

continuity between their past, present and future identities. This translates in more attention and retention of information that are consistent with the actual self-conceptions (Vignoles et al. 2006). People also perceive consistent information as more credible and search for situations that help their self-verification process (Swann 1983). Individuals want to achieve a match between the image associated with the company and its perceived self-image and seek confirmation of who they think they are (Ashforth et al. 2008). Individuals are stimulated to choose compatible products and affiliate themselves with a specific company in order to confirm their perceptions (Swann 1990). This self-verification motive encourages people to engage in strategies and situations that could help them to validate and confirm their actual self-concepts (Burke 2006).

On the other hand, the self-esteem motive is defined as "the motivation to maintain and enhance a positive conception of oneself" (Gecas 1982: 20). Individuals want to satisfy their needs to feel valuable and worthy (Stets and Burke 2000). Individuals construct desired selves and act in ways that are useful in reaching goals to conserve or increase their self-esteem (Sirgy 1985; Vignoles et al. 2005). People can increase their self-esteem through self-enhancement or self-improvement (Sedikides and Strube 1997). Self-enhancement involves a preference for positive self-views and a motivation to enhance the sense of personal worth (Sedikides and Gregg 2008). Literature demonstrates that individuals work hard to maintain high levels of self-esteem and promote themselves in terms of higher value (Swann 1990). Since self-esteem is related to the congruency between the real and ideal selves of people (Leary 1999), people can use different strategies to reduce the discrepancy between the two and brands could be an interesting option to maintain their self-esteem.

H3: The identity threat (related to the principles of continuity and self-esteem) moderates the effect of the primed identity (actual self and ideal self) on brand-self connections for the different

brand personalities (sincere and sophisticated). Continuity threat elevates the importance of congruence between the actual self and the sincere brand, while self-esteem increases the importance of congruence between ideal self and sophisticated brands on self-brand connections.

Public versus Private Self-Threat

Private and public conditions have important implications for consumer identity-signaling and have been shown to influence various consumers' decisions and behaviors (Berger and Heath 2008; Ratner and Kahn 2002; White and Dahl 2006). Public self represents the apparent and perceptible aspects created by the individual such as clothing and speech, whereas the private self consists of non-observable facets such as emotional feelings and thoughts (Fenigstein et al. 1975; Greenwald and Pratkanis 1984). Public threat related to the importance of having and maintaining a good image on others, while private threat aims attention at the private internal aspects of the self (Cheek and Briggs 1982; Fenigstein et al. 1975).

First, impression-management and self-presentation concerns have been found to influence diverse choices in a public setting compared to those that they would make privately (Ratner and Kahn 2002). Individuals decide to alter some decisions and diverge in public when they suppose others will develop opinions about them (Diener 1979). Consumers try to control the images and the impressions that others form about them (Baumeister 1982). This perspective demonstrates that people are concerned about identity-signaling purposes in the case of public, but not private, consumption. In addition, public failures can increase the impression management motivations (Leary and Kowalski 1990). Different strategies and associations to successful products and people can be utilized by consumers to fix and restore their image (Leary and Kowalski 1990). Private failures can also lead to the desire to repair this damage because those threats jeopardize the person's self-concept. For private failure, people can use "identity cues" to confirm who they

are and be persistent and constant with their actual self-conceptions (Escalas and Bettman 2003). Building on this literature, the type of threat (private vs. public) will influence the connections with specific brand personalities. Thus,

H4a: The presence of private identity threat leads to stronger self-brand connections for sincere brands.

H4b: Self-verification mediates this relationship. In this case, consumers connect with personal identity cues to confirm their self-conceptions and repair their private identities.

H5a: The presence of a public identity threat leads to stronger self-brand connections for sophisticated brands.

H5b: Self-enhancement mediates this relationship. When the threat is public, people connect with brands to signal their perceived self and are motivated to control how others perceive them.

It is essential to notice that the presence of a public or a private threat may influence the importance of congruence between self-concept and brand personality on the self-brand connections. While private threat can be related more to the affirmation and validation of the actual self-concept, public threat is more related to impression management and self-enhancement related to the ideal self (Ditto and Lopez 1992; Ward and Dahl 2014). The author proposes that the private and public threats are more threatening when they are relevant to the specific part of the self-concept. Therefore, the author expects that when those threats are relevant, individuals will react by connecting with the congruent brand personality in order to reiterate the threatened part of their self-concept:

H6: Private vs. public identity threats moderate the effect of the primed self-concept (actual and ideal) on brand-self connections for the brand personalities (sincere and sophisticated).

• H6a: Public threat strengthens the effect of the ideal self-concept on brand-self connections for the sophisticated brand personality.

 H6b: Private threat strengthens the effect of the actual self-concept on brand-self connections for the sincere brand personality.

METHODOLOGY

PRELIMINARY STUDY

Conducting an initial study, the author examined the impact of the identity on the preference for the different dimensions of brand personality. In this survey, sports fans answered questions about the brand personality, their relationships with the brand, and their consumption behaviors. This survey was administered through the website of a professional soccer team in France. Questions were adapted and translated from previous studies dealing with brands with a specific focus on the measurement of brand personality. Brand personality items (27 items) were adapted from Aaker (1997) and Brauenstein and Ross (2010). Two items for both self-congruence and social identification on 1-5 Likert scales were also included (Cameron 2004; Swaminathan et al. 2009). The author expected that people's actual self-congruence and social identification with the team will vary depending on their perceptions of the team's brand personality.

A total of 2086 questionnaires were completed and analyzed (67% male). Based on median splits, participants were divided into high and low groups for the perception of the sincerity (4.23 vs. 3.08, F(1, 2085) = 53.59), p < .001) and exciting dimension of this brand (4.30 vs. 3.25, F(1, 2085) = 51.19), p < .001). First, the comparison between the people who perceived the brand to be highly sincere (vs. less sincere) shows that the scores for self-congruence are higher for the high sincerity group (4.38 vs. 3.70, F(1, 2085) = 17.51), p < .001). For social identification, the scores were highly dependent of consumers' perception of the exciting dimension. The social identification was higher for fans who perceived the brand to be exciting compared to others (4.20 vs. 3.49, F(1, 2085) = 11.83), p < .01). In addition, the perception of sincerity explains

more variance in the results for self-congruence (.219 vs. .150) than the perception of excitement, while excitement explains more variance in the results for identification than sincerity (.226 vs. .156). These results suggest that consumers connect different facets of their identity to the brand depending on their perceptions of the brand personality.

STUDY 1

To test the hypotheses related to the importance of congruence between the actual and ideal selves and the brand personality dimensions, a survey was conducted. This study aims to show the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of stronger brand connections (H1a and H1b).

First pretest

Brands were pretested to make sure that they represent strongly one dimension of the brand personality. First, participants (n=50) listed sincere, exciting, sophisticated, rugged and competent brands for any product category that came to mind, based on the name of the brand personality dimensions and some of their facets. This pretest resulted in a list of 94 brands chosen from several industries, including consumer goods, services, and retailing. Only brands that were mentioned by three or more participants were included. 20 sincere brands (e.g., Dove, Hallmark, Cheerios), 19 exciting brands (e.g., Nike, Redbull, Pepsi), 20 sophisticated brands (e.g., Prada, Rolls Royce, Chanel), 17 rugged brands (e.g., Jeep, North Face, Harley-Davidson) and 18 competent brands (e.g., Amazon, Google, Microsoft) were selected for the next pretest.

Second pretest

In the second pretest, 944 participants rated 94 well-known brands from the first pretest on 17 personality traits, similar to the procedure used by Mathur et al. (2012). Respondents answered questions about their perceptions of the brand personality of 3 randomly selected

brands for a total of 25 to 35 observations for each brand. Precisely, participants rated the degree to which the brands could be described by sincerity traits (down-to-earth, honest, cheerful, wholesome), exciting traits (daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date), sophisticated traits (glamorous, upper class, charming), rugged traits (tough, strong, outdoorsy), and competence traits (reliable, intelligent, successful) on seven-point scales (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree). The goal is to select different brands that have strong associations with one personality dimension, but significantly lower ratings on other dimensions. Five brands were selected for each personality trait (See Table 1 for means for the different personality dimensions).

• Sincere: Uncle Ben's, Dove, Cheerios, Tropicana, Fruit of the Loom

• Sophisticated: Gucci, Guess, Chanel, Victoria's Secret, Rolls Royce

	Sincere	Exciting	Sophisticated	Rugged	Competent
Uncle Ben's	5.66	4.40	4.10	4.22	5.13
Dove	5.71	4.66	4.41	4.20	5.40
Cheerios	6.10	4.52	3.96	4.36	5.50
Tropicana	5.62	4.64	4.55	4.29	5.23
Fruit of the Loom	5.69	3.88	3.80	3.89	4.80
Gucci	3.88	5.15	6.03	3.45	5.14
Guess	3.78	5.07	5.75	3.76	5.03
Chanel	4.17	5.20	6.10	3.65	5.37
Victoria's Secret	3.57	4.58	5.99	3.75	5.47
Rolls-Royce	4.55	5.51	6.34	4.50	5.17

TABLE 1: Means for the different brand personality dimensions for the selected brands

Method

Participants

349 Crowdflower participants (at least 30 subjects for each brand) were recruited online. 21 participants did not complete the entire survey, resulting in a final sample of 328. Respondents

completed questionnaires regarding brand preferences and received a small incentive going up to 1\$. For Crowdflower participants, I selected users who were located in the U.S. and had a 95% prior HIT acceptance rate. Participants took between 5 to 10 minutes to answer all the questions (average of 7 minutes for all the participants). The questionnaire was only accessible through this specific link in the message. In this online survey, participants (female = 58.8%, age range 18-76) were randomly assigned to one brand among 10 pretested brands (See Table 1) that represents a particular brand personality. Each respondent answered questions for only one brand.

Procedures and measures

The questionnaire included validated scales from previous studies. First, participants answered questions about their brand familiarity on the three-item brand familiarity of Malär et al. (2011; "I feel very familiar with brand x,", "I feel very experienced with brand x" and "I know product (s) of brand x", 1 = "Not at all familiar," and 7 = "Very familiar) (see Appendix A for all measures used in this research).

The dependent variable consisted of self-brand connections. Specifically, participants completed a self-brand connections scale based on seven items from relevant past research (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Sample items included: "This brand reflects who I am" and "I feel a personal connection to this brand" anchored by strongly disagree [1] to strongly agree [7].

Additional measures included aspects of the self-concept: First, participants reported ratings about the actual and ideal self-congruence between themselves and the brand using the measures applied by Malär et al. (2011). For actual self-congruence, participants used 7-point scales to indicate agreement with statements, "The personality of brand x is consistent with how I see myself (my actual self)," and "The personality of brand x is a mirror image of me (my actual self)" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). For ideal self-congruence, two questions were

used: "The personality of brand x is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self)," and "The personality of brand x is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self)". Brand personality measures (17 items from Aaker 1997) serve as a manipulation check. The questionnaire concluded with demographic measures (age, gender, education, and income).

Results

Data were analyzed using multiple structural equation models to test H1 (H1a and H1b). First, the impact of the congruence with the actual and ideal selves is tested on the overall sample. The goal of this first evaluation is to test whether or not actual and ideal self-congruence leads to self-brand connections. In a second series of analyses, the importance of the congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality is analyzed using multi-group comparative analysis (2 brand personality conditions: sincere and sophisticated).

The measurement scales used in this study demonstrate sufficient reliability and validity. As these measures were borrowed from different studies and were developed in different contexts, a series of analyses were performed on each of the latent variables used in the model to determine their psychometric properties and particularly assess their reliability and validity. For all constructs, the composite reliability surpasses the threshold value of .6 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988) (all composite reliability scores were above .924). All coefficient alpha values exceed the threshold value of .7 recommended by Nunnally (1978) (all Cronbach alphas were above .94).

To analyze the data, the author used AMOS 22.0 to model the structural relationships between actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence on self-brand connections. Independent variables were allowed to correlate in the structural equation model. In this survey, the measures of overall fit mostly meet conventional standards, which suggest that the model fits the data pretty well ($x^2/d.f.=4.089$), root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .061,

standardized root mean square residualion [SRMR] = .049, normed fit index [NFI] = .987, nonnormed fit index [NNFI] = .979, and comparative fit index [CFI] = .990). In this survey, the results confirm a strong positive relationship between the self-concept and self-brand connections. Indeed, actual self-congruence (B=.713, p < .001) and ideal self-congruence (B=.193, p < .001) positively influence connections with brands.

Multiple group structural equation modeling was used to test H1a and H1b, which refer to the influence of congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality on self-brand connections. Table 2 displays the parameter estimates for the different subgroups.

	ACTUAL SELF -		IDEAL SELF 🗪	
	SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS Standardized X ² Estimate (t-Value)		SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS Standardized X ² Estimate (t-Value)	
DIRECT	.713***		.193***	
INFLUENCE	(22.40)		(7.06)	
BRAND PERSONALITY				
Sincere	.822***		.139*	5.82***
	(10.474)		(2.325)	
Sophisticated	.304* 18	3.99***	.554***	
	(2.691)		(7.695)	

TABLE 2: RESULTS FOR THE DIVERSE HYPOTHESES

The results supported the influence of congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality on self-brand connections. First, actual self-congruence has a positive effect for both brand personalities. Even if this effect is positive for sophisticated brands (B = .304, p < .05), this effect becomes even stronger for sincere brands (B = .822, p < .001). In support of H1a, the chi-square difference test demonstrate that the effect of the actual self-congruence is stronger for sincere brands compared to sophisticated brands ($X^2SiA=18.99\Delta$ d.f. =1, p < .001) (see Table 2). Ideal self-congruence, however, has a significant stronger positive effect for brands that are

sophisticated (B = .554, p < .001) compared to sincere (B = 0.139, p < .05) in support of H1b. Here, the chi-square difference is significant ($X^2SoI = 5.82 \triangle d.f. = 1$, p < .001).

Discussion

Study 1 shows that congruence between the self-concept and brand personality leads to greater self-brand connections. This finding supports the proposition that actual and ideal self-concepts increase emotional connections with brands when there is a correspondence with the brand personality. The results demonstrate that congruence between self-concept (i.e., actual self and ideal self) and brand personality (i.e., sincere and sophisticated) is an important driver of self-brand connections. To extend the finding, the following study aims to replicate this pattern in a new brand development context and examines the effect of congruence in a context where individuals do not have any familiarity or previous experiences with the brand.

STUDY 2

The primary goal of Study 2 is to experimentally test the proposition that a person's desire to express a specific part of their self-concept is likely to influence their self-brand connections with the brand. In particular, this experiment examines whether priming self-concept influences consumers' connections with brands with different brand personalities (H1a and H1b).

Method

Participants

In a 2 (prime self-concept: actual self vs. ideal self) X 2 (brand personality: sincere vs. sophisticated) between-subjects experimental design, 131 participants (62 females), with an average age of 42, completed an online study on Crowdflower in return for a nominal payment. However, eight participants were excluded because they did not respond properly to the

manipulation of self-concept. They either left it unanswered, or they fail the attention check question by identifying less than four words in the word search puzzle.

Procedures and measures

Participants completed questionnaires asking them about their connections with diverse brands. First, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions in which their actual versus ideal self-concept was primed. They then saw different descriptions of brands that serve as the manipulation of brand personality (e.g., Swaminathan et al. 2009). The cover story was that the author was interested in examining the impact of website content on consumers' preferences. Athletic shoes were selected for two main reasons. It is a product that is pertinent and commonly used by consumers (Swaminathan et al. 2009), and has been used in past branding research (Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Swaminathan et al. 2007; 2009).

First, a priming technique was used to manipulate self-concept motivations. People did a word search in a puzzle with five words related to their priming conditions (their actual self and their ideal self) (See Appendix B). Words could appear with letters in a straight line either from left to right or from right to left reading down or reading up, and diagonally reading either down or up. A control question was asked to verify how many words they were able to identify. To verify the effectiveness of the prime self-concept, participants answered questions related to actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence. In addition, people rated the importance of actual and ideal self-congruence with the brand. After this manipulation, they examine one of the two brand descriptions created to manipulate brand personality.

For the manipulation of brand personality, the method used was similar to the one by Swaminathan et al. (2009) and Johar et al. (2005). Two brand descriptions were created: each description conveyed a different brand personality. The manipulation of the brand personality was accomplished through overall tonality, the taglines, brand identity elements and visual cues

(See Appendix C). The study relied on fictitious brands the same product category (athletic shoes) to control for product category associations.

A pretest (n= 59) was done of the two ads to verify their accuracy in terms of brand personality. First, it ensured that the two personality conditions did not differ in personal relevance (e.g., brand image relevant to me, makes sense to me; seven-point scale, $\alpha = .81$; $M_{\text{sincerity}} = 5.12$, $SD_{\text{sincerity}} = .82$; $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 4.92$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = .87$; t(57) = .88, n.s.). Further, as expected, participants reported the sincere brand to be related to sincere traits (M = 6.04, SD = .55), compared to other dimensions of brand personality ($M_{\text{exciting}} = 5.02$, $SD_{\text{exciting}} = .73$; t(28) = 9.72, p < .001; $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 4.61$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = .86$; t(28) = 8.97, p < .001; $M_{\text{rugged}} = 4.60$, $SD_{\text{rugged}} = .90$; t(28) = 9.57, p < .001, $M_{\text{competent}} = 5.46$, $SD_{\text{competent}} = .76$; t(28) = 7.11, p < .01). Also, participants reported the sophisticated brand to be related to sophisticated traits (M = 5.78) SD = .84), compared to other brand personality dimensions ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 3.98$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = 1.19$; t(29) = 6.64, p < .001; $M_{\text{exciting}} = 5.00$, $SD_{\text{exciting}} = 1.14$; t(29) = 3.75, p < .001; $M_{\text{rugged}} = 3.50$, $SD_{\text{rugged}} = 1.66$; t(29) = 6.70, p < .001, $M_{\text{competent}} = 4.87$, $SD_{\text{competent}} = 1.26$; t(29) = 3.66, t(29

A manipulation check was also included to test for the brand personality manipulation. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed that "sincere", "sophisticated", "sincere", "rugged" and "competent" well described the different brands figured in the ads. This manipulation check was done at the end of the survey, when they were shown the descriptions one more time. The dependent variables consist of self-brand connections. This concept was measured with the same items used in study 1. The questionnaire ended with demographic measures (age, gender, education, and income).

Results

Manipulation checks

The self-concept manipulation was successful. Participants reported greater importance of their actual self-concept congruence in the actual self-concept condition ($M_{\text{primeactual}} = 5.55$, $SD_{\text{primeactual}} = 1.00 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{primeideal}} = 3.64$, $SD_{\text{primeideal}} = 1.39$; F(1, 122) = 6.18, p < .001). However, in the ideal self-concept condition, participants rated the importance of ideal self-congruence higher (compared to actual self-congruence) ($M_{\text{primeactual}} = 2.89$, $SD_{\text{primeideal}} = 1.10 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{primeideal}} = 5.10$, $SD_{\text{primeideal}} = .87$; F(1, 122) = 9.12, p < .001).

The brand personality manipulation was also successful. Participants rated the brand to be more sincere in the sincerity condition ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 5.81$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = .97$ vs. $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 3.88$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = 1.20$; F(1,122) = 8.79, p < .001), while they assessed the brand to be sophisticated in the sophistication condition ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 4.63$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = 1.11$ vs. $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 5.71$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = .91$; F(1,122) = 5.24, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant. Self-brand connections

We examined how the self-concept motivation differentially affected participants' self-brand connections (α = .81) when they had an actual (vs. ideal) self-concept relative to the brand. In order to support the predictions made in H1a and H1b, the results found in this experiment reveal an interaction between the prime self-concept and the brand personality. A 2 (prime self-concept: actual self and ideal self) X 2 (brand personality: sincere and sophisticated) analysis of variance was performed on self-brand connections. Thus, an ANOVA showed a significant interaction in support of hypothesis 1 (F(1, 122) = 7.49, p < .01; see figure 2).

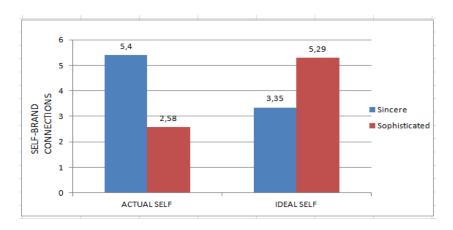


FIGURE 2: PRIMED SELF-CONCEPT X BRAND PERSONALITY ON SELF-BRAND

CONNECTIONS (STUDY 2)

The simple effects reveal that when participants were primed with an ideal self-concept, they had more positive self-brand connections with sophisticated brands (vs. sincere brands) $(M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 5.29, SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = .66 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{sincere}} = 3.35, SD_{\text{sincere}} = 1.14; F(1, 122) = 13.58, p < .001)$. Conversely, participants who were primed with actual self-concept showed more self-brand connections with sincere brands (vs. sophisticated brands) $(M_{\text{sincere}} = 5.40, SD_{\text{sincere}} = .87 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 2.58, SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = 1.24; F(1, 122) = 3.78, p < .01)$ (see Appendix H).

Discussion

Study 2 extends the findings by showing the robustness of the relationship between the congruence between self-concept and brand personality and self-brand connections. In study 1, the author observed that actual and ideal self-concepts positively drive connections with the brands and that those relationships are even stronger when there is congruence with the brand personality. Here, the results again show that the congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality may drive consumers to connect more deeply with brands that are closely linked to their primed self-concept. Furthermore, supporting hypothesis 1 this study confirms the importance of identity-related brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. The results support the prediction that when individuals are thinking about their actual self-concept,

they are more likely to connect with sincere brands in an apparent effort to self-verify their identity. For individuals primed with their ideal self-concept, they establish stronger emotional relationships with sophisticated brands in a perceptible attempt to boost their self-esteem.

A further test of the role of self-concept on the connections with brand personality would involve examining identity threats. If self-concept affects connections with brands with a specific brand personality, threatening one crucial motive of this self-concept should also create stronger connections for this brand personality. The author examines this prediction in study 3 by manipulating two types of identity threat.

STUDY 3

The primary goal of Study 3 is to experimentally test the proposition that an identity threat (continuity vs. self-esteem) influences the connections to certain brand personalities (H2). This study contributes to the demonstration that congruence between primed self-concept and brand personality leads to stronger integration of the brand in consumers' self-concept.

Method

Participants

123 participants (63 females) were recruited through Crowdflower to participate in this online study in exchange of a small monetary reward. However, 5 participants were excluded from the analyses, because they did not answer properly to the manipulation (i.e., left it unanswered or did not provide a specific identity threat). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Again, the focal dependent variable was self-brand connections.

Procedures and measures

This experiment was a 2 (Brand personality: sincere vs. sophisticated) X 2 (Threat: continuity-related threat vs. self-esteem non-social threat). Since those motives are more

Participants completed a reliving task that manipulated the threats (adapted from Knowles et al. 2010, see Appendix D). Participants randomly assigned to the *Self-Esteem Threat* condition were asked to write about a time in which they felt intense failure in an intellectual domain. In the *Continuity-Related Threat* condition, participants had to write about a time where something important change in their identity. To verify the identity threat manipulation, participants indicated the extent to which they felt "threatened," "attacked," "challenged," "unhappy" "impugned," and "maligned," using 7-point scales (1= not all, 7= very; social threat index, White et al. 2012). Also, questions about the continuity of their identities and self-esteem questions were assessed to verify the effectiveness of the threat (Rosenberg 1965; Vignoles et al. 2006).

Finally, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the two different brand descriptions that serve as manipulations of brand personality (sincere and sophisticated). As in the previous study, the brand portrays varied in terms of the taglines, brand identity elements and visual cues. To verify whether the brand personality manipulation is successful, brand personality was measured using the same manipulation check questions as previous studies.

After reading about the brand, the participants responded to the same series of dependent measures (described in previous studies) for the apparel brand.

Results

Manipulation checks

The identity threat manipulation was successful. Those in the continuity threat condition felt that their identities are less continuous across time ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 3.72$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.22$ vs. $M_{\text{self-esteem}} = 5.64$, $SD_{\text{self-esteem}} = 1.07$; F(1, 117) = 9.07, p < .001) than those in the self-esteem threat condition. Participants had lower self-esteem after experiencing the self-esteem threat ($M_{\text{continuity}}$)

= 5.45, $SD_{continuity} = 1.24$ vs. $M_{self-esteem} = 4.16$, $SD_{self-esteem} = 1.08$; F(1, 117) = 6.06, p < .001) than those in the continuity threat. Further, the brand was perceived to be sincere in the sincerity condition ($M_{sincere} = 5.45$, $SD_{sincere} = .90$ vs. $M_{sophisticated} = 4.14$, $SD_{sophisticated} = 1.47$; F(1, 117) = 5.96, p < .001), while it was recognized to be sophisticated in the sophistication condition ($M_{sincere} = 4.47$, $SD_{sincere} = .90$ vs. $M_{sophisticated} = 5.70$, $SD_{sophisticated} = .99$; F(1, 117) = 7.07, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant.

Self-brand connections

In order to verify the predictions made in H2, the results found in this experiment revealed an interaction between the conditions of identity threat and the brand personalities. A 2 (brand personality) X 2 (threat) ANOVA was performed on the self-brand connections. The ANOVA revealed that the interaction between identity threat and brand personality significantly predicted self-brand connections (F(1, 117) = 13.28, p < .001, see figure 3). The main effect for identity threat (F(1, 117 = .472, n.s.) and brand personality (F(1, 117 = .352, n.s.) did not reach significance.

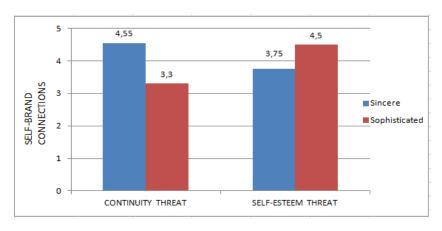


FIGURE 3: PRIMED THREAT X BRAND PERSONALITY ON SELF-BRAND

CONNECTIONS (STUDY 3)

As predicted in H2, in the continuity threat condition, participants were more inclined to connect with the sincere brands (M = 4.55, SD = 1.39) than with the sophisticated brands (M = 3.30, SD = 1.79, F(1, 117) = 3.04, p < .01). In contrast, those primed with a self-esteem threat connected more with sophisticated brands (M = 4.50, SD = 1.47) than with sincere brands (M = 3.75, SD = 1.19; F(1, 117) = 2.08, p < .05) (see Figure 3 and Appendix I).

Discussion

The results of Study 3 support the conceptualization. In particular, when information that represents a continuity threat is presented, consumers report more favorable connections with the brand when the brand personality is sincere than when it is sophisticated. In contrast, when individuals face information that highlights a self-esteem threat, consumers connect more deeply to sophisticated brands than to sincere brands to reflect more their ideal self-congruence. The results of Study 3 provide evidence that threats related to the self-concept can lead to stronger connections to the brands for individuals in order to restore their sense of identity. To test the importance of identity threat on the initial process, study 4 examines the impact of identity threat on the importance of congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality.

STUDY 4

The primary goal of Study 4 is to demonstrate that identity threats (self-esteem vs. continuity) moderate the effect of the primed identity (actual self and ideal self) on brand-self connections for the diverse brand personalities (sincere and sophisticated).

Method

Participants

In a 2 (prime self-concept: actual self vs. ideal self) X 3 (threat: control vs. continuity-related threat vs. self-esteem threat) X 2 (brand personality: sincere vs. sophisticated) between-subjects

experimental design, 337 participants were recruited through Crowdflower to complete an online survey in return of a nominal payment. The author incorporated two quality-control techniques to remove bad responses. First, the author considered the time taken to complete the survey and excluded respondents who skipped through the survey too rapidly to have adequately read all the questions or so slowly that the effects of the priming manipulation were likely to have disappeared. Given the length of the survey, the estimation was that to read and answer the survey questions should have taken no less than 5 minutes and no more than 30 minutes. Therefore, 12 respondents who did not complete the survey within this time range were excluded. Second, the author screened out respondents who did not exert the required cognitive effort for the open-ended question (identity threat manipulation). Specifically, the author removed 11 individuals who did not describe a specific threat, giving a final sample of 314 participants (184 females).

Procedures and measures

The priming manipulation was carried out through an initial word-search puzzle that each participant completed by him/herself at the beginning of the experimental session. Similar to study 2, each list contained the 5 words elated to their priming conditions (their actual self and their ideal self). Participants then responded to the self-concept manipulation check questions.

The next step was to manipulate the identity threats. Similar to study 3, participants completed a reliving task that manipulated the different threats. Participants randomly assigned either to the *control condition*, the *Self-Esteem Threat Condition* or the *Continuity-Related Threat Condition*. The absent threat condition is the control condition. Manipulation check questions included the social threat index as well identity threat questions. After, people did a filter task before viewing the brand personality manipulation and the dependent variables.

Finally, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two brand descriptions of the fictitious brand Astra that serve as manipulations of brand personality (sincere and sophisticated), similar to previous studies. After the brand website description, the participants answered the same series of dependent measures (described in previous studies) for the brand of interest.

Results

Manipulation checks

All three manipulations were successful. First, participants reported greater importance of their actual self-concept congruence in the actual self-concept condition ($M_{primeactual} = 4.97$, $SD_{primeactual} = 1.21$ vs. $M_{primeideal} = 3.55$, $SD_{primeideal} = 1.44$; F(1, 313) = 5.88, p < .001). However, in the ideal self-concept condition, participants rated the importance of ideal self-congruence higher (compared to actual self-congruence) ($M_{primeactual} = 3.70$, $SD_{primeideal} = 1.68$ vs. $M_{primeideal} = 4.71$, $SD_{primeideal} = 1.66$; F(1, 313) = 4.74, p < .001).

Also, people in the threat conditions (i.e., continuity and self-esteem) felt more threatened compared to participants in the control condition ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 2.33$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.22$ vs. $M_{\text{self-esteem}} = 2.39$, $SD_{\text{self-esteem}} = 1.26$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 1.44$, $SD_{\text{control}} = .78$; F(2, 312) = 23.56, p < .001). Those in the continuity threat condition felt that their identities are less continuous across time ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 3.13$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.08$ vs. $M_{\text{self-esteem}} = 4.87$, $SD_{\text{self-esteem}} = 1.38$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.72$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 1.67$; F(2, 312) = 49.67, p < .001) than those in the self-esteem threat condition. Participants had lower self-esteem after experiencing the self-esteem threat ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 4.96$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.01$ vs. $M_{\text{self-esteem}} = 4.10$, $SD_{\text{self-esteem}} = 1.73$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 5.06$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 1.15$; F(2, 312) = 16.42, p < .001) compared to the two other conditions. Further, the brand was perceived to be sincere in the sincerity condition ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 5.50$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = .87$ vs. $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 3.75$, SD

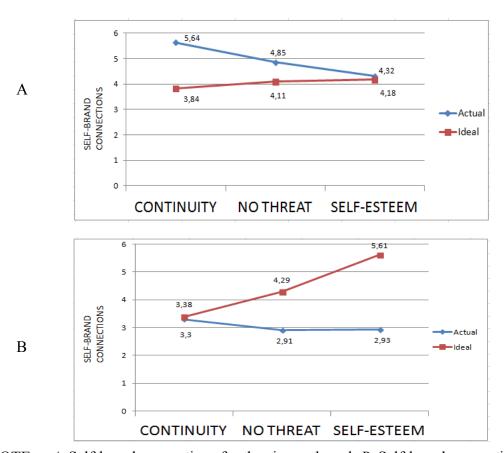
sophisticated = 1.30; F(1,313) = 14.07, p < .001), and to be sophisticated in the sophistication condition ($M_{sincere} = 4.55$, $SD_{sincere} = 1.06$ vs. $M_{sophisticated} = 5.67$, $SD_{sophisticated} = 1.02$; F(1,313) = 9.58, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant.

Self-brand connections

The author investigated how a continuity threat (vs. self-esteem threat) influences the relationship between the congruence of self-concept and brand personality and self-brand connections (α = .94). An ANOVA with self-concept, type of threat and brand personality as predictor variables and self-brand connections as the dependent variable was conducted. In order to validate the predictions made in H3, the results found in this experiment revealed a three-way interaction between the conditions of self-concept, identity threat and brand personality on self-brand connections (F(1, 313) = 3.06, p < .05). The data demonstrated that the type of threat influences the self-brand connections for both the sincere brands (F(1, 313) = 7.41, p < .001; see figure 4) and the sophisticated brand (F(1, 313) = 21.60, p < .001).

For the sincere brand, in the control condition (i.e., no threat) the simple effects reveal that participants who were primed with an actual self-concept (vs. ideal) showed similar results as found in prior studies. Participants connected more deeply with the brand when primed with their actual self-concept ($M_{\text{actual}} = 4.85$, $SD_{\text{actual}} = 1.17$ vs. $M_{\text{ideal}} = 4.11$, $SD_{\text{ideal}} = 1.19$; F(1,313) = 2.14, p < .05). On the other hand, participants who had been primed with an actual self-concept elevated their self-brand connections after experiencing a continuity threat (vs. self-esteem threat) ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 5.64$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.04$ vs. $M_{\text{esteem}} = 4.32$, $SD_{\text{esteem}} = 1.05$; F(1,313) = 4.63, p < .001). In the ideal self-concept prime, no differences were found between the two types of threat ($M_{\text{continuity}} = 3.84$, $SD_{\text{continuity}} = 1.20$ vs. $M_{\text{esteem}} = 4.18$, $SD_{\text{esteem}} = 1.40$; F(1,313) = 1.09, n.s.) (See Figure 4).

For the sophisticated brand, participants had stronger connections with the brand after being primed with the ideal self-concept in the control condition ($M_{\rm actual} = 2.91$, $SD_{\rm actual} = 1.45$ vs. $M_{\rm ideal} = 4.29$, $SD_{\rm ideal} = 1.26$, F(1, 313) = 3.96, p < .001). Self-brand connections were increased after experiencing a self-esteem threat (vs. continuity) when primed with an ideal self-concept ($M_{\rm continuity} = 3.38$, $SD_{\rm continuity} = 1.45$ vs. $M_{\rm esteem} = 5.61$, $SD_{\rm esteem} = 1.03$; F(1, 313) = 5.31, p < .001). Conversely, participants who had been primed with an actual self-concept showed no differences in self-brand connections whether they faced a self-esteem or a continuity threat ($M_{\rm continuity} = 3.30$, $SD_{\rm continuity} = 1.03$ vs. $M_{\rm esteem} = 2.93$, $SD_{\rm esteem} = 1.27$; F(1, 313) = .61, n.s.) (See Appendix J).



NOTE.—A, Self-brand connections for the sincere brand. B, Self-brand connections for the sophisticated brand

FIGURE 4: SELF-CONCEPT X IDENTITY THREAT X BRAND PERSONALITY

ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 4)

Discussion

The results of study 4 provide additional evidence that the congruence between self-concept and brand personality can elevate self-brand connections. Indeed, in the control condition, results reveal similar patterns as found in prior studies. Participants connected more with the sincere brand when primed with an actual self-concept, while self-brand connections were elevated for sophisticated brands when primed with ideal self-concept. In addition, supporting hypothesis 3, the results also showed that experiencing a threat can modify the intensity of this relationship. Thus, by facing a continuity threat after the actual self-concept prime, one can elevate the self-brand connections for the sincere brands, while self-esteem can have the same effects for sophisticated brands when primed with an ideal self-concept. These findings indicate that it is people's self-concept relative to the brand that leaves them vulnerable to the specific threat and increases the perceived connections between the self and the brand.

The different threats can create stronger self-brand connections for the diverse brand personalities. Positive effects of identity threat can only be found when threat-relevant identity had first been primed, while negative repercussions are perceived when threat-irrelevant identity had first been primed. Speculations can be made that self-discrepancy can positively explain the motivation to connect with the brands in the threat-relevant condition, while fluid compensation could explain why people avoid identity-relevant brands in the threat-irrelevant condition.

STUDY 5

The goal of Study 5 is to test the proposition that a public identity threat increases self-brand connections for the sophisticated brands, while private failure enhances self-brand connections for sincere brands (H4a and H4b). The last objective is to examine the underlying processes that

sophisticated brands are used in public context to readjust their public image (self-enhancement), while sincere brands are used for self-verification in the context of private failure (H5a and H5b).

Method

Participants

135 respondents from Crowdflower participated in this study in exchange for a small monetary reward. The author removed respondents who did not complete the manipulation task correctly. More precisely, 11 respondents who did not list a specific threat or did not answer the manipulation check questions were excluded, which resulted in a final sample size of 124 (69 females). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.

Procedure and measures

This experiment was a 2 (brand personality: sophisticated versus sincere) X 2 (threat: public vs. private) between-subjects design. In the first portion of this study, respondents were asked to describe a situation where they received bad news/feedback in a public (i.e., in front of other people) or private (i.e., alone) setting. Participants were instructed to recall one specific threatening moment that they had experienced recently within the past two years. To ensure participants came up with a specific incident, they were first asked to provide some basic information about the event including when and where it happened. Participants were asked to take a few moments to think and describe the event they had "Please write about it in such a way that someone would feel threatened just by reading your description". In the public threat condition, this sentence was added at the end of the task description: "Also write about how other people around you may have thought negative things about you at the moment", while in the private condition, this sentence was inserted "Also write about the negative things that you thought about yourself at the moment". Manipulation check of the threat was measured by

having participants use 7-point scales anchored with "Not at all" to "Very" to rate feelings of being "threatened," "attacked," "challenged," "impugned," "maligned," and "unhappy" when thinking about the threatening moment. Finally, as a check for the private and public aspects of the threat, participants reported how public or private this threat was on seven-point scales (Appendix A).

Finally, in the last part of this study, participants were asked to read about the description of a brand and give their opinions about it. To check whether the brand manipulation was successful, participants used Likert-type scale from 1 to 7 to show agreement related to brand personality dimensions. At the end of experiment, participants filled out the questionnaire to measure dependent variables that will consist of self-brand connections. This variable was measured with the same items used in the previous studies. Additional measures included underlying processes: Self-enhancement was measured with a single item, "It is important that people see me in the best possible light," whereas self-verification was measured with one item, "It is important for me to have accurate information about my strengths and weaknesses." Both items were anchored 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) (Swann 1990).

Results

Manipulation checks

All six questions measuring participants' feeling of threat on their menacing moments loaded together as a single factor (α = .87). People didn't felt more threatened in the public or the private threat conditions ($M_{private}$ = 4.25, $SD_{private}$ = .78 vs. M_{public} = 4.04, SD_{public} = .80; F(1, 123) = 1.49, n.s.). The public vs. private threat manipulation was successful. Those in the public threat condition viewed their threatening moment as relatively more public (M = 5.51, SD = 1.01) than did those in the private threat condition (M = 2.76, SD = 1.21; F(1, 123) = 13.78, p < .001).

Further, the brand was perceived to be sincere in the sincerity condition ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 5.63$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = .95 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 4.13$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = 1.31$; F(1, 123) = 6.99, p < .001), while it was recognized to be sophisticated in the sophistication condition ($M_{\text{sincere}} = 4.72$, $SD_{\text{sincere}} = 1.19 \text{ vs.}$ $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 5.69$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = .91$; F(1, 123) = 4.85, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant.

Self-brand connections

All seven self-brand connections measures loaded together as a single factor; hence, the items were averaged to form a single index of self-brand connections (α = .96). An ANOVA with self-brand connections as the dependent variable revealed no main effects of identity threat and brand personality manipulation, but a significant interaction between the two. Describing a private threat (vs. public) did not led to stronger feelings of connections with the brand ($M_{private}$ = 4.01, $SD_{private}$ = 1.78 vs. M_{public} = 4.54, SD_{public} = 1.23; F(1, 123) = 1.95, n.s.). There was also no difference in terms of emotional connections to brands than are perceived to be sincere versus sophisticated ($M_{sincere}$ = 4.59, $SD_{sincere}$ = 1.15 vs. $M_{sophisticated}$ = 3.97, $SD_{sophisticated}$ = 1.77; F(1, 123) = 2.24, n.s.). Importantly, further examination of the two-way interaction supported the hypotheses (F(1, 123) = 21.31, p < .001). As predicted in H4a, in the private threat condition, participants were more inclined to connect with the sincere brands (M = 5.21, SD = 1.01) than with the sophisticated brands (M = 2.77, SD = 1.21; t(56) = 6.95, p < .01). In contrast, those primed with a public threat connected more with sophisticated brands (M = 4.89, SD = 1.28) than with sincere brands (M = 4.16, SD = 1.26; t(64) = 2.55, p < .05) (see Figure 5 and Appendix K).

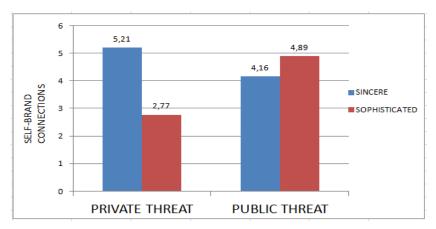


FIGURE 5: PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE THREAT X BRAND PERSONALITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 5)

Mediation

Using the bootstrapping method (Preacher and Hayes 2008), the author tested whether the effect of public and private threat on self-brand connections mediated respectively by self-enhancement and self-verification motivations. Consistent with the prediction, the indirect effect of public threat on self-brand connections through self-enhancement was positive and significant for sophisticated brands with a confidence interval 18 excluding zero (n boots = 5,000,95% BCa CI[.09, .45]). The direct effect of public threat on self-brand connections through self-enhancement was accounted for, was not significant (b = .42, t = 1.61, p = .11). Conversely, for sincere brands, the indirect effect of private threat on self-brand connections through self-verification was positive and significant with a confidence interval 18 excluding zero (n boots = 5,000,95% BCa CI[.003, .26]). The direct effect of private threat on self-brand connections through self-verification was accounted for, was not significant (b = .21, t = 1.57, p = .12) (see Appendix K).

Discussion

These results demonstrate that the connections with brands can also be influenced by the type of threat that individuals can experience, broadening the theoretical and practical implications of

brand personality in the creation of self-brand connections. Some brand personalities are more related to the private aspect of the self and will help consumers restore their self-concept after a private threat (i.e., sincere brands), while others are more useful in the case of a public threat (i.e., sophisticated). Indeed, similar results were found for other personality traits. Exciting brands can also boost self-esteem after a public threat, while competent brands can help confirmation of the self-concept after a public threat. Those results demonstrate that brand personality can explain a crucial part of the connections with brands when consumers face identity threat.

In addition, this study demonstrates the underlying processes for the increase in self-brand connections after the threat. Public threat influences emotional connections for sophisticated brands through self-enhancement, while private threat influences self-brand connections through self-verification motive. When people were instructed to think about a past public failure, their emotional connections for the sophisticated brand was stronger in order to restore their sense of self-esteem. In contrast, when participants thought about a private threat, they connected more deeply to the sincere brand to reinstate self-accuracy about their identity.

STUDY 6

The purpose of study 6 was twofold. The first goal of study 6 was to conceptually replicate the findings of the previous studies and to add robustness and ecological validity in several ways. First, instead of the word search task used in the previous studies, this study uses a sentence rearrangement prime to manipulate actual and ideal self-concept prime (Ward and Dahl 2014). Specifically, participants were explicitly told to rearrange the diverse words to generate sentences that made sense. The second purpose of Study 6 was to demonstrate that public versus

private identity threats moderate the effect of the primed identity (actual self and ideal self) on brand-self connections for the diverse brand personalities (sincere and sophisticated).

Method

Participants

325 Crowdflower respondents participated in this study in exchange for a small monetary reward. As in study 4, the author excluded all respondents who did not complete the survey within 5 to 30 minutes as a means of ensuring quality control. Nine subjects were excluded after considering this time frame. Additionally, respondents who did not complete the manipulation task correctly were excluded. More precisely, the author excluded 18 respondents who did not correctly accomplish the sentence arrangement task, which resulted in a final sample size of 298 (159 females). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the twelve conditions.

Procedures and measures

This experiment was a 2 (prime self-concept: actual self vs. ideal self) X 2 (brand personality: sincere versus sophisticated) X 3 (threat: public threat vs. private threat vs. control) between-subjects design. The first portion of this study contained the self-concept manipulations. After, respondents were asked to read a scenario where they failed an important test in a public or private setting. Finally, in the last part of this study, participants were asked to read about the description of a brand and give their opinions about it.

First, participants were randomly assigned to the actual or ideal self-concept manipulation. Contrary to previous studies, this experiment used a sentence rearrangement task in which people were requested to create sentences with the different words they were given (Oyserman and Lee 2008; Ward and Dahl 2014). Each group of words included a specific word that was related to the participants' actual self (e.g., actual, reflect, identify) or ideal self (e.g., hope, aspire, desire)

(see Appendix F). This manipulation of self-concept was successfully used in previous research to prime actual and ideal self-concept in relation to brands (Ward and Dahl 2014).

To ensure that the sentence rearrangement task induces people to think about their actual or ideal self-concept, a separate pilot study was run with 72 Crowdflower participants (41 females) who participated in exchange for a small monetary reward. Similar to Ward and Dahl (2014), participants were asked to rate their actual and ideal self-concept in relation to the brand by picturing their relationship with a brand with the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) instrument (see Appendix G). The brand was the same for both conditions and was not associated with a specific brand personality trait. This technique has been successfully used in studies in social psychology and marketing studies (Aron et al. 1992; Ward and Dahl 2014). To test the effectiveness of the sentence rearrangement task, self-discrepancy score (i.e., actual self rating – ideal self rating) was estimated. A higher self-discrepancy score means that the brand is closely linked to individuals' ideal self-concept compared to their actual self-concept. Self-discrepancy estimations showed that participants in the prime ideal self-concept compared to participants in the actual self-concept ($M_{primeideal} = 1.53$ vs. $M_{primeactual} = -1.61$; t(71) = 10.02, p < .001).

After, participants were randomly assigned to the threat condition. In the public threat condition, participants read about a scenario where they are doing an important test for school or for work and they received a very bad score in front of their fellow colleagues. After this scenario, they were asked to take a few moments to think about how they would feel. In the private threat condition, they experienced the same failed test, but their results were anonymous (See Appendix E). The control condition, participants were asked to write about their week-end.

Manipulation check questions included social threat index as well as a question about how public or private this threat was on seven-point scales.

After doing those two tasks, participants were assigned to either the sincere or the sophisticated portrays of a fictitious athletic shoe brand. Finally, self-brand connections were assessed as the dependent variable (same measures as previous studies).

Results

Manipulation checks

All six questions measuring participants' feeling of threat on their menacing moments loaded together as a single factor (α = .90). People felt less threatened in the control condition (M = 1.82, SD = 1.33), while no differences were found between the public and the private threat conditions ($M_{private}$ = 4.26, $SD_{private}$ = 1.58 vs. M_{public} = 3.90, $SD_{private}$ = 1.66; F(1, 297) = 1.54, n.s.). The public vs. private threat manipulation was successful. Those in the public threat condition viewed their threatening moment as relatively more public (M = 5.12, SD = 1.20) than did those in the private threat condition (M = 3.04, SD = 1.29; F(1, 297) = 9.72, p < .001). Further, the brand personality manipulation was successful. Participants rated the brand to be more sincere in the sincerity condition ($M_{sincere}$ = 5.64, $SD_{sincere}$ = 1.00 vs. $M_{sophisticated}$ = 4.15, $SD_{sophisticated}$ = 1.26; F(1, 297) = 11.27, p < .001), while it was recognized to be sophisticated in the sophistication condition ($M_{sincere}$ = 4.34, $SD_{sincere}$ = 1.24 vs. $M_{sophisticated}$ = 5.78, $SD_{sophisticated}$ = .97; F(1, 297) = 11.23, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant. Self-brand connections

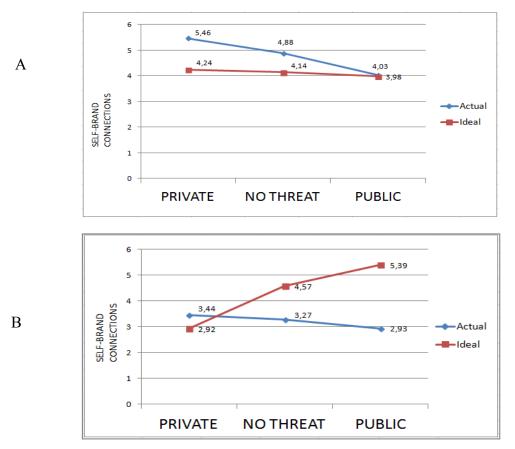
A 2 (brand personality: sincere versus sophisticated) X 2 (prime self-concept: actual self vs. ideal self) X 3 (threat: public versus private vs. control) analysis of variance were performed on the different outcomes. The goal of this study was to investigate how private (vs. public) threat

influences the effect of congruence between self-concept and brand personality on self-brand connections (α = .96). An ANOVA using primed self-concept, type of threat and brand personality as predictor variables was conducted. As hypothesized, a three-way interaction on the self-brand connections index was found (F(1, 297) = 3.05, p < .05). This interaction was analyzed by taking part each side of the brand personality manipulation. There is a significant interaction between self-concept and the threat in the sincere brand condition (F(1, 297) = 3.59, p < .05); see figure 6), as well as in the sophisticated brand condition (F(1, 297) = 10.59, p < .001).

For the sincere brand, the simple effects reveal that participants who were in the control condition (i.e., no threat) showed a pattern of results parallel to prior studies. For these individuals, self-brand connections were stronger when they were primed with actual self-concept (vs. ideal) ($M_{\text{actual}} = 4.88$, $SD_{\text{actual}} = 1.35$ vs. $M_{\text{ideal}} = 4.14$, $SD_{\text{ideal}} = 1.54$; F(1, 297) = 2.53, p < .05). Conversely, participants who were first primed with an actual self-concept motivation and who had experienced a private threat elevated their emotional connections with the sincere brand compared to the public threat condition ($M_{\text{private}} = 5.46$, $SD_{\text{private}} = .75$ vs. $M_{\text{public}} = 4.03$, $SD_{\text{public}} = 1.12$; F(1,297) = 5.63, p < .001). Participants primed with an ideal self-concept showed no differences in self-brand connections whether they experienced a private or a public threat ($M_{\text{private}} = 4.24$, $SD_{\text{private}} = 1.60$ vs. $M_{\text{public}} = 3.98$, $SD_{\text{public}} = 1.40$; F(1,297) = .59, n.s.).

For the sophisticated brand, in the control condition, participants connected more strongly with the brand when they were primed with an ideal self-concept (vs. actual), similar to results found in the previous studies ($M_{\text{actual}} = 3.27$, $SD_{\text{actual}} = 1.84$ vs. $M_{ideal} = 4.57$, $SD_{\text{ideal}} = 1.47$; F(1, 297) = 2.32, p < .05). However, when primed with an ideal self-concept, self-brand connections were elevated when participants experienced a public threat (M = 5.39, SD = 1.13), while a private threat led to results in the opposite direction (M = 2.92, SD = 1.56; F(1,297) = 6.78, p < 1.56

.001). No differences were found for participants who were primed with an actual self-concept $(M_{\text{private}} = 3.44, SD_{\text{private}} = 1.55 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{public}} = 2.93, SD_{\text{public}} = 1.44; F(1, 297) = 1.02, n.s.)$ (see Figure 6 and Appendix L).



NOTE.—*A*, Self-brand connections for the sincere brand. *B*, Self-brand connections for the sophisticated brand.

FIGURE 6: SELF-CONCEPT X THREAT X BRAND PERSONALITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 6)

Discussion

The results of Study 6 provide further evidence that private and public threats increase selfbrand connections respectively for sincere and sophisticated brands. As expected, the positive effect of those threats on emotional connections with the brand was replicated in the control condition. Participants connected more with the sincere brand when they experienced a private threat, while self-brand connections were elevated for sophisticated brands when participants faced a public threat. Also, consistent with the proposition, the fact that the threat is private or public modifies the importance of congruence on self-brand connections. Participants' desire to connect with the brand is reported via an increase in self-brand connections, only when the threat was relevant to the primed self-concept, but not when it was irrelevant. This replicates the effect of the diverse types of threat on the relationship between congruence of the self-concept and the brand personality on self-brand connections.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Past research has demonstrated that identity and self-concept are crucial factors in explaining and managing relationships with brands. People have an inherent need to define their self-concept and represent their identity through their brand choices based on the congruence between brand-user associations and self-image associations (Escalas and Bettman 2005). In order to achieve this self-expression motivation, individuals choose brands that reflect their desired image. The author builds on these findings and shows that the congruence between the actual and ideal self-concept and the brand personality affected the emotional connections with the brand and identify several threats that moderate the importance of congruence on self-brand connections.

The present research examines the role of congruence between the self-concept and brand personality on self-brand connections. The author demonstrates that this congruence can influence the emotional connections with brands (studies 1, 2, 4, and 6), that the type of threat (continuity vs. self-esteem or private vs. public) can also influence the desire to connect with a specific brand personality (studies 3 and 5), and that these threats moderate the importance of congruence (studies 4 and 6). Specifically, these studies show that consumers' motivations to

express parts of their self-concept have some influence on their connections to brands. The importance of this congruence is reflected by the integration of the brand into the individual's self-concept. This essay also shows that the relevance of the threat to the primed self-concept can significantly improve the desire to affiliate with the brand. Importantly, it also demonstrates that some brand personality traits can create connections with consumers through important identity motivations. Study 5 supports the important roles of self-verification and self-enhancement as process variables in the creation of brand connections for sincere and sophisticated brands.

Theoretical Contributions

While prior work has examined the role of self-congruence in the creation of brand relationships (Escalas and Bettman 2003; Fournier 1998), the present research is the first to examine how prime self-concept and brand personality affect consumers' self-brand connections. The present research is one of the few to take a pioneering step in understanding the role of congruence between self-concept and specific traits of the brand personality.

The contribution of this article is centered on understanding the importance of congruence between self-concept and brand personality in the creation of emotional connections between consumers and brands and how this congruity influences their response to identity threats. The findings make several contributions to the self-expression and brand personality streams of research. First, this research extends prior self-expression research by showing that brand personality can trigger different parts of consumers' identities and that this congruence effect can affect participants' connections with the brand. Specifically, the diverse studies show that actual self-concept (vs. ideal self-concept) tends to increase self-brand connections for sincere (vs. sophisticated) brands. Furthermore, the relationship between self-concept and brand personality has not been examined in the past. The findings will allow companies to understand how

consumers form their desires to express themselves through their association with the brand and how different brand personalities help the consumers to communicate who they are.

Study 3 builds on this congruence and examines how identity threats influence connections to specific brands. This study shows that identity continuity and self-esteem can create similar influence on the relationship with the brand. Participants who face a continuity threat connect more strongly with a sincere brand, while a self-esteem threat leads people to be more vulnerable to a sophisticated brand. Next, study 5 examines the impact of a private versus a private threat on connections with a specific brand personality. A private threat positively influences connections for sincere brands through a self-verification process, while a public threat leads to stronger relations with sophisticated brands in order to make people feel good about themselves (i.e., self-enhancement). Thus, this study establishes that these self-evaluation motives can account for the integration of the brand into consumers' self-concept. These mechanisms can be useful for brands to see how they can use identity cues to create stronger brand preferences.

Finally, studies 4 and 6 demonstrate that an identity threat can positively influence individuals to affiliate with the brand in order to rehabilitate their self-evaluations. The studies reveal that after an identity threat, consumers demonstrate association behaviors only when the threat is relevant to their prime self-concept.

Substantial Implications

In conclusion, the present research expands our knowledge about the role of self-expression motivations and identity motives by demonstrating its effects on self-brand connections for different brand personalities. Despite the numerous articles on self-expression, this is still a growing area with the potential for numerous research opportunities. From a managerial perspective, these findings can help corporations in the development of their brand positioning

and communication programs. Practically, marketers may benefit from this research by recognizing how the use of different identities strategies in advertising can lead to stronger connections with consumers. This paper contributes to the understanding of how companies can select specific actions related to self-expression to be closer to their consumers. In addition, these findings can help the segmentation and the targeting of branding efforts to specific groups of consumers.

Future Research

This study has several limitations that need to be mentioned. A current strength of this essay is the precision of the manipulations. However, the tasks and scenarios that were used to prime self-concept and identity threat can limit the generalizability of the findings in actual settings. Thus, future research could be done in real branding settings to explore consumers' reactions.

Also, future research should examine the effect of social identity on other brand personality dimensions that were not included in the present research. For instance, in terms of the need for uniqueness, the author can predict that priming people with a dissociation motive will increase emotional connections with rugged brands. Driven by self-presentation concerns (White and Dahl 2006), people use rugged brands to dissociate from undesired groups and associations.

This research also opens up another question about the role of identity threat in the creation of connections with brands. Although the present research examines the impact of identity threat on connections for a focal brand, it is also possible that an identity threat that is not relevant to the prime self-concept can drive consumers to create relationships and choose an alternate brand in the same category. For example, when people face an identity threat that is not relevant to their actual or ideal self-concept, will it drive preferences for another brand? This avoidance motivation could lead consumers to create relationships with brands that are not associated with

the threatened identity or avoid the product category in general. Based on the fluid compensation theory (Nash et al. 2011), one can make a prediction that experiencing an irrelevant threat would lead to connections with an unrelated brand or a brand in another area. Indeed, this essay raises other interesting questions in the area of brand relationships and emotional connections.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, David A. (1992), "The Value of Brand Equity," *The Journal of Business Strategy*, 13 (4), 27–32.
- Aaker, David A. and Alexander L. Biel (1993), *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's Role in Building Strong Brands*, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Aaker, Jennifer L. (1997), "Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), 347–56.
- Aaker, Jennifer L. (1999), "The Malleable Self: The Role of Self-Expression in Persuasion," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36, 45–57.
- Aaker, Jennifer L., Veronica Benet-Martinez, and Jordi Garolera (2001), "Consumption Symbols as Carriers of Culture: A Study of Japanese and Spanish Brand Personality Constructs," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81 (3), 492–508.
- Aaker, Jennifer L., Susan Fournier, and Adam S. Brasel (2004), "When Good Brands Do Bad," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (1), 1–16.
- Ahluwalia, Rohini, Robert Burnkrant, and H. Rao Unnava (2000), "Consumer Response to Negative Publicity: The Moderating Role of Commitment," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 37 (May), 203–14.
- Albert, Noel, Dwight Merunka, and Pierre Valette-Florence (2008), "When Consumers Love their Brands: Exploring the Concept and its Dimensions," *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (10), 1062–75.
- Alexander, Norman C. Jr. and Harrison G. Weil (1969), "Players, Persons, and Purposes: Situational Meaning and the Prisoner's Dilemma Game," *Sociometry*, 32 (2), 121–44.

- Ang, Swee Hoon and Elison Ali Ching Lim (2006), "The Influence of Metaphors and Product Type on Brand Personality Perceptions and Attitudes," *Journal of Advertising*, 35, 39–53.
- Argo, Jennifer, Katherine White, and Darren W. Dahl (2006), "Social Comparison Theory and Deception in the Interpersonal Exchange of Consumption Information," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33 (1), 99–108.
- Aron, Arthur, Elaine N. Aron, and Danny Smollan (1992), "Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the Structure of Interpersonal Closeness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63 (4), 596–612.
- Ashforth, Blake E. and Fred Mael (1989), "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," Academy of Management Review, 14 (1), 20–39.
- Ashforth, Blake E., Spencer H. Harrison, and Kevin G. Corley (2008), "Identification in Organizations: An Examination of Four Fundamental Questions," *Journal of Management*, 34 (3), 325–74.
- Babin, Barry J., William R. Darden, and Mitch Griffin (1994), "Work and/or Fun: Measuring Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping Value," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (4), 644–56.
- Bagozzi, Richard P., and Youjae Yi (1988), "On the Evaluation of Structural Equation Models," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16 (1), 74–94.
- Batra, Rajeev, Donald R. Lehmann, and Dipinder Singh (1993), "The Brand Personality Component of Brand Goodwill: Some Antecedents and Consequences," in *Brand Equity and Advertising*, ed. David A. Aaker and Alexander Biel, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 83–96.
- Baumeister, Roy F. (1982), "A Self-Presentational View of a Social Phenomena," *Psychological Bulletin*, 91 (1), 3–26.

- Baumeister, Roy F. (1998), "The Self," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology, volume 2*, ed. Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey, Boston: McGraw-Hill, 982–1026.
- Bazarova, Natalya N., Jessie G. Taft, Yoon Hyung Choi, and Dan Cosley (2013), "Managing Impressions and Relationships on Facebook: Self- Presentational and Relational Concerns Revealed Through the Analysis of Language Style," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 32, 121–41.
- Belk, Russell W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), 139–68.
- Berger, Jonah and Chip Heath (2007), "Where Consumers Diverge from Others: Identity Signaling and Product Domains," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (2), 121–34.
- Berger, Jonah and Chip Heath (2008), "Who Drives Divergence? Identity Signaling, Outgroup Dissimilarity, and the Abandonment of Cultural Tastes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95 (3), 593–607.
- Biel, Alexander L. (1993), "Converting Image into Equity," in *Brand Equity and Advertising*, ed. David A. Aaker and Alexander L. Biel, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 67–82.
- Braunstein, Jessica R., and Stephen D. Ross (2010), "Brand Personality in Sport: Dimension Analysis and General Scale Development," *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 19 (1), 8–16.
- Breakwell, Glynis Marie (1986), Coping with Threatened Identities, London: Metheun.
- Brewer, Marilynn B. (1991), "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17 (5), 475–82.
- Brewer, Marilynn B. and Wendi Gardner (1996), "Who Is This "We"? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71 (1), 83–93.

- Burke, Peter J. (1980), "The Self: Measurement Requirements from an Interactionist Perspective," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43 (1), 18–29.
- Burke, Peter J. (1991), "Identity Process and Social Stress," *American Sociological Review*, 56 (6), 836–49.
- Burke, Peter J. (2006), "Identity Change," Social Psychology Quarterly, 69 (1), 81–96.
- Burke, Peter J. and Jan E. Stets (1999), "Trust and Commitment Through Self-Verification," Social Psychology Quarterly, 62, 347–66.
- Cameron, James E. (2004), "A Three Factor Model of Social Identity," *Self and Identity*, 3 (3), 239–262.
- Chaplin, Lan Nguyen and Deborah Roedder John (2005), "The Development of Self-Brand Connections in Children and Adolescents," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), 119–29.
- Cheek, Jonathan M., and Stephen R. Briggs (1982), "Self-Consciousness and Aspects of Identity," *Journal of Research in Personality*, 16 (4), 401–8.
- Cheng, Shirley Y.Y., Tiffany Barnett White, and Lan Nguyen Chaplin (2012), "The Effects of Self-Brand Connections on Responses to Brand Failure: A New Look at the Consumer–Brand Relationship," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (2), 280–88.
- Crawford, Matthew T. (2007), "The Renegotiation of Social Identities in Response to a Threat to Self-Evaluation Maintenance," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43 (1), 39–47.
- Diener, Edward (1979), "Deindividuation, Self-Awareness, and Disinhibition," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37 (7), 1160–71.
- Ditto, Peter H., and David F. Lopez (1992), "Motivated Skepticism: Use of Differential Decision Criteria for Preferred and Non-preferred Conclusions," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63 (4), 68–84.

- Doyle, Peter (1990), "Building Successful Brands: The Strategic Options," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 7 (2), 5–20.
- Droseltis, Orestis and Vivian L. Vignoles (2010), "Towards an Integrative Model of Place Identification: Dimensionality and Predictors of Intrapersonal-Level Place Preferences," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30 (1), 23–34.
- Easterbrook, Matt, and Vivian L. Vignoles (2012), "Different Groups, Different Motives Identity Motives Underlying Changes in Identification With Novel Groups," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38 (8), 1066–80.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1970), "Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 51, 11-22.
- Escalas, Jennifer Edson (2004), "Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14 (1), 168–80.
- Escalas, Jennifer Edson and James R. Bettman (2003), "You Are What They Eat: The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumers' Connections to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13 (3), 339–48.
- Escalas, Jennifer Edson and James R. Bettman (2005), "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (3), 378–89.
- Evans, Douglas W. (2013), Psychology of Branding, Washington: Nova Science.
- Fenigstein, Allan, Michael F. Scheier, and Arnold H. Buss (1975), "Public and Private Self-Consciousness: Assessment and Theory," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 43 (4): 522–7.

- Ferraro, Rosellina, James R. Bettman, and Tanya L. Chartrand (2009), "The Power of Strangers:

 The Effect of Incidental Consumer Brand Encounters on Brand Choice," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (5), 729–41.
- Fetscherin, Marc and Daniel Heinrich (2014), "Consumer Brand Relationships: A Research Landscape," *Journal of Brand Management*, 21 (5), 366–71.
- Fischer, Eileen and Stephen J. Arnold (1990), "More than a Labor of Love: Gender Roles and Christmas Shopping," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17 (3), 333–45.
- Fitzsimons, Gráinne M., Tanya L. Chartrand, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons (2008), "Automatic Effects of Brand Exposure on Motivated Behavior: How Apple Makes You "Think Different," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (3), 21–35.
- Fournier, Susan (1998), "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), 343–73.
- Fournier, Susan (2009), "Lessons Learned about Consumers' Relationships with their Brands," in *Handbook of Brand Relationships*, ed. Deborah J. MacInnis, C. Whan Park and Joseph R. Priester, New York: Society of Consumer Psychology and M. E. Sharp, 5–23.
- Gecas, Viktor (1982), "The Self-Concept," Annual Review of Sociology, 8 (1), 1–33.
- Gecas, Viktor and Peter J. Burke (1995), "Self and Identity," in *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology*, ed. Karen S. Cook, Gary A. Fine, and James S. House, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 41–67.
- Gollwitzer, Peter M. and Robert A. Wicklund (1985), "Self-Symbolizing and the Neglect of Others' Perspectives," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48 (3), 702–15.
- Greenwald, Anthony G., and Clark Leavitt (1984), "Audience Involvement in Advertising: Four Levels," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 581–92.

- Grohmann, Bianca (2009), "Gender Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 66 (1), 105–19.
- Grubb, Edward L. and Harrison L. Grathwohl (1967), "Consumer Self-Concept, Symbolism and Market Behavior: A Theoretical Approach," *Journal of Marketing*, 31 (4), 22–7.
- Higgins, Edward Tory (1987), "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," *Psychological Review*, 94 (3), 319–40.
- Holbrook, Morris B. and Elisabeth C. Hirschman (1982), "The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (2), 132–40.
- James, William (1890), *Principles of Psychology*, New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Johar, Gita Venkataramani, Jaideep Sengupta, and Jennifer L. Aaker (2005), "Two Roads to Updating Brand Personality Impressions: Trait Versus Evaluative Inferencing," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42 (4), 458–69.
- Kihlstrom, John F., and Nancy Cantor (1984), "Mental Representations of the Self," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 17, 1–47.
- Kleine III, Robert E., Susan Schultz Kleine, and Jerome B. Kernan (1993), "Mundane Consumption and the Self: A Social-Identity Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2 (3), 209–35.
- Knowles, Megan L., Gale M. Lucas, Daniel C. Molden, Wendi L. Gardner, and Kristy K. Dean, (2010). "There's No Substitute for Belonging: Self-Affirmation Following Social and Nonsocial Threats," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36 (2), 173–86.
- Leary, Mark R. (1999), "Making Sense of Self-Esteem," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8 (1), 32–35.

- Leary, Mark R. and Robin M. Kowalski (1990), "Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two-Component Model," *Psychological Bulletin*, 107 (1), 34–47.
- Levy, Sidney J. (1959), "Symbols for Sale," Harvard Business Review, 37 (4), 117-24.
- Lin, Long-Yi (2010), "The Relationship of Consumer Personality Trait, Brand Personality and Brand Loyalty: An Empirical Study of Toys and Video Games Buyers," *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19 (1), 4–17.
- Longoni, Chiara, Peter M. Gollwitzer, and Gabriele Oettingen (2014), "A Green Paradox: Validating Green Choices Has Ironic Effects on Behavior, Cognition, and Perception," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 50, 158–65.
- Malär, Lucia, Harley Krohmer, Wayne D. Hoyer, and Bettina Nyffenegger (2011), "Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self," *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (4), 35–52.
- Markus, Hazel Rose (1983), "Self-Knowledge: An Expanded View," *Journal of Personality*, 51 (3), 543–65.
- Markus, Hazel and Paula Nurius (1986), "Possible Selves," American Psychologist, 41 (9), 954–69.
- Markus, Hazel Rose and Ziva Kunda (1986), "Stability and Malleability in the Self-Concept in the Perception of Others," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (4), 858–66.
- Markus, Hazel Rose and Elissa Wurf (1987), "The Dynamic Self-Concept: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 38 (1), 299–337.
- Mathur, Pragya, Shailendra P. Jain, and Durairaj Maheswaran (2012), "Consumers' Implicit Theories about Personality Influence their Brand Personality Judgments," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (4), 545–57.

- McGuire, William J., Claire V. McGuire, Pamela Child, and Terry Fujioka (1978), "Salience of Ethnicity in the Spontaneous Self-Concept as a Function of One's Ethnic Distinctiveness in the Social Environment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36 (5), 511–20.
- Meyer, John P., Thomas E. Becker, and Rolf Van Dick (2006), "Social Identities and Commitments at Work: Toward an Integrative Model," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27 (5), 665–83.
- Moore, David J., and Pamela Miles Homer (2008), "Self-Brand Connections: The Role of Attitude Strength and Autobiographical Memory Primes," *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (7), 707–14.
- Morgan-Thomas Anna and Cleopatra Veloutsou (2013), "Beyond Technology Acceptance: Brand Relationships and Online Brand Experience," *Journal of Business Research*, 66 (1), 21–27.
- Nash, Kyle, Ian McGregor, and Mike Prentice (2011), "Threat and Defense as Goal Regulation: From Implicit Goal Conflict to Anxious Uncertainty, Reactive Approach Motivation, and Ideological Extremism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101 (6), 1291–1301.
- Nunnally, Jum C., Jr. (1978), Psychometric Theory. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Oyserman, Daphna, and Spike W. S. Lee (2008), "Does Culture Influence What and How We Think? Effects of Priming Individualism and Collectivism," *Psychological Bulletin*, 134 (2), 311–42.
- Park, C. Whan, Deborah MacInnis, Joseph Priester, Andreas B. Eisingerich, and Dawn Iaccobucci (2010), "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers," *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (6), 1–17.

- Plummer, Joseph T. (1985), "How Personality Makes a Difference," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 24 (6), 27–31.
- Pratt, Michael G. and Peter O. Foreman (2000), "Classifying Managerial Responses to Multiple Organizational Identities," *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), 18–42.
- Preacher, Kristopher J. and Andrew F. Hayes (2008), "Asymptotic and Resampling Strategies for Assessing and Comparing Indirect Effects in Multiple Mediator Models," *Behavior Research Methods*, 40 (3), 879–91.
- Prentice, Deborah A. (1987), "Psychological Correspondence of Possessions, Attitudes, and Values," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53 (6), 993–1003.
- Ratner, Rebecca K. and Barbara E. Kahn (2002), "The Impact of Private versus Public Consumption on Variety-Seeking Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (2), 246–57.
- Reed II, Americus (2004), "Activating the Self-Importance of Consumer Selves: Exploring Identity Salience Effects on Judgments," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (2), 286–295.
- Richins, Marsha L. (1994), "Valuing Things: The Public and Private Meanings of Possessions," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3), 504–21.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rousseau, Denise M. (1998), "Why Workers Still Identify with Organizations," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 19, 217–33.
- Schau, Hope Jensen (2000), "Consumer Imagination, Identity and Self-expression," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 27 (1), 50–56.

- Sedikides, Constantine and Michael J. Strube (1995), "The Multiply Motivated Self," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21 (12), 1330–35.
- Sedikides, Constantine and Aiden P. Gregg (2008), "Self-Enhancement: Food for Thought," Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3 (2), 102–16.
- Shavelson, Richard J. and Roger Bolus (1982), "Self-Concept: The Interplay of Theory and Methods," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74 (1), 3–17.
- Sirgy, Joseph M. (1982), "Self-Concept in Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (3), 287–300.
- Sirgy, Joseph M. (1985), "Using Self-Congruity and Ideal Congruity to Predict Purchase Motivation," *Journal of Business Research*, 13 (3), 195–206.
- Sirgy, Joseph M., Dhruv Grewal, Tamara F. Mangleberg, Jae-ok Park, Kye-Sung Chon, C.B. Claiborne, J. S. Johar, and Harold Berkman (1997), "Assessing the Predictive Validity of Two Methods of Measuring Self-Image Congruence," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25 (3), 229–41.
- Stets, Jan E. and Peter J. Burke (2000), "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63 (3), 224–37.
- Stryker, Sheldon (1980), *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*. Menlo Park: Benjamin Cummings.
- Stryker, Sheldon (1987), "Identity Theory: Developments and Extensions," in *Self and Identity:**Psychosocial Perspectives*, ed. Krysia Yardley and Terry Honess, New York: Wiley, 83–103.
- Stryker, Sheldon and Peter J. Burke (2000), "The Present, Past, and Future of an Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63 (4), 284–97.

- Swaminathan, Vanitha, Karen L. Page, and Zeynep Gurhan-Canli, Z. (2007), ""My" Brand or "Our" Brand: The Effects of Brand Relationship Dimensions and Self-Construal on Brand Evaluations," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (2), 248–59.
- Swaminathan, Vanitha, Karen M. Stilley, and Rohini Ahluwalia (2009), "When Brand Personality Matters: The Moderating Role of Attachment Styles," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (6), 985–1002.
- Swann, William B. (1983), "Self-Verification: Bringing Social Reality into Harmony with the Self," *Social Psychological Perspectives on the Self*, 2, 33–66.
- Swann, William B. (1990). "To Be Adored or to Be Known?: The Interplay of Self-Enhancement and Self-Verification," in *Handbook of Motivation and Cognition*, ed. E. Tory Higgins and Richard M. Sorrentino, New York: Guilford, 408–50.
- Swann, William B. and Craig A. Hill (1982), "When our Identities Are Mistaken: Reaffirming Self-Conceptions through Social Interaction," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43 (1), 59–66.
- Tajfel, Henri (1982), "Instrumentality, Identity and Social Comparisons," in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 483–507.
- Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner (1979), *An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict*.

 Monterey: Brooks/Cole.
- Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner (1986), *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*. Chicago: Nelson.
- Taylor, Charles (1989), Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Turner, John C. (1985), "Social Categorization and the Self-Concept: A Social Cognitive Theory of Group Behavior," *Advances in Group Processes*, 2, 77–122.
- Turner, John C., Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell (1987), *Rediscovering the Social Group*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Turner, Ralph H. (1978), "The Role and the Person," American Journal of Sociology, 84, 1–23.
- Veloutsou, Cleopatra (2007), "Identifying the Dimensions of the Product-Brand and Consumer Relationship," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 23 (1/2), 7–26.
- Vignoles, Vivian L., Camillo Regalia, Claudia Manzi, Jen Golledge, and Eugenia Scabini (2006), "Beyond Self-Esteem: Influence of Multiple Motives on Identity Construction," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90 (2), 308–33.
- Vignoles, Vivian L., Claudia Manzi, Camillo Regalia, Simone Jemmolo, and Eugenia Scabini (2008), "Identity Motives Underlying Desired and Feared Possible Future Selves," *Journal of Personality*, 76 (5), 1165–1200.
- Ward, Morgan K., and Darren W. Dahl (2014), "Should the Devil Sell Prada? Retail Rejection Increases Aspiring Consumers' Desire for the Brand," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (3) 590–609.
- White, Katherine and Darren W. Dahl (2006), "To Be or Not Be? The Influence of Dissociative Reference Groups on Consumer Preferences," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16 (4), 404–14.
- White, Katherine and Darren W. Dahl (2007), "Are All Out-Groups Created Equal? Consumer Identity and Dissociative Influence," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (4), 525–36.

White, Katherine, Jennifer J. Argo and Jaideep Sengupta (2012), "Dissociative versus Associative Responses to Social Identity Threat: The Role of Consumer Self-Construal," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (4), 704–19.

APPENDIX A- MEASURES

Familiarity (3 items) (Malär et al. 2011):

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate your level of familiarity with Uncle Ben's:

	Not at all familiar						Very familiar
I feel very familiar with brand x	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel very experienced with brand x	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I know products/services of brand x	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Brand personality (17 items) (Aaker 1997):

Imagine that (Brand X) is a person, you would describe this person as...

	Strongly						Strongly
	disagree						agree
Down-to-Earth (SINC1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wholesome (SINC2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Honest (SINC3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cheerful (SINC4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Daring (EXC1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spirited (EXC2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Imaginative (EXC3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Up-to-date (EXC4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Glamorous (SOP1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Upper class (SOP2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Charming (SOP3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tough (RUG1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong (RUG2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Outdoorsy (RUG3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reliable (COMP1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intelligent(COMP2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Successful (COMP3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Self-brand connections (7 items) (Escalas and Bettman 2005):

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
This brand reflects who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can identify with this brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel a personal connection to this brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I use this brand to communicate who I am to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think this brand helps me become the type of person I want to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I consider this brand to be "me" (it reflect who I consider myself to be or the way I want to present myself to others).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This brand suits me well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SELF-CONCEPT ASPECTS

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements:

Actual self-congruence (Malär et al. 2011)

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
The personality of brand x is consistent with how I see myself (my actual self).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The personality of brand x is a mirror image of me (my actual self).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Ideal self-congruence (Malär et al. 2011)

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
The personality of brand x is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The personality of brand x is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Personal relevance (Aaker et al. 2004)

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
The brand image of brand x is relevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The brand image of brand x makes sense to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
me.							

Social index threat (White et al. 2012)

Please indicated the extent to which you feel:	Not at						Very
	all						
Threatened	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attacked	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Challenged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impugned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Maligned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<u>Identity motives (Droseltis and Vignoles 2010)</u>

Imagine that you do own a product made by brand x, please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements:

	Strongly						Strongly
	disagree						agree
This brand makes me feel positively about	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
myself. (Self-esteem)							
This brand gives me a sense of continuity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
between past, present and future in my life.							
(continuity)							

Public versus Private threats (White et al. 2014)

	Not at all						Very
To what degree was this moment private?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what degree was this moment anonymous?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what degree was this moment public?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what degree was this moment seen by	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
others?							

APPENDIX B- WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

PRIMING ACTUAL VS IDEAL SELF-CONCEPT

Actual self

Think about your actual self and how you see yourself. Describe the different attributes that you believe you actually possess and your own personality. Relate to the type of person you *are* and *represent*.

Ideal self

Think about your ideal self. Describe the attributes that you ideally would like to have. Relate to the type of person you *hope*, *wish*, and *aspire to be*.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Actual self

U	0	Q	Н	В	У	L	K	V	F	Т	Н
Н	X	U	G	Q	В	Α	Т	Χ	S	С	D
U	5	G	Н	V	Α	Ε	R	L	Q	Ε	0
Q	Ε	5	Ν	M	R	R	Т	Р	J	Т	I
Н	F	Α	W	Ι	L	W	Т	В	Ν	U	R
Z	У	Ε	Т	M	Т	Α	В	D	Ζ	В	V
K	Р	Ι	У	J	L	5	K	Χ	M	С	G
Ρ	R	F	L	Α	J	5	Ι	Т	Н	С	I
U	Ε	Κ	U	X	W	G	Ε	Χ	F	C	K
Ε	Р	Т	Ν	Ε	R	R	U	С	Ε	Z	5
Α	С	M	5	X	5	Α	5	Р	X	U	K
Α	Т	Ν	Ε	5	Ε	R	Р	Ε	R	J	W

ACTUAL CURRENT REAL REPRESENT EXISTING

Ideal self

PCRPBNRAVDLR LHDHOPEOWIL Ε WLSKIERIPSAN MIMXYSQHC E D X WTIDEALLYLZA Ι MQLNHAHATTW J H Q V N H P P T 0 F Ζ R B D R E A M R I Q H G AZMPUJVIL PGV ZKJYLNDKNETB Z B Y W D K N J E A DW Y ODKUYVASKCRJ

ASPIRE IDEALLY HOPE WISH DREAM

APPENDIX C- BRAND PERSONALITY

We asked them to form impressions of an athletic shoe company, named Astra, based on a set of six claims that had supposedly been extracted at random from the company's Web site. We pretested each of the six claims (e.g., "Our brand is based on family-tradition" and "Our brand is one of a kind, different from others") (Similar to Johar et al. 2005). In addition, we included tagline and images related to the specific brand personality traits similar to Aaker et al. (2004) and Swaminathan et al. (2009).

<u>Sincere</u>

- 1. Our brand is based on **family-tradition**. (down-to-earth)
- 2. Our brand is dedicated to **sincerity**, being **real** (honest)
- 3. We are built around traits of nurturance (cheerful)
- 4. We are a high-spirited, **friendly** company. (cheerful)
- 5. Unlike other companies, we do things in a **trustworthy** way (honest).
- 6. Our products are made in ethical conditions, with **original** components (wholesome)

Tagline: Because life is too **meaningful** to let it pass you by.

Images:









Sophistication

- 1. Our brand is based on **charm**, allure (charming)
- 2. Even among designer labels, Brand x design is considered to be in a class of its own (upper class)
- 3. We are built around traits of **glamour**. (upper class)
- 4. This brand of clothing is always shown at the fashion shows in Milan and Paris. (upper class)
- 5. Unlike other brands, we do things in an elegant, polished way (charming).
- 6. Our products are designed to make **you look good**. (upper class)

Tagline: Because life is too glamorous to let it pass you by.

Images:









APPENDIX D- THREAT CONDITIONS

(adapted from Knowles et al. 2010)

Self-Esteem Threat

Participants assigned to the *intelligence threat* condition were asked to write about a time in which you felt intense failure in an intellectual domain, a time that you felt as if you were not very smart. This failure can be academic in nature (e.g., a time in which you failed a class or an exam) or can be a failure outside of school (e.g., a time in which you tried but failed to understand something important).

Continuity-Related Threat

Participants assigned to the *continuity threat* condition were asked to write about a time in which you experienced an important change in their lives, a time that they felt as if you felt as you did not felt as a sense of continuity. This change can be professional in nature (e.g., a change related to work, or school) or can be personal (e.g., a change related to friends or family).

APPENDIX E- PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE CONDITIONS

STUDY 5

Public Threat

Participants assigned to the *public* condition were asked to write about a time in which you received bad news or negative feedback in the presence of other people. This situation was public and several people could know or knew what the situation was. Describe the type of feedback you received and clearly explain who was present at that time.

Private Threat

Participants assigned to the *private* condition were asked to write about a time in which you received bad news or negative feedback in a private setting. This situation was private and no one could know what the situation was. Describe the type of feedback you received and the moment and the location where you were.

STUDY 6

Public Threat

Imagine that you are taking a test for one of your courses or an important training component at work. As you are working on the test, you realize that you are unable to answer many of the questions. You know that your score on the test won't be good. At the end of the test, you are told that the test will be scored immediately and that your results will be discussed in front of other students or colleagues. The results are in: You failed this test by a considerable margin, and your fellow students or colleagues know about your result.

Take a couple of minutes and as much space as you need in order to fully elaborate and describe how you feel.

Private Threat

Imagine that you are taking a test for one of your courses or an important training component at work. As you are working on the test, you realize that you are unable to answer many of the questions. You know that your score on the test won't be good. At the end of the test, you are told that the test will be scored immediately and that your results will be kept confidential. The results are in: The results are in: You failed this test by a considerable margin, but your fellow students or colleagues won't know about your result.

Take a couple of minutes and as much space as you need in order to fully elaborate and describe how you feel.

APPENDIX F- SENTENCE REARRANGEMENT TASK

1. ACTUAL SENTENCES

mine what's is yours

happy he to home be was

there ready she is to drive

actual what cost is

the she must body identify

eat it fun was to out

restaurants own the several in state they

is he <u>authentic</u> thought

studied he self the

surface the the shiny reflect sun will

2. ASPIRE SENTENCES

her a was doctor be aim to

happy he to home be was

to the <u>desire</u> fulfilled travel her trip

she dreams aspire big had to

eat it fun was to out

park he to want go will to the

there happy she is to drive

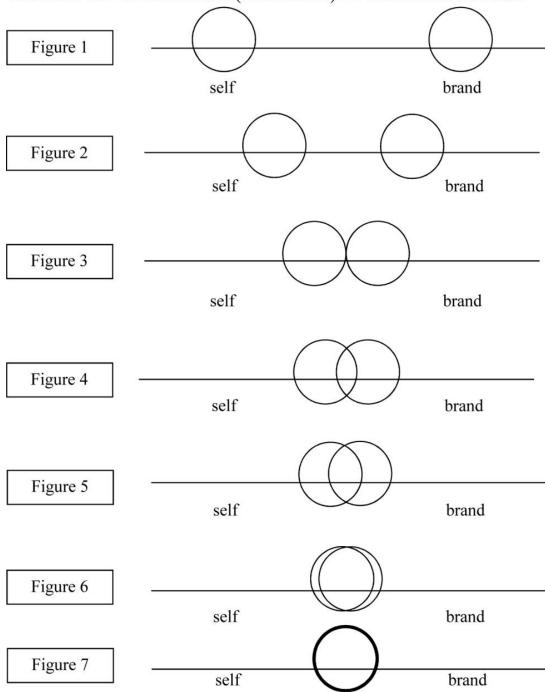
dying it his was wish

rain hope it doesn't I

bleak his looked future

APPENDIX G- INSTRUMENT DEPICTING LEVELS OF IDENTIFICATION WITH BRAND

Question: Please indicate which of these figures best represents how you CURRENTLY RELATE TO / WOULD LIKE (OR ASPIRE) TO RELATE to the brand



Source: Aron et al. 1992

APPENDIX H- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 2

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality							
Prime Self-Concept	1= Sincere	2= Sophisticated						
1=Actual Self	n = 33	n = 31						
	M = 5.40	M = 2.58						
	SD = .87	SD = 1.24						
2 = Ideal Self	n = 28	n = 31						
	M = 3.35	M = 5.29						
	SD = 1.14	SD = .66						

APPENDIX I- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 3

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality								
Threat	1= Sincere	2= Sophisticated							
1=Continuity-	n = 32	n = 28							
related threat	M = 4.55	M = 3.30							
	SD = 1.39	SD = 1.79							
2 = Self-esteem	n = 28	n = 30							
related threat	M = 3.75	M = 4.50							
	SD = 1.19	SD = 1.47							

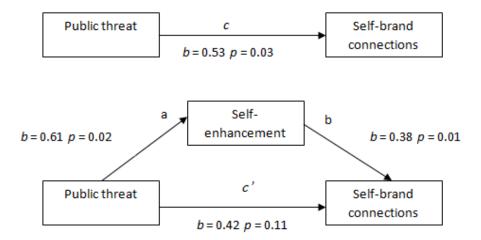
APPENDIX J- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 4

Factor A: Threat	Factor B: Prime Self-Concept				
	1= Ac		2 = Ideal		
	Factor C: Brand Personality		Factor C: Brand Personality		
	Sincere	Sophisticated	Sincere	Sophisticated	
1=Control	n = 22	n = 29	n = 24	n = 25	
	M = 4.85	M = 2.91	M = 4.11	M = 4.29	
	SD = 1.17	SD = 1.45	SD = 1.19	SD = 1.26	
2=Continuity-	n = 27	n = 26	n = 28	n = 23	
related threat	M = 5.64	M = 3.30	M = 3.84	M = 3.38	
	SD = 1.04	SD = 1.03	SD = 1.20	SD = 1.45	
3= Self-esteem	n = 28	n = 25	n = 27	n = 30	
related threat	M = 4.32	M = 2.93	M = 4.18	M = 5.61	
	SD = 1.05	SD = 1.27	SD = 1.40	SD = 1.03	

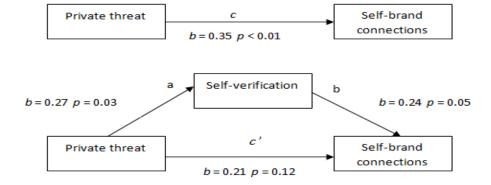
APPENDIX K-SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 5

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality			
Threat	1= Sincere	2= Sophisticated		
1= Private Threat	n = 28	n = 30		
	M = 5.21	M = 2.77		
	SD = 1.01	SD = 1.21		
2 = Public Threat	n = 31	n = 35		
	M = 4.16	M = 4.89		
	SD = 1.26	SD = 1.28		

Effect of public threat on self-brand connections mediated by self-enhancement for sophisticated brands



Effect of private threat on self-brand connections mediated by self-verification for sincere brands



APPENDIX L-SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 6

Factor A:	Factor B: Prime Self-Concept				
Threat	1 = Actual		2 = Ideal		
	Factor C: Brand Personality		Factor C: Brand Personality		
	Sincere	Sophisticated	Sincere	Sophisticated	
1= Control	n = 26	n = 22	n = 21	n = 25	
	M = 4.88	M = 3.27	M = 4.14	M = 4.57	
	SD = 1.35	SD = 1.84	SD = 1.54	SD = 1.47	
2= Private threat	n = 31	n = 23	n = 23	n = 26	
	M = 5.46	M = 3.44	M = 4.24	M = 2.92	
	SD = .75	SD = 1.55	SD = 1.60	SD = 1.56	
3= Public threat	n = 25	n = 24	n = 22	n = 30	
	M = 4.03	M = 2.93	M = 3.98	M = 5.39	
	SD = 1.12	SD = 1.44	SD = 1.40	SD = 1.13	

Chapter 3

The first essay of this dissertation examined the effects of the congruence between the actual and ideal self-concept and brand personality (i.e., sincere and sophisticated) on self-brand connections. Results of six studies suggest that this congruence is important, especially when individuals face a recent threat to their identity. Thus, the presence of a threat and the circumstances of this threat have a significant impact on strengthening self-brand connections.

By investigating the relationship between identity and brand personality, the first essay demonstrated that factors such as the identity motives can be influenced at different touch points with consumers to stimulate the integration of brands in the consumers' self-concept. Brands can link elements of their brand personality to consumers' identity motives and self-expression motivations to create stronger emotional connections. Since individuals forge relationships with brands through different mechanisms, the second essay complements the first one by examining how consumers can use brand relationships as coping strategies to resolve identity conflicts and ambiguity, and to what extent this mechanism leads to stronger self-brand connections. It is essential for individuals to develop a clear sense of identity, but this process can be difficult for individuals. In addition, identity crises become more significant due to the increasing number of possible identities consumers are exposed to (Weigert et al. 1986). Identity conflicts and ambiguity can cause high levels of uncertainty. To reduce this uncertainty, individuals adopt different actions to manage stress and anxiety. These include the use of brands to reduce uncertainty. The latter process can lead to a greater integration of the brand into the consumer's self-concept. This research provides guidelines for marketers in order to help the connection between the brand and the consumer by reducing the uncertainty associated with moments of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity.

Chapter 4 - ESSAY 2

Who am I?: How Identity Crises Can Influence the Emotional Connections between Brands and Consumers

ABSTRACT

The second essay investigates the effect of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity on self-brand connections in the context of self-expression. Past research demonstrated that individuals can go through different identity crises over the years and that these identity crises can be very stressful and painful (Baumeister et al. 1985; Weigert et al. 1986). This essay examines whether identity conflicts and ambiguity compel consumers to use different coping strategies in order to resolve these crises and to communicate their identities to other consumers. It investigates how brands can serve as coping mechanisms to reduce uncertainty during periods of identity crises.

Throughout six studies, the authors examine how identity conflicts and identity ambiguity can lead to different strategies for consumers in terms of their rebranding strategies and communicating their identities to other consumers. Finally, several moderating variables (i.e., affirmation of self-clarity, and intolerance to uncertainty) were explored to examine their impact on the relationship between identity conflicts and identity ambiguity and brand self-connections. Managerial and academic implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Identity conflicts, Identity ambiguity, Self-expression, Self-brand connections

INTRODUCTION

The notion of identity has been explored in the literature in the past century and has been described as a crucial sociological aspect for individuals and society (Mead 1934; Stryker 1968). The self includes an important social nature and socialization processes that can influence the formation, the verification and the change of the identity (Burke 2006). Because of its pertinence and importance in terms of consumption, marketing academics and practitioners have investigated this aspect in terms of its potential applications in terms of brands and products (Gilmore and Pine 2007; Malär et al. 2011).

Past research demonstrates that a person's identity has multiple parts that represent its diverse relationships and positions in the society (James 1890; Stryker 1968). Individuals have different possible identities that are organized hierarchically (Markus and Kunda 1986). These multiple identities coexist peacefully the majority of the time, but sometimes the different identities can come into conflicts with each other (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Pratt and Foreman 2000). However, research that explores identity crises, including identity conflicts and ambiguity, has been limited until now.

In their lives, individuals can go through different identity crisis. For example, teenagers can go through an identity crisis when they examine their roles in the society, including their potential future careers, their values and gender roles. Developing and establishing its sense of identity is an essential aspect for individuals (Marcia 1966). However, this process can be challenging and demanding for a person. Struggling with several aspects of its identity is normal, but can be very stressful and painful (Baumeister et al. 1985). In the past century, this crisis phenomenon has increased in importance with the number of available identities (Weigert et al.

1986). Identity crisis can be framed as the search for meaning, but also can represent the overwhelming choices between different identity goals (Weigert et al. 1986).

Thus, this paper draws on the notions of identity crises and uncertainty reduction theory to present a first investigation of the impact of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity on selfbrand connections. It examines how identity crisis can influence and even strengthen self-brand connections. The author argues that consumers try to resolve these identity crises by connecting more with brands they view as clear and defined. This research has two main research objectives: (1) to understand the impact of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity on self-brand connections, and (2) to examine the different contexts and consumers' differences that modify this relationship to gain a better understanding. The first major goal is to examine the concepts of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity in the creation of emotional connections. This research investigates if the connection with a brand can be used as a coping strategy for people when they face an identity crisis. Previous research in social psychology and organizational behavior demonstrates that coping strategies are used when people are confronted with an identity crisis and that it can lead to an increased branding effort (Corley and Gioia 2004). Following this argument, identity crises can be pertinent in the creation of emotional connections with brands that have high brand personality clarity. In terms of the second objective, the author explores the impact of these two identity crises across different contexts and consumers. The author investigates how uncertainty avoidance and self-clarity affirmation can influence the effects of identity conflicts on self-brand connections.

By investigating these concepts, this research contributes to the marketing literature by examining identity crises. Literature is extremely limited in terms of how people deal with identity conflicts and ambiguity. Since these situations regularly happen in a lifetime, more

research is needed to examine how people resolve these crises. The findings will be helpful for companies to create more efficient strategies in order to be closer to their consumers. This paper provides indications on how they can connect with them during periods of identity crises.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Identity

The concept of identity has been deeply investigated by academic researchers for its crucial importance in the development of individuals (Mead 1934; Stryker 1968). Identity has been structured to carry two levels: the content and the value dimensions (Breakwell 1986). The majority of previous research has tried to explain and define the content dimension of the identity (Breakwell 1986; Mead 1934). The content dimension represents the "defining properties of the identity, the characteristics which the individual concerned considers actually to describe himself or herself and which, taken together as a syndrome, mark him or her as a unique person, different in psychological profile from all others" (Breakwell 1986: 12). The value dimension relates to the value, positive or negative, connected to each element of the content dimension (Breakwell 1986). Certain characteristics of the identity can be attached to a positive value, while others are represented negatively for the self.

The content dimension of identity combines both characteristics contained in the personal and social identities. Previous research on social identity demonstrates that individuals fluctuate between the notions of their personal identity and their social identity (Brewer 1991; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987). Personal identity relates more to the unique and distinctive aspects of the self (e.g., values or attitudes), while the

social identity represents the components of the self obtained by the different group memberships and social relationships (Ashforth et al. 2008; Brewer 1991).

Individuals possess a multitude of identities and these aspects are mentally structured (Mead 2009). Thus, aspects of the identity are hierarchically organized and vary in terms of their importance for the self (Breakwell 1986). This classification can fluctuate and change depending on different external factors. Identity being a social process and product, contradictions represent an important part in the evolution of the identity for individuals. These contradictions represent opportunities to make choices and validate the self-concept (Breakwell 1986).

The formation of identity is one of the most important aspects of an individual's life (Erikson 1970). The development of the identity often faces different struggles, which is formulated as an identity crisis (Erikson 1970). Identity crises are pretty common during the period of adolescence where teenagers struggle with their notion of identity and role confusion (Erikson 1970). Adolescents often struggle to make a commitment to a precise identity (Marcia 1966). Individuals who decide to forge a strong commitment to an identity are often happier than other people (Marcia 1976). With today's evolving world, identity crises happen more often with the increased number of possible identities (Weigert et al. 1986). The conflicts are not confined to the adolescence period anymore. More than ever, people struggle to handle all their different identities. Individuals can experience them at different periods of change in their lives such as becoming a parent or beginning a new job. Identity crises can take two main forms: identity conflicts and identity ambiguity. Identity conflicts occur when people feel a tension or a competition between two or more important

identities, while identity ambiguity refers more for a research in the definition of our identity (Ashforth et al. 2008).

Identity Deficit and Ambiguity

Individual can experience an important identity-related problem: identity ambiguity (or deficit) (Baumeister 1986). This concept is referred as a motivation crisis which relates to the fact that people have difficulty to clearly define their sense of self (Baumeister et al. 1985). This crisis appears when individuals experience a lack of commitment to personal goals and values. The inability to commit to goals and values leads to the absence of foundations to guide behaviors and actions (Baumeister et al. 1985). In these circumstances, individuals have difficulty to commit and engage in a search for meaning and completion (Baumeister et al. 1985).

During certain periods of their lives, individuals have to revise their sense of identity or their identity may lose its meanings (Corley and Gioia 2004). The word ambiguity represents "an ongoing stream that supports several different interpretations at the same time" (Weick 1995: 91). More specifically, identity ambiguity happens when an identity is vague and lacks clarity (Weick 1995). In these circumstances, people are unclear about the different meanings associated with their selves or the different interpretations.

Identity ambiguity can be associated to three main sources: changes in social referents, temporal identity ambiguity and construed external image discrepancies (Corley and Gioia 2004). Social referents may be people or organizations that can be used to evaluate and comprehend who they are (Corley and Gioia 2004; Shah 1998). In certain circumstances, individuals can lose some of the referents that they normally utilize to reduce uncertainty. Some discrepancies can also happen between the actual identity and what they would like to be in the

future (Corley and Gioia 2004). Finally, the discrepancies can be more between the person's perceptions and others' perceptions (Corley and Gioia 2004). People have to compare their evaluations of their identity and external perceptions. This analysis can lead to a sense of discrepancy or a sense of alignment. These two processes lead to different outcomes. Alignment reinforces the identity, while discrepancy results in sensemaking and investigation of this incongruity (Chreim 2002; Gioia et al. 2000). Identity ambiguity causes uncertainty for individuals and they fight to resolve it.

Identity Conflicts

The self being a multifaceted concept (Stryker 1968), people experience identity conflicts. Identity conflict is defined as "an inconsistency between the contents of two or more identities, such as a clash of values, goals, or norms" (Ashforth et al. 2008: 56). Research on identity supports the idea that the multiple identities can conflict with one another and that individuals need to manage them (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Pratt and Foreman 2000). This multitude of identities can create inconsistent demands and can conflict with each other (Leary et al. 1986). People have to deal with tensions between personal and social identity (Kreiner et al. 2006).

One important aspect to explain these conflicts is that identities can differ in terms of how they are related to one another (Burke 1980; McCall and Simmons 1986). Past literature demonstrates that individuals handle their different identities by mentally organizing them (Stryker and Serpe 1982). Thus, identity conflicts relate to the notion of competing identities to represent who we are. Individuals regularly experience identity conflicts that are minor or hidden (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Normally, individuals go smoothly from one identity to another.

However, in some cases, conflicts can become problematic for individuals (Burke 2003).

The essential established condition for an identity conflict is that an individual is strongly

committed to two identity facets that are inconsistent with each other (Baumeister et al. 1985). For example, two identities (e.g., mother and doctor) that are important for the person can create dissonance (Burke 2003). Conflicts can happen especially when identities are too unrelated (Grant and Hogg 2012; Pratt and Foreman 2000). In those situations, the gap between the identities is salient and individuals have to take on different identities simultaneously (Ashforth and Mael 1989).

In addition, in the identity theory perspective, it is also acknowledged that people have multiple roles in their social structures (Turner 1978). All these roles are tied to diverse sets of expectations. Thus, the conflicts come from conflicting expectations that the person internalized and that are closely related to its sense of identity (Burke 1980). These multiple roles can lead to role conflicts and overload that can generate inaction, hesitation or contradictory action (Biddle 1986; Pratt and Foreman 2000; Weigert and Franks 1989).

In these circumstances, individuals have different approaches to deal with identity conflicts (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Breakwell 1986). Often, these conflicts can be cognitively resolved with strategies such as organizing and separating the diverse identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989). People can rank their multiple identities in terms of importance and use them in different situations. In conflicting circumstances, people define themselves in terms of the most important identity and identity salience predicts people's behaviors (Stryker 1968). This hierarchy of identities helps in the resolution of conflicts by the fact that people concede to the most valued identity (Ashforth and Mael 1987; Stryker and Serpe 1982). Past research identified different cognitive ways to manage the conflicting identities such as compartmentalization, elimination, integration and aggregation of the different identities (Ashforth et al. 2008; Pratt and Foreman

2000). Thus, conflicting identities can be mentally regulated through different strategies that allow the resolution of the identity crises.

The aspect of identity conflicts can be closely related to the social identity complexity and self-complexity. Social identity complexity is how a person illustrates the connections between his or her multiple social identity (Grant and Hogg 2012; Roccas and Brewer 2002). The more people believe that their diverse identities overlapped with each other, the more they have a simple identity structure (Grant and Hogg 2012). In contrast, when their social identities are distinct and separated, individuals possess a complex identity structure. Therefore, a complex social identity is composed of several nonoverlapping group memberships and the recognition that other people's social identities are different and dissimilar from their own identities (Grant and Hogg 2012). On the other hand, self-complexity related to personal attributes and can be expressed by the quantity of aspects related to the self and the degree of correspondence between these aspects (Linville 1985). These two concepts are illustrated in terms of the overlap between the identities, but also in terms of the quantity of identities that represent the self. Social identity complexity has been investigated along with self-uncertainty to demonstrate the impact on identification with social groups (Grant and Hogg 2012). Under high uncertainty and high identity prominence, individuals identify more strongly with a focal group.

Uncertainty Reduction

Past research demonstrates that certainty is an important need for individuals as they want to feel confident in their ways of behaving and be certain about their environments (Hogg 2000). Indeed, "uncertainty about one's attitudes, beliefs, feelings and perceptions, as well as about oneself and other people, is aversive" (Hogg 2000: 227) since it is connected with less control over one's environment (Stets 2003). Uncertainty is an undesirable condition and people have

strong desires to diminish this uncertainty to feel good. Individuals have positive feelings when they are confident and sure about the beliefs, perceptions and actions (Grieve and Hogg 1999).

Therefore, this desire leads to an uncertainty reduction motive. Uncertainty reduction is a cognitive motive that represents the need for information, interpretation and comprehension of the self and the social environment (Hogg 2000; Reid and Hogg 2005). Thus, it is a strong human motive that has several implications in different domains (Hogg 2000). In communication, uncertainty reduction is a crucial aspect that motivates people to communicate with others to decrease uncertainty (Hogg 2000). In the case of identity, people have the urge to search for coherence and protect the integrity of their self-image (Hogg 2000; Tajfel 1969). Even if it doesn't have positive outcomes, people seek to decrease this uncertainty about their self-concept and identity (Hogg 2000; Sedikides and Strube 1995). Thus, the feeling of uncertainty linked to the self-conceptualization in different contexts motivates individuals to use different means to decrease and find solutions to this uncertainty.

When faced with subjective uncertainty, one strategy that can be used by individuals is the identification with inclusive social categories (Hogg 2000). The uncertainty-identity theory conceptualizes that the uncertainty triggers group identification (Hogg et al. 2010). Uncertainty that is related to aspects that are directly related or reflected on who the person is can be particularly problematic and painful (Hogg 2000). Individuals aim to reduce this sensation of uncertainty by seeking for information about themselves, others, and their environment (Gibbs et al. 2011; Hogg 2000; Hogg et al. 2010). Identification with a self-inclusive category is an efficient strategy that allows more control and planning in terms of their feelings and actions (Grieve and Hogg 1999; Hogg et al. 2007; 2010). This uncertainty reduction can stimulate self-categorization in positively viewed groups (Hogg 2000). Group identification is one of the most

efficient strategies to resolve uncertainty related to the self-concept. However, other ways can be used to diminish self-related uncertainty.

Identity Construction and its Impact on Connections with Brands

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework. Building on this literature, this research will try to establish the influence of identity conflicts and identity ambiguity on self-brand connections.

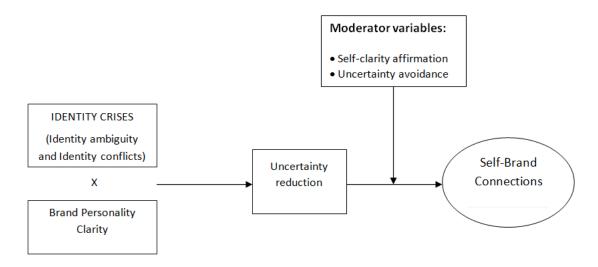


FIGURE 1: Proposed Framework

The construction of the identity is a complicated and difficult process that can be challenging for individuals. The main assumption is that people use brands to build and define their self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2005). From a very young age, children and teenagers connect with brands and these products are utilized in the development of their identities (Chaplin and John 2005). When faced with ambiguity or conflicts between their important identities, individuals experience discomfort that they try to resolve. Thus, identity crises encourage individuals to use coping strategies to find solutions (Baumeister et al. 1985). The prediction is that brands can be used as a coping strategy and that this process can lead to stronger connections with brands. The concept of self-brand connections describes the degree to which

individuals integrate brands into their self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2003; 2005). In this case, identity conflicts and identity ambiguity lead to greater brand self-connections for certain brands.

Furthermore, this research explores the impact of identity crises on the desire to use coping strategies. Identity conflict can lead to a lack of clarity associated with uncertainty (Weick 1995). In certain occasions, contextual factors can create subjective uncertainty that makes people doubt their sense of self and individuals are motivated to reduce this uncertainty (Ashforth et al. 2008; Saks and Ashforth 1997). When faced with an identity conflict such as having incoherent selfrelevant demands, people use coping strategies to maintain certainty about their personal values and identification (Baumeister et al. 1985; McGregor et al. 2001). One strategy that can be used in the short-term is to associate their selves with a brand with high clarity. Brands can have symbolic values that can help consumers to develop and reveal their personal and social identities (Swaminathan et al. 2007). This self-expression process leads to consumer-brand relationships (Veloutsou 2009). Individuals use material possessions to seek happiness, remind themselves of experiences, accomplishments, and other people in their lives (Belk 1988). People try to reflect and develop an image of individuality, autonomy, and self-empowerment in their choices (Belk 1988). Consumption of diverse products is used to differentiate themselves from others, to reaffirm the self-image, to validate their own self-concepts, and the principles and beliefs that consumers stand for (Dunning 2005; Kleine et al. 1993; Prentice 1987).

In some circumstances, the relationships between consumers and brands are so important that consumers greatly connect the brand to their self-concept (Chaplin and John 2005; Escalas 2004; Escalas and Bettman 2003). Past literature demonstrates that individuals can associate themselves with a brand to build and establish a positive self or express their self-concept to

others (Aaker 1999; Escalas and Bettman 2003; 2005). The brand symbolizes how consumers represent who they are or aspire to be (Escalas and Bettman 2005; Fournier 1998). In cases where the brand is involved in the development and the expression of the self-concept, people create a connection with the brand (Escalas and Bettman 2003).

Brand Personality Clarity

Past research investigated how brands can be associated with different personality traits that provide self-expressive or symbolic benefits to the consumer (Aaker 1997; Plummer 1985). Brands can represent different human characteristics that help consumers create connections and relationships with brands in different ways (Aaker et al. 2004; Grohmann 2009). The concept of brand personality is extremely relevant in the judgment and the consumption of brands (Mathur et al. 2012; Swaminathan et al. 2007). Brand personality can be developed through direct and indirect interactions between the consumer and the brand and through diverse marketing efforts of the company (Aaker and Biel 1993; Ang and Lim 2006; Fitzsimons et al. 2008).

Brand personality can be more or less accessible in consumers' minds. Some brands possess strong associations with one or some brand personality dimensions, while others didn't construct a robust brand personality (Johar et al. 2005; Mathur et al. 2012). When the associations with brand personality are apparent and salient, individuals use this aspect to make judgment and create associations (Fitzsimons et al. 2008; Mathur et al. 2012). In order to influence brand attachment and purchase decisions, the brand personality needs to be apparent and recognizable. Brand personality clarity relates to the degree to which the brand personality is clear, obvious and definite (Freling et al. 2011). In order to create an interesting brand personality, brand managers should formulate clear and salient beliefs about the different attributes associated with

the brand (Freling et al. 2011). Those beliefs could provide coherent and understandable perimeters around this particular brand.

For personal and social identity, ambiguity can relate to finding themselves. Individuals can be confronted with the incongruity of several future identities and this can lead to a lack of commitment to a precise sense of self (Baumeister et al. 1985). In the field of organizational behavior, three main themes were identified to understand how people react to identity ambiguity: refinement of the desired future image, increased branding effort and modeling behaviors related to the desired future image (Corley and Gioia 2004). Branding efforts can be used to manage impressions from external sources and to represent their desired future image (Corley and Gioia 2004). Discrepancies can lead to an amplified effort for individuals to connect with brands to figure out their sense of self and commit to a certain identity. Thus,

H1: Higher levels of identity ambiguity lead to stronger self-brand connections for brands with a high clarity brand personality.

For individuals, the absence of a definite and certain identity can be unpleasant and can be linked to negative feelings such as stress and anxiety (Thoits 1991). This ambivalence leads to a motivation to reduce those harmful feelings. Identity ambiguity creates a lack of clarity associated with uncertainty (Weick 1995). Reducing uncertainty is a basic human motivation (Hogg 2000; Tobin and Raymundo 2010; Wilson et al. 2005) and thus, increased uncertainty rising from ambiguous information about its identity can bring tension to individuals. That is, the quest for certainty is likely to make the consumers connect with a high clarity brand personality due to the clear boundaries associated with it:

H2: Uncertainty reduction mediates the influence of identity ambiguity on self-brand connections with brands with high clarity brand personality.

In addition, literature on social groups demonstrates that certain properties of group can stimulate identification (Hogg 2004; 2007). In particular, group entitativity can encourage people to identify with a particular group. The fact that a group has explicit boundaries, goals and structure stimulates individuals' preferences for this group in uncertain conditions compared to low entitativity groups (Hogg 2007). Following this logic, the author argues that explicit, clear and salient brand personality will also be preferred by consumers under uncertainty. When facing an identity conflict, individuals can use brands with clear brand personalities to work on their self-definition and resolve those struggles. In fact, high clarity brand personality will help self-categorization and this process will help to reduce uncertainty. Stated formally:

H3: Identity conflicts lead to stronger self-brand connections with brands with high clarity brand personality.

For individuals, conflicts between their multiple identities can sometimes be challenging and these opposing views can create uncertainty. This struggle to resolve conflicts between two or more important identities can result in anxiety and distress for a person (Carver and Scheier 1988). This uncertainty can be related to self-knowledge deficiency, meaning that individuals can have need of a structure that can help them resolve the contraction between the different parts of their identities (Baumeister 1993). This uncertainty encourages people to find efficient ways to correct this identity overload. High clarity brand personality makes the brand and its attributes more predictable for the consumer. Indeed, the knowledge about exact aspects of the brand will make it more relevant for consumers in order to reduce uncertainty.

H4: Uncertainty reduction mediates the influence of identity conflicts on self-brand connections with brands with high clarity brand personality.

Validating the Impact of Self-Clarity

Past research conceptualized the notion of self-concept as the cognitive schema that individuals create with the information, the knowledge and the expertise they get from their life experiences (Markus 1980; 1983). Individuals gain awareness and expertise about their abilities, preferences, motives, values and goals that help them establish their self-concept (Markus 1983). Identity process is always adjusting, reacting like a feedback loop (Burke 1991). Individuals constantly adapt and regulate their behaviors to fit with their identity standards or attributes (Burke 1991).

The definition of the self-concept can be more or less clear for the individuals. Self-concept clarity is defined as "the extent to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable" (Campbell et al. 1996: 141). This concept is not related to the accuracy of those beliefs and self-knowledge, but the fact that those beliefs are clear and well-articulated (Campbell et al. 1996). Individuals who have high self-concept clarity are quite confident in the different aspects of their self-concept and are more likely to trust self-information such as internal standards and goals to influence their own behaviors (Campbell et al. 1996). Thus, people who have low self-concept clarity are less confident about the various dimensions of the self-concept and its stability (Butzer and Kuiper 2006). They are also more likely to be influenced by external factors to guide them define themselves (Dittmar and Howard 2004). The absence of a definite and coherent sense of self and personal identity leads them to be more influenced by external sources. Individuals who are high in self-concept clarity are less susceptible to use external information to define themselves (Dittmar and Howard 2004).

When people are faced with a challenge of their identities, people try to reprove themselves.

To achieve their identity goal, they can use diverse identity symbols (Gollwitzer and Wicklund

1985; Longoni et al. 2014). One strategy that could be utilized is to consume products or material symbols that can confirm their identities (Longoni et al. 2014; Swann 1990). In the context of this study, it is important to confirm that identity crises result in a self-clarity threat. To demonstrate this, the author built on the self-clarity theory in testing whether affirming the self before the evaluation of the brand will mitigate the effects. In this case, identity conflicts represent a threat to the certainty of the identity. Previous research has proved that affirmation in advance of a threat allows consumers to maintain clear and certain self-concepts (Koole et al. 1999; Sherman et al. 2000; Ward and Dahl 2014).

In this case, if people have had the occasion to affirm their knowledge about themselves before the identity conflict, they are less motivated to rely on external factors to reach their sense of self. Thus, individuals who can affirm the clarity of their self-concepts will have more stable views of their selves and will feel less uncertainty. When individuals experience an identity conflict, expectations are that granting them with the occasion of affirming their sense of self-clarity will attenuate the effect of the high clarity brand on self-brand connections. Thus:

H5: For consumers who experience an identity conflict, affirming (vs. not affirming) their self-concept clarity before experiencing the identity conflict will moderate the connections they will create with the high clarity brand personality.

The Effect of Uncertainty Avoidance

As stated earlier, certainty is a crucial need for individuals who have a strong desire to be certain about their behaviors, others' behaviors and their environment (Hogg 2000). Individual differences can accentuate the uncertainty reduction motive (Hogg 2000). Certain people are more worried about uncertainty than others and feel uncomfortable with a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity (Hofstede 1980; Hogg 2000; Neuberg and Newson 1993). Those people have a

stronger desire for knowledge and are more concerned to conserve their beliefs (Sorrentino et al. 1988). Thus, they make more efforts to maintain their sense of self. When confronted with uncertainty, they tend to use heuristics to solve this uncertainty rapidly (Hogg 2000).

H6: Uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between identity conflicts and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections. In the case of identity conflicts, high uncertainty avoidance (vs. low) leads to stronger self-brand connections for high clarity brands.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY 1

The primary goal of Experiment 1 is to test the proposition that identity conflicts lead to stronger self-brand connections for brands with a clear brand personality (H3). In particular, this experiment examines whether manipulating the identity prominence influences connections to brands that have high brand personality clarity. The author manipulated the overlap or the distinctiveness of three identities with a focal identity and manipulated brand personality clarity.

Method

Participants

158 participants were recruited through Crowdflower to participate in an online survey. Subjects completed questionnaires in return of a small monetary reward. They were randomly assigned to conditions formed by the 2×2 manipulation of identity prominence (overlapping vs. distinctive identities) and brand personality clarity (high clarity vs. low clarity). 10 participants were excluded from the final sample, because they did not answer properly to the manipulation (i.e. left it unanswered or did not provide the number of required identities), resulting in a final sample size of 148 (77 females).

Procedure and measures

All participants completed the study on a computer at their own pace. They were first instructed to list three identities that are important to them. To manipulate identity prominence, they had to write a paragraph about how their social identities overlapped and were related (overlapping identities) or were distinct from one another (distinct identities) (See Appendix B for specific manipulations). This manipulation was checked by asking participants "how much do you feel your identities overlap" (1 = not very much, 7 = very much). This method of priming subjective identity prominence is adapted from previous research (Grant and Hogg 2012).

Next, participants read about a brand. The brand personality clarity dimension was manipulated based on Freling et al. (2011). In the high clarity condition, brand Astra was described as possessing several traits related to sincerity. In the low salience condition, brand Astra was explained using several traits unrelated to a single personality dimension (see Appendix C). In addition to the pretest, a manipulation check was also included to test for the brand personality clarity manipulation. To verify the brand personality clarity manipulation, participants were asked a series of questions to rate the brand personality appeal. The brand personality clarity was measured with the question: "This brand personality is..." on five item scales (unapparent/apparent, indistinct/distinct, not obvious/obvious, vague/well-Defined and unclear/clear) rated on seven-point scales. The originality was measured with four items (common/distinctive, ordinary/novel, predictable/surprising and routine/fresh), while favorability was assessed with seven items (unsatisfactory/satisfactory, unpleasant/pleasant, unattractive/attractive, negative/positive, bad/good, poor/excellent and undesirable/desirable). (See Appendix A for all measures used in the essay).

After the brand description, participants completed the self-brand connections scale based on seven items from past research (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Sample items included: "This brand

reflects who I am" and "I feel a personal connection to this brand" anchored by strongly disagree [1] to strongly agree [7]. The questionnaire concluded with demographic variables (age, gender, education, and income). After the participants completed the questionnaire, they were asked to guess what they thought the purpose of the experiment was; none of the participants in this study or the subsequent studies correctly presumed the hypotheses.

Pretest

A pretest was conducted with 76 participants on Crowdflower to confirm the accuracy in terms of brand personality clarity manipulation. After reading one of the randomly presented brand description scenarios, participants indicated how they perceived the brand personality. All the measures of brand personality appeal and relevance were measured on 1-7 Likert scales. First, the author had to make sure that the two personality clarity conditions did not differ in personal relevance (i.e., brand image relevant to me, makes sense to me; seven-point scale, $\alpha = .84$; $M_{\text{high}} = 5.83$, $SD_{\text{high}} = .98$; $M_{\text{low}} = 5.50$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.07$; t(74) = 1.42, n.s.). The author used the brand personality appeal scale to verify the effectiveness of the manipulation. The two brand descriptions did not differ in terms of both originality ($\alpha = .81$; $M_{\text{high}} = 4.71$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.04$; $M_{\text{low}} = 4.46$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.11$; t(74) = 1.00, n.s.) and favorability ($\alpha = .95$; $M_{\text{high}} = 5.71$, $SD_{\text{high}} = .90$; $M_{\text{low}} = 5.35$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.00$; t(74) = 1.64, n.s.). As expected, the results indicated that after viewing the clear brand personality manipulation (vs. low), participants reported more clarity in terms of the brand personality ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.62$, $SD_{\text{high}} = .95$; $M_{\text{low}} = 4.61$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.31$; t(74) = 3.86, p < .001).

In addition, in the high clarity condition, people perceived the brand to be highly sincere compared to other dimensions of the brand personality scale. As intended, participants reported the high clarity brand to be related to sincere traits (M = 5.85, SD = .77), compared to other dimensions of brand personality (M_{exciting} = 5.12, SD_{exciting} = .98; t(38) = 6.51, p < .001;

 $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 4.39$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = 1.09$; t(38) = 8.70, p < .001; $M_{\text{rugged}} = 4.67$, $SD_{\text{rugged}} = 1.05$; t(38) = 8.78, p < .001, $M_{\text{competent}} = 5.18$, $SD_{\text{competent}} = 1.11$; t(38) = 4.57, p < .001). In contrast, no distinctions between brand personality dimensions were perceived in the low clarity dimension $(M_{\text{sincere}} = 5.10, SD_{\text{sincere}} = .94$; $M_{\text{exciting}} = 5.11$, $SD_{\text{exciting}} = 1.02$; $M_{\text{sophisticated}} = 4.95$, $SD_{\text{sophisticated}} = 1.16$; $M_{\text{rugged}} = 4.97$, $SD_{\text{rugged}} = .97$; $M_{\text{competent}} = 5.34$, $SD_{\text{competent}} = .90$, n.s.).

Results

Manipulation checks

The identity prominence manipulation was successful. Participants reported greater identity overlap in the overlapping than distinct condition ($M_{\text{overlap}} = 5.74$, $SD_{\text{overlap}} = 1.17$ vs. $M_{\text{distinct}} = 3.27$, $SD_{\text{distinct}} = 1.37$; t(146) = 11.86, p < .001). The brand clarity manipulation was also successful. All five questions measuring brand personality clarity loaded together as a single factor ($\alpha = .89$). Participants who saw the brand with high clarity brand personality reported more brand personality clarity than those in the unclear brand personality ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.72$, $SD_{\text{high}} = .86$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 4.50$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.21$; t(146) = 7.12, p < .001).

Self-brand connections

All seven self-brand connection measures loaded together as a single factor; hence, the items were averaged to form a single index of self-brand connections (α = .95). In order to verify the predictions made in H3, the results found in this experiment have to reveal an interaction between the identity prominence and the brand personality salience. A 2 (identity prominence: overlapping vs. distinctive identities) X 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) analysis of variance was performed on self-brand connections. An ANOVA revealed no main effects of identity prominence and brand personality clarity manipulations, but a significant interaction between the two. People who had the described the distinctiveness between their identity (vs.

overlap) did not lead to stronger feelings of connections with the brand ($M_{\rm distinct} = 4.53$, $SD_{\rm distinct} = 1.01$ vs. $M_{\rm overlap} = 4.26$, $SD_{\rm overlap} = 1.07$; F(1, 147) = 1.55, n.s.). There was also no difference in terms of emotional connections to brands perceived to have a clear brand personality versus unclear brand personality ($M_{\rm high} = 4.60$, $SD_{\rm high} = 1.03$ vs. $M_{\rm low} = 4.25$, $SD_{\rm low} = 1.04$; F(1, 147) = 2.33, n.s.). Importantly, further examination of the two-way interaction supported the hypothesis (F(1, 147) = 11.12, p < .001). As predicted in H3, when facing an identity conflict (in this case, thinking about how their identities are distinctive from one another), participants were more inclined to connect with the brand with a clear brand personality (M = 5.03, SD = .72) than with the low clarity brand personality (M = 4.00, SD = 1.03; (F(1, 147) = 4.92, P < .01, see figure 2). In contrast, no difference in terms of brand connections where found between people who were in the identity overlap condition (i.e., no identity conflict) ($M_{\rm high} = 4.24$, $SD_{\rm high} = 1.13$ vs. $M_{\rm low} = 4.30$, $SD_{\rm low} = 1.00$; (F(1, 147) = .27, n.s) (see Appendix F).

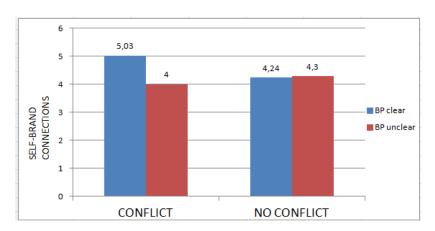


FIGURE 2: IDENTITY CONFLICT (i.e., identity prominence) X BRAND
PERSONALITY CLARITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 1)

Discussion

Study 1 shows that identity conflicts indeed lead to greater self-brand connections for brands that have high clarity brand personality. In line with hypothesis 3, the data revealed that when

consumers experience an identity conflict, they connect more their self-concept with the high clarity brand personality compared to low clarity. In the next study, the author looked at this phenomenon in more details by replicating this pattern with another identity prominence context and examined the effect of identity conflict and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections. In addition, the following experiment aimed to examine the process of uncertainty reduction associated with a clear brand personality. The main prediction is that people who will experience an identity conflict may connect more deeply with the high clarity brand in order to reduce their felt uncertainty, whereas those who do not evaluate the clear brand personality will still endure uncertainty emotions.

STUDY 2

The primary goal of Study 2 is to replicate the results from experiment 1, but manipulating the identity prominence with the number of social identities. The author manipulated the identity prominence with the number of social identities (few or many). The prediction is that identity prominence (i.e., many social identities) leads to stronger self-brand connections for a brand with a clear brand personality (H3). Another goal of Experiment 2 is to test the mediation hypothesis (H4). In this case, the author investigated the impact of felt uncertainty on the relationship between identity conflicts and self-brand connections. In addition, this study examined the impact of uncertainty avoidance on the relationship between identity conflicts and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections (H6).

Method

Participants

151 participants were recruited through Crowdflower to participate in an online survey. Subjects completed questionnaires regarding brand connections in return of a small money incentive. The experiment was a 2 (identity prominence: one vs. three identities) x 2 (brand personality clarity: low vs. high) between-participants design. Participants were told a cover story that they were being recruited to give feedback to a new clothing brand (i.e., Astra) that was going to be launched in the next months. The author removed 12 participants, because they did not apply the requisite cognitive effort for the open-ended question (i.e. identity prominence), yielding a final sample of 139 participants (60 males).

Procedure and measures

Participants completed an online questionnaire asking them about their connections to a brand. Participants were first asked to list one or three identities that are important in giving them a sense of who they are (see Appendix B). Then, they had to write a paragraph describing this (these) social identity (ies). This manipulation was checked by asking participants "how many important different identities do you feel you have" (1 = not very many, 7 = very many). This priming method is adapted from previous research (Grant and Hogg 2012).

Next, participants read about a brand. The clarity of the brand personality dimension was manipulated similarly to the method used in Study 1. In the high clarity condition, brand Astra was defined as possessing several traits related to sincerity. In the low clarity condition, brand Astra was described using several traits that were unrelated to a single personality dimension. The dependent variables consisted of self-brand connections. This concept was measured with the same items used in experiment 1. Additional measures include a moderating variable: 10 items measures of uncertainty avoidance (Freeston et al. 1994). Representative items include, "I should be able to organize everything in advance," and "I must get away from all uncertain situations (1 = not at all characteristic of me, 7 = entirely characteristic of me).

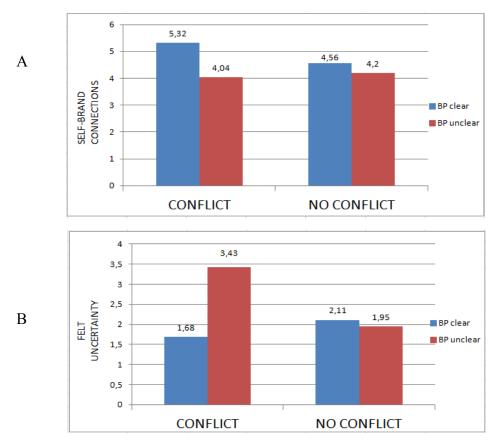
Results

Manipulation checks

Two-way, prominence by brand personality clarity, ANOVAs on the manipulation checks revealed only a main effect of prominence on the prominence check (F(1, 138) = 11.19, p < .001) and only a main effect of brand personality clarity on the clarity check (F(1, 138) = 7.86, p < .01). Participants reported having many other identities in the multiple identity condition (i.e., three) compared to the single identity condition ($M_{\text{multiple}} = 4.86, SD_{\text{multiple}} = 1.85 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 3.91, SD_{\text{single}} = 1.39; t(137) = 3.43, p < .001$) and reported more brand personality clarity in the high versus low brand personality clarity condition ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.86, SD_{\text{high}} = .84 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{low}} = 5.32, SD_{\text{low}} = 1.39; t(137) = 2.76, p < .01$).

Self-brand connections

In order to verify the predictions made in the hypothesis (H3), the results found in this experiment reveal an interaction between the identity prominence and the brand personality salience. A 2 (identity prominence: one vs. three social identities) X 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) analysis of variance was performed on self-brand connections (α = .95). This revealed the predicted interaction between description of brand personality clarity and identity prominence (F(1, 138) = 8.11; p < .01; figure 3). When participants thought about several important identities (i.e., high identity prominence), having a brand with high brand personality clarity (vs. low clarity) increased self-brand connections (M_{high} = 5.32, SD_{high} = .86 vs. M_{low} = 4.04, SD_{low} = 1.14; F(1, 138) = 5.11, p < .001). There was no effect of brand personality clarity when participants listed only one important identity (M_{high} = 4.56, SD_{high} = .83 vs. M_{low} = 4.20, SD_{low} = 1.13; F(1, 138) = 1.51, n.s.).



NOTE.—*A*, Self-brand connections resulting from treatment (i.e., identity prominence) versus control conditions across brand personality clarity conditions. *B*, Felt uncertainty resulting from treatment versus control conditions across brand personality clarity conditions.

FIGURE 3: IDENTITY CONFLICT X BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 2)

Mediation: Uncertainty reduction

To measure felt uncertainty, three questions on felt uncertainty emotions were averaged (α = .965). An ANOVA was performed with identity prominence and brand personality clarity as between-participants factors predicting felt uncertainty. This revealed the predicted interaction between brand personality clarity and identity prominence (F(1, 138) = 11.96; p < .001). When participants thought about several important identities (i.e., high identity prominence), having a brand with a high brand personality clarity (vs. low) decreased felt uncertainty ($M_{high} = 1.68$, $SD_{high} = 1.38$ vs. $M_{low} = 3.43$, $SD_{low} = 1.87$; F(1, 138) = -4.52, p < .001). After seeing a brand with a high clarity brand personality, participants' level of felt uncertainty is similar to the low

identity prominence condition. There was no difference in terms of felt uncertainty between the two brand descriptions when participants listed only one important identity ($M_{high} = 2.11$, $SD_{high} = 1.49$ vs. $M_{low} = 1.95$, $SD_{low} = 1.26$; F(1, 138) = .178, n.s.) (see Figure 3 and Appendix G).

In addition, to test whether the effect of brand personality clarity on self-brand connections is mediated by uncertainty reduction, a mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method (Preacher and Hayes 2008) was performed. As predicted, the bootstrapping test (n boots = 5,000) showed the indirect effect of brand personality clarity on self-brand connections through emotion is positive and significant with a 95% BCa confidence interval excluding zero (.003, .162). The direct effect of the brand personality clarity on the dependent variable (c' path) was not significant (b = .19, t = 3.65 p = .16) (see Appendix G).

Uncertainty avoidance

The author also wanted to verify the impact of uncertainty avoidance on the interaction of identity conflicts and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections. An ANCOVA was run to verify is the slope between uncertainty avoidance and self-brand connections is the same across the different conditions. The analysis revealed the influence of uncertainty avoidance differed across the diverse conditions (F(1, 138) = 3.01, p < .05). Supporting hypothesis 6, the effect of uncertainty avoidance is only significant when participants encountered a high clarity brand personality after experiencing an identity conflict (B = .529, F(1, 138) = 5.10, p < .001). In the other conditions, participants' tendency to avoid uncertainty didn't have a significant impact on the emotional connections they created with the described brand.

Discussion

Study 2 extends the findings by showing the robustness of the effects of identity conflicts and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections. In this second experiment, the results

show that identity prominence may drive consumers to connect more deeply with a brand that has a clear and defined brand personality. Furthermore, supporting hypothesis 4, this study demonstrates that this effect is driven by uncertainty reduction. The results corroborate the prediction when individuals face an identity conflict, they are more likely to connect with a brand that has a high clarity brand personality in an apparent attempt to reduce their felt uncertainty. When people were instructed to evaluate a clear brand personality, their negative emotional reaction became less intense, and they reported feeling less uncertainty. These effects do not duplicate for individuals who didn't experience any identity conflict.

In studies 1 and 2, identity conflict was manipulated by the proxy of identity prominence. While identity prominence has been demonstrated to raise the issue of complexity and conflict between the different identities (Grant and Hogg 2012), it is important to see whether the effects hold when individuals are faced with an imagined scenario. In the next two studies, the author formed scenarios that closely imitated possible situations of conflicts in real lives.

STUDY 3

An important dimension of identity conflict is that it is related to inconsistency or contradictory demands from two or more identity (Ashworth et al. 2008; Leary et al. 1986). Conflicting demands or goals may be particularly important for consumers because it will influence individuals' decisions and strategies in order to manage their different identities and release tensions. Thus, in this study, the author examined a role conflict scenario – professional versus personal obligations. As in previous studies, this experiment manipulated identity conflicts and brand personality clarity, but in this study identity conflict was manipulated through a standard scenario instead of relating to participants' unique multiple identities. In

addition, the author wanted to rule out the alternative hypothesis that cognitive load could be driving the effects that have been observed.

Method

Participants

In a 2 (identity conflict: present vs. control) x 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) between-participants experimental design, 120 Crowdflower female (age 19-72) respondents participated in this study in exchange for a small monetary reward. Seven participants were dropped from the analysis due to noncompletion of the experimental instrument or because they disclosed they were not women, which resulted in a final sample size of 113. In this study, the author used a female population because females are particularly sensitive to identity conflicts (Ginsburg and Orlofsky 1981). The process of identity conflicts is often perceived to be more complicated and negative by women compared to men (Orlofsky 1978). Thus, females have the tendency to experience more identity conflicts during their lives and are more responsive to conflicting demands (Ginsburg and Orlofsky 1981; Orlofsky 1977; 1978).

Procedure and measures

In the control condition, participants just read about a typical day at work. In the identity conflict condition, participants first read a hypothetical scenario in which they were instructed to imagine a situation in which they had conflicting demands for their personal and professional lives. This scenario was written to provide a conflict between their family and professional obligations. Below is an excerpt of the review read by the participants:

"Imagine that you are finishing your day at work. As you are wrapping up your day, your supervisor asks you to do some overtime to finish a presentation for an important client. This extra hour will make you late to pick up your kids at school. It

is impossible for you to finish the presentation in time to be able to pick up the kids. You must choose between your professional and personal obligations."

Following the scenario, participants were asked to take a couple of minutes and as much space as they need in order to fully elaborate and describe how they felt. After reading one of the randomly presented rejecting or control scenarios, participants indicated how conflicted, disturbed, ambivalent, undecided and irresolute they felt (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). Also, participants provided their own emotional reactions to it. Specifically, they were asked, "How does thinking about this experience make YOU feel right now?" to which they indicated how angry, upset, frustrated, irritated, and annoyed they felt (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

After reading the scenario, participants were assigned to either the high clarity or low clarity brand personality manipulation (same as studies 1 and 2). Finally, they answered a series of questions on 1-7 Likert scales assessing their self-brand connections, different negative and positive emotions and effort rating questions.

Pretest

A pretest was conducted with 70 participants on Crowdflower to confirm that the identity conflict scenario resulted in participants' feeling conflicted. After reading one of the randomly presented conflicting or control scenarios, participants indicated how conflicted, disturbed, ambivalent, undecided and irresolute they felt, on 1-7 Likert scales (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). The results indicated that after reading the identity conflict scenario, participants felt more conflicted ($M_{\text{conflict}} = 5.37$, $M_{\text{conflict}} = 1.28$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 2.45$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 1.16$; t(68) = 37.78, p < .001), than those in the control condition.

Results

Manipulation checks

The five conflicted questions (conflicted, disturbed, ambivalent, undecided and irresolute) and five negative emotion questions (angry, upset, frustrated, irritated, annoyed) loaded together as a single factor and were averaged to create a single measure of conflicted emotion (α = .91) and negative emotion (α = .94). As intended, participants in the identity conflict condition reported significantly higher conflicted (M = 5.95, SD = 1.42) and negative emotions (M = 4.58, SD = 1.17) compared to those in the control condition (Conflicted emotions: M = 3.14, SD = 1.15; t(111) = 38.94, p < .001; Negative emotions: M = 2.75, SD = .97; t(111) = 20.81, p < .001). Similar to previous studies, the brand clarity manipulation was also successful. All five questions measuring brand personality clarity loaded together as a single factor (α = .90). Participants who saw the brand with a clear brand personality reported more brand personality clarity than those in the unclear brand personality (M_{high} = 5.73, SD_{high} = .79 vs. M_{low} = 4.87, SD_{low} = 1.26; t(111) = 4.37, p < .001).

Self-brand connections

The author examined how identity conflict (vs. control) differentially affected participants' self-brand connections (α = .94) when they face a brand with a clear brand personality (vs. low). As a result, an ANOVA with identity conflict (present vs. control) and brand personality clarity (high vs. low) as predictor variables revealed a significant interaction in support of hypothesis 3 (F(1,112) = 6.61, p < .02, see figure 4). The simple effects showed that when participants faced an identity conflict, they had stronger self-brand connections with the brand with high brand personality clarity (vs. low clarity) (M_{high} = 5.21, SD_{high} = .88 vs. M_{low} = 4.09, SD_{low} = 1.44; F(1, 112) = 3.54, p < .001). Conversely, participants who were in the control condition (i.e., no

conflict) demonstrated no difference in self-brand connections between the two brands ($M_{high} = 4.34$, $SD_{high} = .98$ vs. $M_{low} = 4.33$, $SD_{low} = 1.12$; F(1, 112) = .10, n.s., see Appendix H).

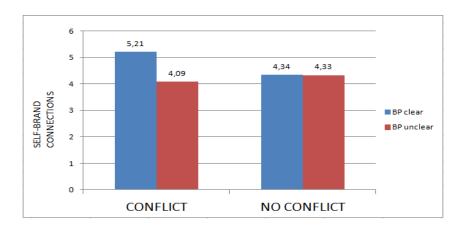


FIGURE 4: IDENTITY CONFLICT X BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 3)

Mediation: Uncertainty reduction

An ANOVA was performed with identity conflict and brand personality clarity as between-participants factors predicting felt uncertainty (α = .96). This revealed the predicted interaction between description of brand personality clarity and identity conflict (F(1, 112) = 4.27; p < .05). When participants visualized an identity conflict, evaluating a brand with a high brand personality clarity (vs. low clarity) had a significant decreasing effect on their felt uncertainty (M_{high} = 1.70, SD_{high} = 1.39 vs. M_{low} = 3.31, SD_{low} = 1.43; F(1, 112) = -4.43, p < .001). After seeing a brand with a high clarity brand personality, participants' level of felt uncertainty is similar to the control condition. There was no difference in terms of felt uncertainty between the two brand descriptions when participants in the control condition (M_{high} = 1.63, SD_{high} = 1.15 vs. M_{low} = 2.17, SD_{low} = 1.53; F(1, 112) = -1.44, n.s.).

In addition, the author wanted to rule out the alternative hypothesis that cognitive load could be driving this effect. Indeed, the clear brand could be seen as the easier choice and option for consumers who could connect more deeply with it when they are experiencing a higher cognitive load (i.e., identity conflict). However, no differences were found between participants in the different conditions in terms of their effort ratings. Indeed, no main effects of identity conflict $(M_{\text{conflict}} = 3.25, SD_{\text{conflict}} = 1.25 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{control}} = 2.95, SD_{\text{control}} = 1.33; F(1, 112) = 1.25, n.s.)$ and brand personality clarity $(M_{\text{high}} = 3.04, SD_{\text{high}} = 1.22 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{low}} = 3.14, SD_{\text{low}} = 1.37; F(1, 112) = .41, n.s.)$ as well as interaction effect between the two were found on subjects' evaluation of their mental efforts (F(1, 112) = .79, n.s.). No differences were observed in terms of mental efforts required between participants who saw a clear brand personality (vs. low clarity) when they faced an identity conflict $(M_{\text{high}} = 2.78, SD_{\text{high}} = 1.06 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{low}} = 3.09, SD_{\text{low}} = 1.52; t(58) = -.91, n.s.)$.

Discussion

The results of study 3 provide additional evidence that individuals who face an identity conflict are likely to raise their connections with brands that possess a high clarity brand personality as a mean to reduce the uncertainty associated with this problematic. Study 3 was different from studies 1 and 2 in several important ways. Specifically, this study mimicked a possible identity conflict, providing support for practical implications. The findings indicate that consumers may end up choosing and connecting with clear brands when they are experiencing conflicting demands from two important identities. Brands can be used as a coping strategy helping to decrease negative emotions related to identity conflicts. In addition, the author ruled out the alternative hypothesis that cognitive load has driven the effect. The easiness associated with the high clarity brand personality cannot explain the increase in self-brand connections.

STUDY 4

Study 4 was designed with two purposes in mind. The first was to further explore the impact of a primed identity conflict on self-brand connections. Toward understanding the robustness of

the effect of identity conflicts on connections for high clarity brand personality, in this study, the author investigates the impact of conflicting demands between two important identities. This time, the academic and social demands of students' lives will be examined.

Second, confirming the hypothesized mediator, further examine the role of uncertainty reduction in the relationship between identity conflicts and self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality. Based on the argument that uncertainty reduction is the mediator, the author expects that affirmation of the self-concept clarity before experiencing the identity conflict will mitigate the effect on self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality.

Method

Participants

In a 2 (identity conflict: present vs. control) X 2 (brand personality clarity: high clarity vs. low clarity) X 2 (self-clarity affirmation: affirmed or not) between-subjects experimental design, 190 student participants, with an age between 18 and 29 years old, from a large university participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit. The author excluded respondents who did not complete the manipulation task correctly. More precisely, 14 respondents who did not answer the whole self-affirmation questionnaire were removed from the analysis, which resulted in a final sample size of 176 (77 females).

Procedure and measures

First, participants completed the self-concept clarity manipulation in which they could express the certainty of their self-concept. Participants were assigned randomly to one of two conditions in which they were asked to fill out either a "Self-Clarity Questionnaire" to assess their self-concept clarity or a "Personal Information" questionnaire that gathered information such as where they went to high school, their professional occupation and gender (control). The

Self-Clarity Questionnaire included a ranking question about values and personal characteristics and asked participants to place them in order of personal importance. The values assessed were: justice, sense of humor, relationships with friends/family, spontaneity, courage, modesty, musical appreciation, respect, creativity, honesty, and romantic values. Then they were asked to write an essay about their most important value and why it is important to them (Crocker et al. 2008; Schimel et al. 2004). This value affirmation task was proved to increase self-clarity (Stapel and van der Linde 2011).

A pretest was done to validate that people express more certainty about their self-concept after this manipulation. Participants (n = 52) from a subject pool were randomly assigned to the Self-Clarity Questionnaire or the Personal Information Questionnaire. After, subjects answered 12 items from relevant previous studies (Campbell et al. 1996). Sample items included: "My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another" and "I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Participants who answered the Self-Clarity Questionnaire felt less uncertainty about their self-concept ($M_{\text{self-clarity}} = 2.75$, $SD_{\text{self-clarity}} = 1.11$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.15$, $SD_{\text{control}} = .85$; t(50) = 5.10, p < .001).

Participants were then assigned to the identity conflict manipulation. People were put either in the control or the identity conflict manipulation. In the control condition, people just read about a typical day as a student at a large university. In the identity conflict, participants read a scenario where they have to imagine that they have to choose between social and academic obligations (i.e., birthday party and important midterm exam, see appendix D for the exact scenario). This scenario was particularly relevant for students since those are two important identities for students and this study was done in a period right before their own midterm exams. After explaining how the situations made them feel, participants rated how they felt in relation to

the diverse scenarios. Next, participants were instructed to complete a second supposedly unrelated task using the same brand personality manipulation used in previous studies and responded to the manipulation check questions anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) about the brand personality clarity as in the prior studies. After reading the brand description, the participants answered the same series of dependent measures described in previous studies.

Results

Manipulation checks

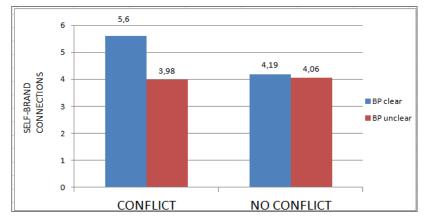
A 2 (conflict: present vs. control) x 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) ANOVA on the manipulation checks revealed only main effects for conflict such that participants who were in the identity conflict situation reported feeling more conflicted (5 questions, α = .93) than those in the control condition (M_{conflict} = 4.45, SD_{conflict} = 1.17 vs. M_{control} = 2.43, SD_{control} = 1.28; t(174) = 10.90, p < .001). Similarly, after seeing the clear brand personality product, participants reported more brand personality clarity than those in the unclear brand personality condition (M_{high} = 5.88, SD_{high} = .90 vs. M_{low} = 4.95, SD_{low} = 1.01; t(174) = 6.42, p < .001).

Self-brand connections

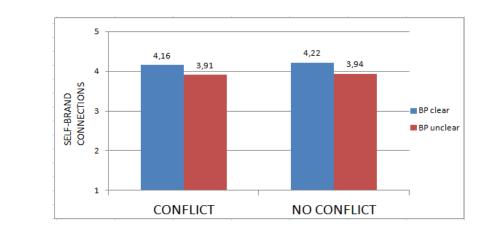
The author examined how experiencing an identity conflict differentially affected participants' self-brand connections (α = .94). To analyze the data, an ANOVA using identity conflict, brand personality clarity and affirmation of self-concept clarity as predictor variables was conducted. As anticipated, a three-way interaction was observed on the self-brand connections index (F(1, 175) = 5.71, p < .05). The author decomposed the interaction by examining each side of the affirmation manipulation (supporting hypothesis 5). In the control condition (in which subjects did not have the opportunity to affirm their self-concept clarity)

there is a significant interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 175) = 13.76, p < .001; see figure 5). Conversely, when participants were able to affirm important values, there was no interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 175) = .50, n.s.).

The simple effects revealed that participants in the control condition (i.e., no affirmation) showed similar patterns to previous studies. Again, within the identity conflict condition, participants exposed to the clear brand personality description felt more emotionally connected to the brand than those exposed to the low brand personality description. This effect is statistically significant ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.60$, $SD_{\text{high}} = .85$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.98$, $SD_{\text{low}} = .90$; F(1,175) = 7.57, p < .001). With the control (i.e., no conflict) condition, presenting a clear brand personality did not increase self-brand connections compared with the unclear brand personality ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.19$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.03$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 4.06$, $SD_{low} = 1.56$; F(1,175) = .53, n.s., see Figure 5 and Appendix I).



A



NOTE.—*A*, Results for control condition (i.e., no opportunity to affirm their self-concept clarity before being primed with the identity conflict). *B*, Results for treatment condition (i.e., affirmation of self-concept clarity before being primed with the identity conflict).

FIGURE 5: IDENTITY CONFLICT X BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY X SELF-CLARITY AFFIRMATION ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 4)

Mediation: Uncertainty reduction

В

The author examined how experiencing an identity conflict differentially affected participants' felt uncertainty (α = .93). An ANOVA using identity conflict, brand personality clarity and affirmation of self-concept clarity as predictor variables was used to analyze the data. As anticipated, a three-way interaction was observed on the felt uncertainty index (F(1, 175) = 4.25, p < .05). The author decomposed the interaction by examining each side of the affirmation manipulation. In the control condition (in which subjects did not have the opportunity to affirm their self-concept clarity) there is a significant interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 175) = 9.10, p < .001). Conversely, when participants were able to affirm important values, there was no interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 175) = .16, n.s.).

The simple effects revealed that participants who didn't have the occasion to express their self-concept clarity showed comparable pattern to previous studies. Again within the identity conflict condition, participants exposed to the high clarity brand personality description felt less uncertain than those exposed to the low brand personality description. This effect is statistically

significant ($M_{\text{high}} = 2.00$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.25$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.75$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.39$; F(1,175) = -5.50, p < .001). With the control (i.e., no conflict) condition, participants showed no difference in felt uncertainty whether they examine a high or a low brand personality clarity ($M_{\text{high}} = 2.06$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.40$ vs. $M_{low} = 2.02$, $SD_{low} = 1.50$; F(1,175) = -.0358, n.s.).

Discussion

Study 4 goes beyond the results of prior studies to explore the mechanism underlying the effect of identity conflicts on self-brand connections for brands with a high clarity brand personality. Not only do the findings replicate the results as shown in previous studies, but they also demonstrate that, for people who have the opportunity to affirm their self-concept clarity, it can diminish the effects of identity conflicts. Supporting hypothesis 5, these results demonstrate that it is the uncertainty related to their identity that drives the connections to the high clarity brand personality. The next study examines the impact of another identity crisis: identity ambiguity. Study 5 investigates the impact of identity ambiguity on self-brand connections as well as the mediation pattern of uncertainty reduction.

STUDY 5

The primary goal of Study 5 was to test the proposition that identity ambiguity leads to stronger self-brand connections. In particular, this experiment examined whether manipulating the identity discrepancies influence connections to brands with a high clarity brand personality (H1). This experiment manipulated the discrepancies between actual and future selves and manipulated brand personality clarity. The author predicted that identity ambiguity will lead to stronger self-brand connections for brands with a clear brand personality. Another goal of Experiment 5 was to examine the mediation hypothesis (H2) by investigating the impact of uncertainty on the relationship between identity ambiguity and self-brand connections.

Method

Participants

142 participants on Crowdflower completed the online survey in exchange for a small monetary reward. This study used a 2 (ambiguity: high vs. low discrepancy) x 2 (brand personality clarity (high vs. low) experimental design. The author screened out participants who did not exert the requisite cognitive effort for the selves questionnaire (list the five traits associated with their ideal self-concepts). Specifically, 13 individuals who did not detail five traits were excluded, ending with a final sample of 129 participants (76 males).

Procedure and measures

At the beginning of the survey, participants were informed that they would be completing multiple tasks during the study session. First, all participants completed the individual version of the selves questionnaire (Higgins et al. 1985). To measure discrepancies, participants were asked to list 5 traits or attributes associated with their ideal self-concepts. After listing each attribute, they rated (a) the extent to which they would like to ideally possess it or believed they should possess it, and (b) the extent to which they actually did possess it. These results were used to divide participants into high and low actual: ideal discrepancy groups at the median of their actual/own: ideal/own discrepancy scores, similar to the method proposed by Higgins (1987).

Next, participants received the website description of a new brand of clothing. The clarity of the brand personality dimension, sincerity, was manipulated with the same content as previous studies. In the high clarity condition, brand Astra was portrayed as possessing several traits related to sincerity. In the low salience condition, brand Astra was illustrated using several traits that were unrelated to a single personality dimension. The dependent variables consisted of self-brand connections, measured with the same items used in previous experiments.

Results

Ambiguity: Self-discrepancy group

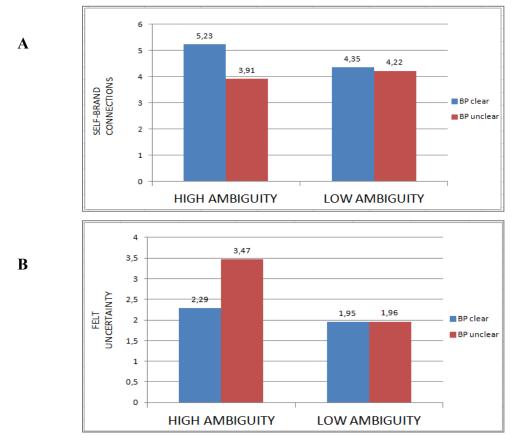
The author divided the subjects into a high discrepancy group (i.e., high ambiguity) and a low discrepancy group (i.e., low ambiguity) with respect to the selves questionnaire. To create the groups for the high and low actual: ideal discrepancy, a median split on measures of actual/own: ideal/own discrepancy scores was used. The high discrepancy group was indicated by a measured discrepancy score that was higher than the median ($M_{high} = 10.34$, $SD_{high} = 4.56$ vs. $M_{low} = 2.27$, $SD_{low} = 1.72$; t(127) = 13.34, p < .001).

Manipulation check: Brand personality clarity

As intended, participants in the high-clarity condition reported high ratings of brand personality clarity (M = 5.80, SD = .88) compared to those in the low-clarity condition (M = 4.44, SD = 1.28; t(127) = 6.97, p < .001).

Self-brand connections

A 2 (identity ambiguity: high vs. low discrepancy) x 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) ANOVA on self-brand connections (α = .95) revealed the anticipated interaction (F(1, 128) = 7.92, p < .01). As expected in hypothesis 1, when identity ambiguity was high, participants connected more strongly to the high clarity brand (M = 5.23, SD = 1.10) than to low clarity brand (M = 3.91, SD = 1.20; F(1, 128) = 4.63, p < .001; refer to Figure 6). In addition, when identity ambiguity was low, high clarity brand were evaluated in terms of self-brand connections similarly to the low clarity brand (M_{high} = 4.35, SD_{high} = 1.38 vs. M_{low} = 4.22, SD_{low} = 1.16; F(1, 128) = .41, n.s., see Appendix J).



NOTE.—A, Self-brand connections resulting from divisions of participants into high ambiguity group versus low ambiguity groups across brand personality clarity conditions. B, Felt uncertainty resulting from high and low ambiguity groups across brand personality clarity conditions.

FIGURE 6: IDENTITY AMBIGUITY X BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 5)

Mediation: Uncertainty reduction

To measure felt uncertainty, the author averaged the three questions on felt uncertainty emotions (α = .96). An ANOVA with felt uncertainty index as the dependent variable revealed a significant interaction between description of brand personality clarity and identity ambiguity (F(1, 128) = 5.43; p < .05). Simple effect tests revealed that, consistent with hypothesis 2, participants with a high actual-ideal discrepancy felt more certain (i.e., experienced an uncertainty reduction) when they were facing a brand with a high brand personality clarity as compared to a low clarity brand (M_{high} = 2.29, SD_{high} = 1.58 vs. M_{low} = 3.47, SD_{low} = 1.40; F(1,

128) = -3.17, p < .01). After seeing a brand with a high clarity brand personality, participants' level of felt uncertainty is similar to the no conflict condition (F(1,128) = .91, n.s.). In contrast, participants with a low level of discrepancy did not differ in their felt uncertainty as a function of the brand personality clarity ($M_{high} = 1.95$, $SD_{high} = 1.33$ vs. $M_{low} = 1.96$, $SD_{low} = 1.37$; F(1, 128) = -.02, n.s.).

Discussion

Study 5 examined the impact of another possible identity crisis. The results of study 5 support hypotheses 1 and 2 and provide evidence that the impact of identity ambiguity on self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality is the same as for identity conflict. Identity ambiguity increases uncertainty and in order to reduce this uncertainty, individuals connect more deeply with brands that have clear boundaries (i.e., high clarity brand personality). This finding further supports the theory that high clarity brand personality increases self-brand connections by reducing the intensity of the felt uncertainty associated with the identity crisis.

Thus far, across a range of identity crisis, the results showed that high clarity brand personality increases connections between the self and the brand. The previous studies have also demonstrated the role of uncertainty reduction in this effect by both measuring changes in emotion and the felt uncertainty after evaluating the brand. In the next study, the author will demonstrate further robustness of the influence of uncertainty reduction on this relationship by manipulating uncertainty prior to the brand evaluation.

STUDY 6

This study served one important purpose. The main goal of this experiment was to further examine the process of uncertainty reduction and how it increases self-brand connections for brands with brand personality clarity. The proposition is that identity conflicts create uncertainty

for individuals and that under uncertainty people want to connect more strongly with brands that have a clearly defined brand personality. Brand personality clarity provides clear boundaries that will help consumers in reducing their uncertainty. This study highlights this process by adding a condition that directly manipulates uncertainty. More specifically, the author demonstrates in this study that, for consumers who experience an identity conflict, receiving news that is certain (vs. uncertain) before seeing the brand will mitigate the connections they will create with the clear brand personality. Indeed, being reassured will moderate the effect of identity conflict on self-brand connections for the brand with high brand personality clarity. In contrast, when people experience an even more uncertain situation (i.e., receive information about the recession, job loss), their connections for the clear brand personality will be stronger. Finally, even for participants who do not experience an identity conflict, uncertainty can mimic the effect of identity conflicts to increase connections for the high clarity brand personality.

Method

Participants

In a 2 (identity prominence: distinct vs. overlapping identities) x 2 (brand personality clarity: high vs. low) x 2 (uncertainty: uncertain vs. less uncertain), 258 participants, with an average age of 39, completed an online study on Crowdflower in exchange for a small monetary incentive. Four participants were dropped because they did not provide relevant social identities, resulting in a final sample size of 254 (135 females).

Procedure and measures

Participants were told that they had to do a series of unrelated tasks. The cover story was that Astra (i.e., the new brand) wanted to test their website content in order to analyze consumers' attitude. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions. First,

similar to study 1, participants were asked to name important social identities and write about how these social identities were distinct (vs. overlapping) from one another. Following this manipulation, participants read a carefully chosen newspaper article and state the words or sentences that make them feel uncertain (e.g., financial crisis, foreclosure, unpredictability) or less uncertain (e.g., recovery, hope, opportunities) (See Appendix E). This method of priming uncertainty is adapted from previous research that has successfully primed uncertainty in a similar way (e.g., Grant and Hogg 2012; Hogg et al. 2007; Hogg et al. 2010). Eight manipulation check questions were asked focusing on how uncertain participants felt about themselves, their future and their place in the world. The questions were anchored on a scale for 1 (not very much) to 7 (very much).

The author also conducted a pretest of 66 participants from Crowdflower in order to verify if this manipulation was effective. As expected, participants reported feeling more uncertain about themselves ($M_{\text{uncertain}} = 4.97$, $SD_{\text{uncertain}} = 1.15$ vs. $M_{\text{certain}} = 3.40$, $SD_{\text{certain}} = 1.54$; t(64) = 4.69, p < .001), their future ($M_{\text{uncertain}} = 5.11$, $SD_{\text{uncertain}} = 1.16$ vs. $M_{\text{certain}} = 3.44$, $SD_{\text{certain}} = 1.60$; t(64) = 4.81, p < .001), and the world ($M_{\text{uncertain}} = 5.35$, $SD_{\text{uncertain}} = .87$ vs. $M_{\text{certain}} = 3.88$, $SD_{\text{certain}} = 1.31$; t(64) = 5.38, p < .001) in the uncertain condition (vs. less uncertain).

Following this manipulation, participants were randomly assigned to a brand (high clarity vs. low clarity) and provided their own emotional connections to this brand. The dependent variable was a multi-item measure of self-brand connections, similar to previous experiments.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Those in the identity conflict condition (i.e., identity distinctiveness) felt that their identities were less overlapping ($M_{\text{distinct}} = 4.36$, $SD_{\text{distinct}} = 1.69$ vs. $M_{\text{overlapping}} = 5.85$, $SD_{\text{overlapping}} = 1.13$;

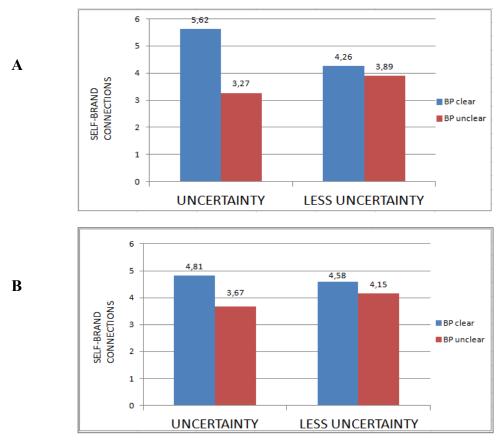
F(1, 253) = 7.86, p < .001) than those in the overlapping condition. Further, participants felt more uncertain about themselves ($M_{\rm uncertain} = 4.59$, $SD_{\rm uncertain} = 1.25$ vs. $M_{\rm lessuncertain} = 3.79$, $SD_{\rm lessuncertain} = 1.45$; F(1, 253) = 4.69, p < .001), their future ($M_{\rm uncertain} = 4.77$, $SD_{\rm uncertain} = 1.27$ vs. $M_{\rm lessuncertain} = 3.91$, $M_{\rm lessuncertain} = 1.53$; F(1, 253) = 4.90, p < .001) and in the world ($M_{\rm uncertain} = 5.25$, $SD_{\rm uncertain} = 1.23$ vs. $M_{\rm lessuncertain} = 4.32$, $M_{\rm lessuncertain} = 1.33$; F(1, 253) = 5.78, p < .001) after reading the uncertain newspaper article (vs. less uncertain). Finally, participants felt that the brand personality was more clear and well-defined in the high brand clarity condition ($M_{\rm high} = 5.90$, $M_{\rm high} = .90$ vs. $M_{\rm low} = 5.00$, $SD_{\rm low} = 1.31$; F(1, 253) = 6.34, p < .001). For all measures, no other effects were shown to be significant.

Self-brand connections

The author examined how the identity conflict (vs. control) and brand personality clarity relationship on self-brand connections (α = .96) is influenced by the uncertainty manipulation. An ANOVA was executed using identity conflict, uncertainty, and brand personality clarity as predictor variables. As predicted, a three-way interaction was observed on the self-brand connections index (F(1, 253) = 4.73, p < .05). The author decomposed the interaction by assessing each side of the uncertainty manipulation. In the uncertain condition (in which participants had to read a newspaper article highlighting words or sentences that are uncertain) there is a significant interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 253) = 8.16, p < .01; see figure 7). Conversely, when participants read the article that was less uncertain, there was no interaction between identity conflict and brand personality clarity (F(1, 253) = .024, n.s.).

For individuals who are primed with uncertainty, self-brand connections were again elevated for a high clarity (vs. low) brand personality ($M_{high} = 5.62$, $SD_{high} = .82$ vs. $M_{low} = 3.27$, $SD_{low} =$

1.10; F(1, 253) = 9.79, p < .001) after identity conflict. Conversely, participants who experienced a less uncertain newspaper article after the identity conflict manipulation showed no differences in self-brand connections for high or low clarity brand personality ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.26$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.19$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.89$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.35$; F(1,253) = 1.05, n.s.). These results demonstrate that uncertainty drives this emotional connection to clear brand personality. Thus, when people are reassured after experiencing their identity conflict, they don't need to connect with a brand to reduce their uncertainty and they don't show any specific behavior toward the high clarity brand.



NOTE.—Self-brand connections resulting from treatment conditions across prime conditions when identity conflict (i.e., distinctiveness) has been primed (A) or not (i.e., overlapping) (B).

FIGURE 7: IDENTITY CONFLICT X UNCERTAINTY X BRAND PERSONALITY

CLARITY ON SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS (STUDY 6)

In addition, simple effects demonstrate that uncertainty manipulation can mimic the effect of identity conflict. Even when participants did not experience an identity conflict, uncertainty led to stronger self-brand connections for high clarity brands ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.81$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 1.43$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.67$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 1.39$; F(1, 253) = 2.74, p < .01). Finally, experiencing both identity conflict and uncertainty elevates connections (M = 5.62, SD = .82) for high clarity brand compared to only uncertainty (M = 4.81, SD = 1.43; F(1, 253) = 2.94, p < .01) and only identity conflict (M = 4.26, SD = 1.19; F(1, 253) = 5.33, p < .001, see Appendix K).

Discussion

The results of study 6 provide additional evidence that uncertainty reduction drives the preferences for brands with a high clarity brand personality. Supporting hypothesis 4, the results also show that being reassured after the identity conflict will mitigate the likelihood of connection with the high clarity brand. Indeed, by reading a less uncertain newspaper article after the conflict, one can mitigate the effects of identity conflict. By reducing uncertainty the author has, as predicted, eliminated the effect of identity conflicts on self-brand connections for high clarity brands. This finding suggests that it is people's uncertainty in their identity that leaves them susceptible to create stronger connections with the clear brand personality. In addition, when people experienced more uncertainty after the identity conflict, they had a stronger emotional connection between themselves and the high clarity brand. Finally, uncertainty can mimic the effect of identity conflict. Thus, participants who faced uncertainty after no identity conflict exhibited stronger connections to the high clarity brand personality.

Overall, this study provided further insight into the mechanism of how identity conflicts affect self-brand connections by reducing uncertainty. This experiment replicated the positive effect of identity conflict on self-brand connections for high clarity brand, while also showing

that no identity conflict can lead to the same outcome as identity conflict when followed by uncertainty. Finally, the author demonstrated that uncertainty reduction can mitigate the effect of identity conflicts on self-brand connections for clear brand personality.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research examines how identity conflicts and identity ambiguity lead to heightened self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality through an uncertainty reduction process. The six experiments provide evidence that identity conflicts and identity ambiguity motivate connections with high clarity brand personality, and that under those circumstances, people identify more strongly with these brands to reduce uncertainty. Specifically, these studies show that high clarity brands can help reduce the uncertainty associated with identity crises and that this clarity can increase the connections between the selfconcept and the brand. Studies 1 and 5 demonstrate the basic effect while providing evidence that identity crises have an effect on brand relationships with certain brands. Studies 2 and 3 provide further evidence of this relationship and investigate the uncertainty reduction mechanism. Study 4 shows that self-clarity affirmation can mitigate the effects of identity conflicts. This study validates that it is the uncertainty about their self-concept that leaves individuals to connect more with high clarity brand personality. Finally, Study 6 also examines the proposed mechanism by demonstrating that reducing the level of uncertainty after the identity conflict attenuates the effect, while combining uncertainty with identity conflict can strengthen the effect of brand personality clarity on self-brand connections.

The current research is the first paper to examine the impact of identity conflicts (i.e., identity prominence and conflicting demands) and identity ambiguity in the self-expression and brand relationship contexts. This essay contributes to the discussion on identity crises. This paper is the

first one to investigate how brands can be used as coping strategies to solve identity crises. This research demonstrates that identity conflicts and identity ambiguity generate higher levels of self-brand connections for high clarity brand personality.

Importantly, this research also demonstrates the role of uncertainty reduction as a process variable in the relationship between identity crises and brand personality clarity on self-brand connections. This is accomplished through mediation analyses (studies 2 through 6), moderation by affirmation of self-clarity (study 4), and moderation by manipulated level of uncertainty (study 6). The findings demonstrate that high clarity brand personality (i.e., having clear boundaries) can positively influence emotional connections to the brand by reducing the uncertainty associated with identity crises.

Theoretical Contributions

Prior work demonstrates the importance of identity creation as a crucial need for individuals and shows that individuals used different strategies in order to resolve identity crises (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Baumeister et al. 1985). The main contribution of the article revolves around the notion that brands can be used as coping strategies when people are facing an identity crisis and how this search for certainty influences their emotional connections with brands. The first important academic contribution is to provide knowledge regarding the impact of identity crises in the creation of self-brand connections. The present research is one of the few to take a pioneering step in understanding the impact of identity crises for consumers in the context of consumer-brand relationships. Thus, the author contributes to the identity crisis literature in two important ways: first by examining the effect of identity crises in a consumption domain (i.e., brand relationships and connections) and examining how brands can be used as a coping strategy by reducing the uncertainty related to the self-concept definition.

This research supports the discussion about the identity complexity, identity conflicts, and ambiguity. The different experiments demonstrate that even if those identity crises can vary in terms of frequency and importance for individuals, they can be contextually primed. Identity prominence and conflicting demands can be manipulated by different means in order to create this feeling of uncertainty.

The present work also contributes to the uncertainty reduction theory by revealing that brands are useful and relevant coping strategies for individuals. The findings across the diverse studies suggest that consumers are more likely to connect with brands that help them in the resolution of their crises. Understanding how to utilize uncertainty reduction in order to increase consumers' level of identification and associations can be applied to many marketing contexts. Marketers may want their customers to feel a high sense of certainty and clarity. For brand managers, certain actions can be managed to facilitate the integration of the brand into the consumer's self-concept. Focusing attention to comprehensive attributes, making salient and clear the boundaries associated with the brand, or simply having a clear definition of its brand personality are examples that can be integrated into their strategies.

Substantial Implications

In conclusion, the present research expands the knowledge on identity crises and how consumers integrate brands into their self-concept. The findings of this paper will help companies and marketers to emotionally connect with consumers during those periods of identity crises. Individuals experience, more than ever, different identity crises. They search for ways to diminish stress and anxiety associated with those moments. Brand managers and marketers can be active participants in this process to increase consumers' connections with the brand. The

findings suggest that brand managers can work on several important issues, such as creating a salient, clear and distinctive brand personality, to reduce uncertainty created by identity crises.

Future Research

The present research has some limitations that could be investigated in the future. The different scenarios help the clear manipulation of identity conflicts. However, consumers do not really experience those conflicts and deal with the real consequences. Thus, future research should try to replicate the results in a real context with real brands and validate the conclusions described in this essay. For example, it could be interesting to examine this process after people have resolved their identity crises.

Another factor that would be interesting to examine is the type and the severity of conflicts. In the studies, all participants experienced the same conflict over a restricted period of time. Varying the type of crisis, its intensity, and its duration could lead to more intense results in terms of identifying with the brand. Indeed, the severity of the identity crisis could lead to more intense uncertainty and bring individuals to search for more extreme coping strategies.

Finally, the type of product or brand personality could also be examined. In this study, the brand personality was kept general and not related or not to the identity crisis. However, whether the brand is related to the specific identity could modify the results. For instance, it could be interesting to verify if an adverse reaction could occur for brands that are not related to identity crisis or not related to the chosen identity.

In conclusion, the present research broadens the way identity crises are resolved in the literature to include not only psychological processes, but also consumption experiences, such as consumer-brand relationship. Specifically, the author uncovers the impact of brand personality clarity when people experience identity crises and shows it can heighten self-brand connections.

The author hopes to facilitate future research in this area as identity crises may be experienced frequently by consumers.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Consumers' lives are filled brand interactions, and occasions to create emotional connections with these brands. As consumers develop, maintain, and express their sense of identity, brands serve an important supporting role in this process. Several brands are focusing on this self-expressive function to stimulate their associations with consumers. But, how does consumers' need for identity formation and the environment can influence the relationship with those lifestyle brands? This dissertation examines under which identity circumstances self-brand connections can be strengthened. What goes on in consumers' minds when they face an identity threat or an identity crisis, and why is this relevant to marketers?

Specifically, the two essays tackle the role of identity processes on how relationships and connections between brands and consumers evolve and strengthen over time. The first essay shows that the congruence between the self-concept and the brand personality leads to stronger self-brand connections. In order to achieve important identity motives (i.e., continuity and self-esteem), individuals are emotionally connecting with a precise brand personality. Furthermore, identity threats that people can face in their everyday lives directly influence their relationships with brands.

The second essay examines the role of identity crises in the context of product consumption by showing that brands are used as a coping strategy. The author finds that brands with a high clarity brand personality by providing clear boundaries and attributes help in reducing the uncertainty associated with these identity crisis periods. The salient and clear cues about the brand personality lead people to feel a heightened sense of connections with these brands, especially when the level of uncertainty surrounding them is elevated.

Moreover, the author examines various identity concepts, threats and crises across the studies in both essays. This was not only to test the robustness of the findings, but also to highlight the practical relevance of understanding the role of identity in consumer behavior. While identity salience can be naturally achieved, it has also been shown to be a malleable, subjective experience that can be experienced as a result of external influences. Following prior work (Ward and Dahl 2014; White and Dahl 2006), the results show that people can gain a sense of connections and preferences for the brand when they face an identity threat or when a certain aspect of their identity is particularly salient. Applying and building on prior work related to identity, the author successfully manipulated identity salience and threat with a word search, a sentence rearrangement task, thinking about past experiences and scenarios. Additionally, the researcher manipulated identity conflicts and ambiguity through identity prominence, conflicting demands scenarios and self-discrepancy techniques.

Prior research on brand relationships has mainly focused on how brand managers can help the integration of the brand into their self-concept and the type of norms that govern those relationships. This dissertation builds on this work and expands the current knowledge about how identity aspects affect self-brand connections. The author moves beyond showing emotional consequences to demonstrate the importance of congruence between self-concept and brand personality in the creation of emotional connections between consumers and brands and how this congruity influence their response to identity threats (Essay 1). In addition, essay 2 investigates how brands can be used as a coping strategy in order to reduce the uncertainty associated with an identity crisis.

Self-brand connections and identity as a research topic have vast potential for future inquiries. For example, people will most likely vary in their ability to move on and in their

degree of strategic effort they put in to find peace between their different identities. This suggests that some individuals would be more susceptible than others in terms of how much they are influenced by identity threat or conflicting demands between different aspects of their self-concept. Deeper comprehension would not only allow us to examine the process of identity salience more deeply, but it would also help us gain a better understanding of other traits and characteristics it is related or unrelated with. For example, do people with a high need or ability to achieve identity clarity also have a high need for other types of clarity? Are these people better emotion regulators or are they less affected by external factors in their different psychological and consumption patterns?

Another area of future research is to examine the role of uncertainty reduction as a goal or motivational drive. All studies in the second essay look at how brand personality can provide clarity for consumers. However, uncertainty reduction may motivate people to behave in certain ways, and future research could examine how products or services providers can influence this uncertainty. This relationship between identity crises, uncertainty reduction, and consumption patterns could be examined in several different domains and angles.

Finally, the approach and avoidance aspects of self-priming and threat could be interesting to investigate further. Indeed, in this research, individuals were confronted with one brand, one specific evaluation at the time. However, in reality, people encountered hundreds, even thousands of brand stimuli every day. In this sense, it could be interesting to investigate those crises in a real consumption context to see the approach and avoidance of related and unrelated products.

These are only some general directions for future research, as the possibility of future research in this area seems abundant. The author looks forward to continued investigation of this

topic to better understand the cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes associated with self-concept and identity crises in various domains.

Limitations

Despite providing strong contributions to the field, this research is not without its limitations. In essay 1, multiple methods were used to reduce method bias. Nonetheless, an important limitation in the two essays is the arguable artificiality of the experimental method. To elicit the self-concept and identity conflicts, participants were forced to express memorable past events or to read hypothetical scenarios to elicit feelings of threat or identity crises. This manipulation, although effective in terms of evoking identity problems among participants, may have represented a timid illustration of achieving identity threats and crises in a brand context. Indeed, consumers do not actually experience the threat or the crisis and thus do not endure the torment associated with these events in an actual setting. In this matter, it would also be interesting to evoke these sensations with videos or a field study (e.g., multimedia tool, personalized brand communication), as these are the means by which consumers are naturally exposed to identity threats and crises in real world situations.

In addition, this experimentation method limits the generalizability associated with the investigation of two personality traits with restricted product categories. Further, this relationship between the brand and the consumer was artificially created. One question pertains to whether such affiliations are temporary or relatively stable. Indeed, some may argue the degree and the strength to which emotional connections were developed at all. The short time associated with these experiments can raise questions regarding the conservation of observed effects as well as the establishment of a relationship.

Limitations regarding the scales should also be pointed. Some scales used only one particular item (e.g., self-enhancement), leading to the impossibility of examining the reliability of this scale. Future studies should include a multi-item version of the identity processes to avoid error measurements of these constructs. In addition, the identity motive scales (Breakwell 1986; Vignoles et al. 2006) is undertested in the literature, especially in consumer behavior research. Further research should focus on assessing the reliability of this scale.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, David A. and Alexander L. Biel (1993), *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's Role in Building Strong Brands*, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Aaker, Jennifer L. (1997), "Dimensions of Brand Personality", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), 347–56.
- Aaker, Jennifer L. (1999), "The Malleable Self: The Role of Self-Expression in Persuasion," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36, 45–57.
- Aaker, Jennifer L., Susan Fournier, and Adam S. Brasel (2004), "When Good Brands Do Bad", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (1), 1–16.
- Ang, Swee Hoon and Elison Ali Ching Lim (2006), "The Influence of Metaphors and Product Type on Brand Personality Perceptions and Attitudes," *Journal of Advertising*, 35 (2), 39–53.
- Ashforth, Blake E. and Fred Mael (1989), "Social Identity Theory and the Organization." Academy of Management Review, 14 (1), 20–39.
- Ashforth, Blake E., Spencer Harrison, and Kevin G. Corley (2008), "Identification in Organizations: An Examination of Four Fundamental Questions", *Journal of Management*, 34 (3), 325–74.
- Baumeister, Roy F. (1986), *Identity: Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baumeister, Roy F. (1993), "Understanding the Inner Nature of Low Self-Esteem: Uncertain, Fragile, Protective, and Conflicted" in *Self-Esteem*, ed. Roy F. Baumeister, New York: Springer US, 201–18.

- Baumeister, Roy F., Jeremy P. Shapiro, and Dianne M. Tice (1985), "Two Kinds of Identity Crisis," *Journal of Personality*, 53 (3), 407–24.
- Belk, Russell W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), 139–68.
- Biddle, Bruce J. (1986), "Recent Developments in Role Theory", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 87–92.
- Breakwell, Glynis Marie (1986), Coping with Threatened Identities, London: Metheun.
- Brewer, Marilynn B. (1991), "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17 (5), 475–82.
- Burke, Peter J. (1980), "The Self: Measurement Requirements from an Interactionist Perspective", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43 (1), 18–29.
- Burke, Peter J. (1991), "Identity Process and Social Stress", *American Sociological Review*, 56, 836–49.
- Burke, Peter J. (2003), "Relationships among Multiple Identities," in *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Peter J. Burke, Timothy J. Owens, Richard T. Serpe, and Peggy A. Thoits, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 195–214.
- Burke, Peter J. (2006), "Identity Change", Social Psychology Quarterly, 69 (1), 81–96.
- Butzer, Bethany and Nicholas A. Kuiper (2006), "Relationships between the Frequency of Social Comparisons and Self-Concept Clarity, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Anxiety, and Depression," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41 (1), 167–76.
- Campbell, Jennifer D., Paul D Trapnell, Steven J. Heine, Ilana M. Katz, Loraine F. Lavallee, and Darrin R. Lehman (1996), "Self-Concept Clarity: Measurement, Personality Correlates, and Cultural Boundaries," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70 (1), 141–56.

- Carver, Charles S. and Michael Scheier (1988), "A Control-Process Perspective on Anxiety," Anxiety Research, 1 (1), 17–22.
- Chaplin, Lan Nguyen and Deborah Roedder John (2005), "The Development of Self-Brand Connections in Children and Adolescents," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), 119–29.
- Chreim, Samia (2002), "Influencing Organizational Identification during Major Change: A Communication-Based Perspective," *Human Relations*, 55 (9), 1117–37.
- Corley Kevin G. and Dennis A. Gioia (2004), "Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-off," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49 (2), 173–208.
- Crocker, Jennifer, Yu Niiya, and Dominik Mischkowski (2008), "Why Does Writing about Important Values Reduce Defensiveness?," *Psychological Science*, 19 (7), 740–47.
- Dittmar, Helga and Sarah Howard (2004), "Thin-Ideal Internalization and Social Comparison Tendency as Moderators of Media Models' Impact on Women's Body-Focused Anxiety," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23 (6), 768–91.
- Dunning, David (2005), Self-insight: Roadblocks and Detours on the Path to Knowing Thyself, New York: Psychology Press.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1970), "Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 51, 11-22.
- Escalas Jennifer Edson (2004), "Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14 (1), 168–80.
- Escalas, Jennifer Edson and James R. Bettman (2003), "You Are What They Eat: The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumers' Connections to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13 (3), 339–48.

- Escalas, Jennifer Edson and James R. Bettman (2005), "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (3), 378–89.
- Fitzsimons, Gráinne M., Tanya L. Chartrand, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons (2008), "Automatic Effects of Brand Exposure on Motivated Behavior: How Apple Makes You "Think Different," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (3), 21–35.
- Fournier, Susan (1998), "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), 343–73.
- Freling, Traci H., Jody L. Crosno, and David H. Henard (2011), "Brand Personality Appeal:

 Conceptualization and Empirical Validation," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*,
 39 (3), 392–406.
- Freeston, Mark H., Josée Rhéaume, Hélène Letarte, Michel J. Dugas, and Robert Ladouceur (1994), "Why Do People Worry?," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 17 (6), 791–802.
- Gibbs, Jennifer L., Nicole B. Ellison, and Chih-Hui Lai (2011), "First Comes Love, then Comes Google: An Investigation of Uncertainty Reduction Strategies and Self-Disclosure in Online Dating," *Communication Research*, 38 (1), 70–100.
- Gilmore, James H. and B. Joseph Pine (2007), *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want, Vol.*1, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Gioia, Dennis A., Majken Schultz, and Kevin G. Corley (2000), "Organizational Identity, Image and Adaptive Instability," *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), 63–81.
- Ginsburg, Sheila D. and Jacob L. Orlofsky (1981), "Ego Identity Status, Ego Development, and Locus of Control in College Women," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 10 (4), 297–307.
- Gollwitzer, Peter M. and Robert A. Wicklund (1985), "Self-Symbolizing and the Neglect of Others' Perspectives," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48 (3), 702–15.

- Grant, Fiona, and Michael A. Hogg (2012), "Self-Uncertainty, Social Identity Prominence and Group Identification," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48 (2), 538–542.
- Grieve, Paul G. and Michael A. Hogg (1999), "Subjective Uncertainty and Intergroup Discrimination in the Minimal Group Situation," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25 (8), 926–40.
- Grohmann, Bianca (2009), "Gender Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 66 (1), 105–19.
- Higgins, Edward Tory (1987), "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," *Psychological Review*, 94 (3), 319–40.
- Higgins, E. Tory, Ruth Klein, and Timothy Strauman (1985), "Self-Concept Discrepancy Theory: A Psychological Model for Distinguishing among Different Aspects of Depression and Anxiety, *Social Cognition*, 3 (1), 51–76.
- Hofstede, Geert (1980). Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hogg, Michael A. (2000), "Subjective Uncertainty Reduction through Self-Categorization: A Motivational Theory of Social Identity Processes," *European Review of Social Psychology*, 11 (1), 223–55.
- Hogg, Michael A. (2004), "Uncertainty and Extremism: Identification with High Entitativity Groups under Conditions of Uncertainty," in *The Psychology of Group Perception: Perceived Variability, Entitativity, and Essentialism*, ed. Vincent Yzerbyt, Charles M. Judd, and Olivier Corneille, NewYork: Psychology Press, 401–18.

- Hogg, Michael A., David K. Sherman, Joel Dierselhuis, Angela T. Maitner, and Graham Moffitt (2007), "Uncertainty, Entitativity, and Group Identification," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43 (1), 135–42.
- Hogg, Michael A., Christie Meehan, and Jayne Farquharson (2010), "The Solace of Radicalism: Self-Uncertainty and Group Identification in the Face of Threat," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46 (6), 1061–6.
- James, William (1890), *Principles of Psychology*, New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Johar, Gita Venkataramani, Jaideep Sengupta, and Jennifer L. Aaker (2005), "Two Roads to Updating Brand Personality Impressions: Trait Versus Evaluative Inferencing," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42 (4), 458–69.
- Kleine, Robert E., Susan Schultz Kleine, and Jerome B. Kernan (1993), "Mundane Consumption and the Self," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2 (3), 209–35.
- Koole, Sander L., Karianne Smeets, Ad van Knippenberg, and ApDijksterhuis (1999), "The Cessation of Rumination through Self-Affirmation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77 (1), 111–25.
- Kreiner, Glen E., Elaine C. Hollensbe, and Mathew L. Sheep (2006), "Where Is the "Me" among the "We"? Identity Work and the Search for Optimal Balance," *Academy of Management Journal*, 49 (5), 1031–57.
- Leary, Mark R., David S. Wheeler, and T. Brant Jenkins (1986), "Aspects of Identity and Behavioral Preference: Studies of Occupational and Recreational Choice," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 49 (1), 11–18.
- Linville, Patricia W. (1985), "Self-Complexity and Affective Extremity: Don't Put All of Your Eggs in One Cognitive Basket," *Social Cognition*, 3 (1): 94–120.

- Longoni, Chiara, Peter M. Gollwitzer, and Gabriele Oettingen (2014), "A Green Paradox: Validating Green Choices Has Ironic Effects on Behavior, Cognition, and Perception," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 50, 158–65.
- Malär, Lucia, Harley Krohmer, Wayne D. Hoyer, and Bettina Nyffenegger (2011), "Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self," *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (4), 35–52.
- Marcia, James E. (1966), "Development and Validation of Ego Identity Statuses," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3 (5), 551–8.
- Marcia, James E. (1976), "Identity Six Years After: A Follow-Up Study," Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 5 (2), 145–60.
- Markus, Hazel Rose (1980), "The Self in Thought and Memory," in *The Self in Social Psychology*, ed. Dan M. Wegner and Robin R. Vallacher, New York: Oxford University Press, 102–30.
- Markus, Hazel Rose (1983), "Self-Knowledge: An Expanded View," *Journal of Personality*, 51 (3), 543–65.
- Markus, Hazel Rose and Ziva Kunda (1986), "Stability and Malleability in the Self-Concept in the Perception of Others," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (4), 858–66.
- Mathur, Pragya, Shailendra P. Jain, and Durairaj Maheswaran (2012), "Consumers' Implicit Theories about Personality Influence their Brand Personality Judgments," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (4), 545–57.
- McCall, George J. and Jerry Laird Simmons (1978), *Identities and Interactions: An Examination of Associations in Everyday Life* (revised ed.), New York: Free Press.

- McGregor, Ian, Mark P. Zanna, John G. Holmes, and Steven J. Spencer (2001), "Compensatory Conviction in the Face of Personal Uncertainty: Going to Extremes and Being Oneself," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80 (3), 472–88.
- Mead, George Herbert (1934), Mind, Self, and Society, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead, George Herbert (2009), Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Neuberg, Steven L. and Jason T. Newsom (1993), "Personal Need for Structure: Individual Differences in the Desire for Simpler Structure," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65 (1), 113–31.
- Orlofsky, Jacob L. (1977), "Sex-Role Orientation, Identity Formation, and Self-Esteem in College Men and Women," *Sex Roles*, 3 (6), 561–75.
- Orlofsky, Jacob L. (1978), "Identity Formation, Achievement, and Fear of Success in College Men and Women," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 7 (1), 49–62.
- Plummer, Joseph T. (1985), "How Personality Makes a Difference," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 24 (6), 27–31.
- Pratt, Michael G. and Peter O. Foreman (2000), "Classifying Managerial Responses to Multiple Organizational Identities," *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), 18–42.
- Preacher, Kristopher J. and Andrew F. Hayes (2008), "Asymptotpic and Resampling Strategies for Assessing and Comparing Indirect Effects in Multiple Mediator Models," *Behavior Research Methods*, 40 (3), 879–91.
- Prentice, Deborah A. (1987), "Psychological Correspondence of Possessions, Attitudes, and Values," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53 (6), 993–1003.

- Reid, Scott A. and Michael A. Hogg (2005), "Uncertainty Reduction, Self-Enhancement, and Ingroup Identification," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31 (6), 804–17.
- Roccas, Sonia and Marilynn B. Brewer (2002), "Social Identity Complexity," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 6 (2), 88–106.
- Saks, Alan M. and Blake E. Ashforth (1997), "Organizational Socialization: Making Sense of the Past and Present as a Prologue for the Future," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51 (2), 234–79.
- Schimel, Jeff, Jamie Arndt, Katherine M. Banko, and Alison Cook (2004), "Not All Self-Affirmations Were Created Equal: The Cognitive and Social Benefit of Affirming the Intrinsic (vs.) Extrinsic Self," *Social Cognition*, 22, 75–99.
- Sedikides, Constantine and Michael J. Strube (1995), "The Multiply Motivated Self," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21 (12), 1330–5.
- Shah, Priti Pradhan (1998), "Who Are Employees' Social Referents? Using a Social Network Perspective to Determine Referent Others," *Academy of Management Journal*, 41 (3), 249–68.
- Sherman, David A. K., Leif D. Nelson, and Claude M. Steele (2000), "Do Messages about Health Risks Threaten the Self? Increasing the Acceptance of Threatening Health Messages Via Self-Affirmation," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26 (9), 1046–58.
- Sorrentino, Richard M., Ramona D. Bobocel, Maria Z. Gitta, James M. Olson, and Erin C. Hewitt (1988), "Uncertainty Orientation and Persuasion: Individual Differences in the Effects of Personal Relevance on Social Judgments," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55 (3), 357–71.

- Stapel, Diederik A., and Lonneke A. J. G. van der Linde (2011), "What Drives Self-Affirmation Effects? On the Importance of Differentiating Value Affirmation and Attribute Affirmation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34–45.
- Stets, Jan E. (2003), "Justice, Emotion, and Identity Theory," in *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Peter J. Burke, Timothy J. Owens, Richard Serpe, and Peggy A. Thoits, New York: Springer, 105–22.
- Stryker, Sheldon (1968), "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 30 (4), 558–64.
- Stryker, Sheldon and Richard T. Serpe (1982), "Commitment, Identity Salience, and Role Behavior: Theory and Research Example," in *Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior*, ed. William Ickes and Eric S. Knowles, New York: Springer-Verlag, 199–218.
- Swaminathan, Vanitha, Karen L. Page, and Zeynep Gurhan-Canli, Z. (2007). ""My" Brand or "Our" Brand: The Effects of Brand Relationship Dimensions and Self-Construal on Brand Evaluations," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (2), 248–59.
- Swann, William B. (1990). "To Be Adored or to Be Known?: The Interplay of Self-Enhancement and Self-Verification," in *Handbook of Motivation and Cognition*, ed. E. Tory Higgins and Richard M. Sorrentino, New York: Guilford, 408–50.
- Tajfel, Henri (1969), "Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice," Journal of Social Issues, 25, 79–97.
- Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner (1979), An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict, Monterey: Brooks/Cole.
- Thoits, Peggy A. (1991), "On Merging Identity Theory and Stress Research," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 54 (2), 101–12.

- Tobin, Stephanie J. and Melissa M. Raymundo (2010), "Causal Uncertainty and Psychological Well-Being: The Moderating Role of Accommodation (Secondary Control," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36 (3), 371-83.
- Turner, John C. (1978), "Social Comparison, Similarity and Ingroup Favouritism," in Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, ed. Henri Tajfel, London: Academic Press, 235–50.
- Turner, John C., Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell (1987), *Rediscovering the Social Group*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Veloutsou, Cleopatra (2009), "Brands as Relationship Facilitators in Consumer Markets", *Marketing Theory*, 9 (1), 127–30.
- Ward, Morgan K., and Darren W. Dahl (2014), "Should the Devil Sell Prada? Retail Rejection Increases Aspiring Consumers' Desire for the Brand," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (3) 590–609.
- Weick, Karl E. (1995), Sensemaking in Organizations, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Weigert, Andrew J., J. Smith Teitge, and Dennis W. Teitge (1986), *Society and Identity*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Weigert, Andrew J. and David D. Franks (1989), "Ambivalence: A Touchstone of the Modern Temper," in *The Sociology of Emotions: Original Essays and Research Papers*, ed. David D. Franks and E. Doyle McCarthy, Greenwich: JAI Press, 205–27.
- White, Katherine and Darren W. Dahl (2006), "To Be or Not Be? The Influence of Dissociative Reference Groups on Consumer Preferences", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16 (4), 404–14.

Wilson, Timothy D., David B. Centerbar, Deborah A. Kermer, and Daniel T. Gilbert (2005), "The Pleasures of Uncertainty: Prolonging Positive Moods in Ways People Do Not Anticipate," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88 (1), 5-21.

APPENDIX A- MEASURES

Dependent variables

Self-brand connections (7 items) (Escalas and Bettman 2005)

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
This brand reflects who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can identify with this brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel a personal connection to this brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I use this brand to communicate who I am to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
other people.							
I think this brand helps me become the type of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
person I want to be.							
I consider this brand to be "me" (it reflects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
who I consider myself to be or the way I want							
to present myself to others).							
This brand suits me well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Brand personality appeal (16 items) (Freling et al. 2011)

This brand's personality is:

unapparent (C1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Apparent
indistinct (C2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distinct
unsatisfactory (F1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Satisfactory
not obvious (C3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Obvious
unpleasant (F2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant
common (O1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distinctive
unattractive (F3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
ordinary (O2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Novel
negative (F4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad (F5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
vague (C4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well-defined
poor (F6)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
undesirable (F7)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Desirable
predictable (O3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Surprising
routine (O4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Fresh
unclear (C5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Clear

Uncertainty Avoidance (Freeston et al., 1994)

The IUS is a general measure of aversion to uncertainty. This 27-item scale assesses reactions to ambiguous situations and the implications of being uncertain. One important factor of this aversion of uncertainty is to control the future and avoid uncertainty (10 items). Individuals rate each item on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (entirely characteristic of me).

	Not at all characteristic of me						Entirely characteristic of me
I should be able to organize everything in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
advance.							
One should always look ahead so as to avoid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
surprises.							
The smallest doubt can stop me from acting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can't stand being taken by surprise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unforeseen events upset me greatly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always want to know what the future has in store	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
for me.							
A small unforeseen event can spoil everything,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
even with the best of planning.							
I can't stand being undecided about my future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It frustrates me not having all the information I	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
need.							
I must get away from all uncertain situations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Emotions Felt uncertainty (McGregor et al. 2001)

Please indicated the extent to which you feel:	Not at all						Very
Bothered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Uneasy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Excited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Нарру	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Joyful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Angry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B- IDENTITY CRISES

MANIPULATION

Identity prominence-OVERLAP (Grant and Hogg 2012) EXPERIMENT 1

First they were asked to list three social identities they considered important to themselves. To manipulate subjective identity prominence they were asked to write a short paragraph describing how these social identities overlapped and were related (overlapping identities) or were distinct from one another (distinct identities). This manipulation was checked by asking participants "how much do you feel your identities overlap" (1 not very much, 9 very much).

Identity prominence-NUMBER (Grant and Hogg 2012) EXPERIMENT 2

To manipulate social identity prominence participants were asked to list one or three social identities (other than nationality) that they considered important in providing them with a sense of who they are. Then they wrote a short paragraph describing this (these) social identity (ies).

Identity ambiguity (Higgins 1987) EXPERIMENT 5

To measure discrepancies, participants will have to write 5 ideal attributes describing themselves. After listing each attribute, they will rate (a) the extent to which they would like to ideally possess it or believed they should possess it, and (b) the extent to which they actually did possess it. They were divided into high and low actual: ideal discrepancy groups at the median of their actual/own: ideal/own discrepancy scores.

APPENDIX C- BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY

Brand personality clarity (Freling et al. 2011, Mathur et al. 2012)

In the high clarity condition, the brand will be illustrated as having several traits related to the sincere brand personality.

- 1. Our brand is based on family-tradition.
- 2. Our brand is dedicated to sincerity, being real.
- 3. We are built around traits of nurturance.
- 4. We are a high-spirited, friendly company.
- 5. Unlike other companies, we do things in a trustworthy way.
- 6. Our products are made in ethical conditions, with original components.









Because life is too meaningful to let it pass you by.

In the low clarity condition, the brand will be described as possessing different traits that are not related to a single personality dimension.

- 1. Astra is based in Houston, TX
- 2. Customer service is a top priority for us.
- 3. We are specialized in sports and athletic products.
- 4. Making life easier for the athletic community is a core company value.
- 5. You will always get the answers you need promptly and courteously.
- 6. Our goal is to provide consumers with the highest quality products by assuring their performance, consistency, safety and value.







APPENDIX D- IDENTITY CONFLICT SCENARIOS

MOM: IDENTITY CONFLICT CONDITION (STUDY 3)

Imagine that you are finishing your day at work. As you are wrapping up your day, your supervisor asks you to do some overtime to finish a presentation for an important client. This extra hour will make you late to pick up your kids at school. It is impossible for you to finish the presentation in time to be able to pick up the kids. You must choose between your professional and personal obligations.

Take a couple of minutes and as much space as you need in order to fully elaborate and describe how you feel.

STUDENT: IDENTITY CONFLICT CONDITION (STUDY 4)

Imagine that you have an important exam next Monday. This exam is worth 40% of your semester and you really need to study in order to get a good grade. You just received a phone call from your one of your friends who is celebrating his 21st birthday on Saturday night. This event will reduce the number of hours you will be able study for your exam, but you don't want to disappoint your friend.

Take a couple of minutes and as much space as you need in order to fully elaborate and describe how you feel.

APPENDIX E- UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty (Grant and Hogg 2012; Mittal and Griskevicius 2014)

UNCERTAINTY CONDITION

The Great Recession of 2007–091 had **severe** consequences in both Canada and the United States, including significant net job losses, totalling 430,000 in Canada and 8.7 million in the United States. The unemployment rate has remained high for years and **shows little sign of going down any time soon**. For example, an unusually large share of the unemployed have been out of work for six months or more, and many workers who would like to work full time have been able to obtain only part-time employment. In addition, despite some job gains, many big employers continue to downsize their workforce or lay off workers. This situation is very difficult for the general economy and U.S. Citizens. NBC News reported this month that: "Already some 5 million homes have been lost to **foreclosure**; estimates of future foreclosures range widely. [Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi], who has followed the mortgage mess since the housing market began to crack in 2006, figures foreclosures will strike **another three million homes** in the next three or four years.

LESS UNCERTAIN CONDITION

The Great Recession of 2007–09 had consequences in both Canada and the United States, including significant net job losses, totalling 430,000 in Canada and 8.7 million in the United States. Fortunately, significant **progress** has been made since the crisis. The Canadian job market has proved to be particularly resilient, **recovering** the number of jobs it lost during the recession and adding about 600,000 more. The United States also had regained the majority of its job losses. One reason to be **optimistic** is the fact that the manufacturing employment has started to pick up again in the last year and a half. In addition, the situation is **promising** for the general economy and U.S. Citizens. NBC News reported this month that "U.S. household debt has shrunk significantly. As a result, many households now have more disposable income, even as wages stagnate, says Karen Dynan, vice president for economic studies at the Brookings Institution. All those factors represent glimmers of **hope** for the U.S. economy.

APPENDIX F- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 1

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity				
Identity Prominence	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity			
1=Overlapping	n = 34	n = 33			
(No conflict)	M = 4.24	M = 4.30			
	SD = 1.13	SD = 1.00			
2 = Distinctive	n = 40	n = 41			
(Conflict)	M = 5.03	M = 4.00			
	SD = .72	SD = 1.03			

APPENDIX G-SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 2

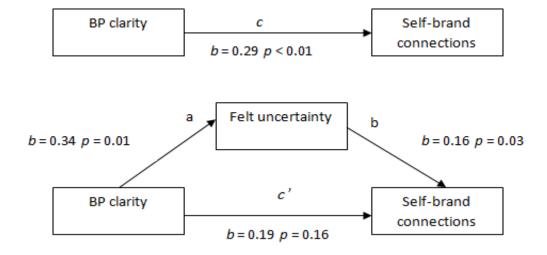
SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity			
Identity Prominence	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity		
1= One identity	n = 36	n = 32		
(No conflict)	M = 4.56	M = 4.20		
	SD = .83	SD = 1.13		
2 = Three identities	n = 37	n = 34		
(Conflict)	M = 5.32	M = 4.04		
	SD = .86	SD = 1.14		

FELT UNCERTAINTY

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity				
Identity Prominence	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity			
1= One identity	n = 36	n = 32			
(No conflict)	M = 2.11	M = 1.95			
	SD = 1.49	SD = 1.26			
2 = Three identities	n = 37	n = 34			
(Conflict)	M = 1.68	M = 3.43			
,	SD = 1.38	SD = 1.87			

Effect of brand personality clarity on self-brand connections mediated by felt uncertainty when identity conflicts



APPENDIX H- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 3

SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity				
Identity Conflict	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity			
1= Present	n = 27	n = 33			
	M = 5.21	M = 4.09			
	SD = .88	SD = 1.13			
2 = Control	n = 26	n = 26			
	M = 4.34	M = 4.33			
	SD = .98	SD = 1.11			

FELT UNCERTAINTY

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity			
Identity Conflict				
	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity		
1= Present	n = 27	n = 33		
	M = 1.70	M = 3.31		
	SD = 1.39	SD = 1.43		
2 = Control	n = 26	n = 27		
	M = 1.63	M = 2.17		
	SD = 1.15	SD = 1.53		

APPENDIX I- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 4

SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

Factor A: Self-Clarity	Factor B: Identity Conflict				
Affirmation	1= Pr	esent	$2 = C_0$	ontrol	
	Factor C: Bran	nd Personality	Factor C: Brai	nd Personality	
	Claı	rity	Clar	rity	
	High	Low	High	Low	
1= Affirmed	n = 20	n = 20	n = 19	n = 23	
	M = 4.16	M = 3.91	M = 4.22	M = 3.94	
	SD = 1.16	SD = 1.05	SD = 1.20	SD = 1.28	
2= Not Affirmed	n = 28	n = 24	n = 23	n = 19	
	M = 5.60	M = 3.98	M = 4.19	M = 4.06	
	SD = .85	SD = .90	SD = 1.03	SD = 1.56	

FELT UNCERTAINTY

Factor A: Self-Clarity	Factor B: Identity Conflict				
Affirmation	1= Pr	esent	$2 = C_0$	ontrol	
	Factor C: Brai	nd Personality	Factor C: Brai	nd Personality	
	Claı	rity	Clar	rity	
	High	Low	High	Low	
1= Affirmed	n = 20	n = 20	n = 19	n = 23	
	M = 1.98	M = 2.13	M = 1.79	M = 1.87	
	SD = 1.30	SD = 1.35	SD = 1.16	SD = 1.25	
2= Not Affirmed	n = 28	n = 24	n = 23	n = 19	
	M = 1.88	M = 3.75	M = 2.06	M = 2.02	
	SD = 1.08	SD = 1.39	SD = 1.40	SD = 1.50	

APPENDIX J- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 5

SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

Factor A:	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity			
Identity Ambiguity	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity		
1= High Discrepancy	n = 33	n = 32		
	M = 5.23	M = 3.91		
	SD = 1.10	SD = 1.20		
2 = Low Discrepancy	n = 30	n = 34		
	M = 4.35	M = 4.22		
	SD = 1.38	SD = 1.16		

FELT UNCERTAINTY

Factor A: Identity Conflict	Factor B: Brand Personality Clarity		
	1= High Clarity	2= Low Clarity	
1= Present	n = 33 $M = 2.29$ $SD = 1.58$	n = 32 $M = 3.47$ $SD = 1.40$	
2 = Control	n = 30 $M = 1.95$ $SD = 1.33$	n = 34 $M = 1.96$ $SD = 1.37$	

APPENDIX K- SUMMARY STATISTICS STUDY 6

SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

Factor A: Uncertainty	Factor B: Identity Prominence				
	1= Overlapping	g (No Conflict)	2 = Distinct (Conflict)		
	Factor C: Brand Personality		Factor C: Brand Personality		
	Clarity		Clarity		
	High	Low	High	Low	
1= Uncertain	n = 34	n = 30	n = 30	n = 33	
	M = 4.81	M = 3.67	M = 5.62	M = 3.27	
	SD = 1.43	SD = 1.39	SD = .82	SD = 1.10	
2= Less Uncertain	n = 34	n = 31	n = 28	n = 34	
	M = 4.28	M = 4.15	M = 4.26	M = 3.89	
	SD = 1.43	SD = 1.37	SD = 1.19	SD = 1.35	