



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

Strong brands feel right

The application of emotional intelligence to brands

The branding literature has not demonstrated how a relationship between a consumer and a brand develops after the identification process. In addition, it was not clear how an emotional connection between a consumer and a brand can be reached. The author proposes emotional intelligence as a brand relationship-building tool that takes these two observations into account. Eight interviews showed that consumers indeed can perceive brands as emotionally intelligent. Emotional intelligence in turn can have short-term effects (attractiveness of a brand), and long-term effects (consumer-brand relationship). Consequences and future research opportunities are discussed.

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Student: Walter Limpens, 0233404

Supervisor: Roger Pruppers

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Emotional Intelligence of brands

A brand can be a valuable asset for a company. According to Interbrand's best global brand list, Coca Cola is world's most valuable brand (Interbrand, 2010). Years and years of advertising have led to an estimated brand value of 69 billion dollars for the Coca Cola company. But a brand is more than a valuable asset on the balance sheet. A strong brand can provide a host of benefits to a firm, such as larger margins, greater consumer loyalty and increased marketing effectiveness (Keller, 2001). Building a strong and valuable brand should be a priority for every ambitious company.

Not only practitioners are interested in the properties and building mechanisms of a strong brand, academics also have had a profound interest in the matter. Brand researchers have developed several conceptualisations of brands and brand building. Probably the most influential, and most cited, model for building strong brands is Keller's consumer based brand equity (Keller, 1993). The consumer based brand equity model explains how a strong brand can be built, leading from brand knowledge (brand awareness and brand image) to brand resonance: a complete harmonious brand relationship. Seeing a brand as a relationship partner is not an obvious association, but if one takes a closer look at the properties of a brand than it indeed is possible to see a brand as a relationship-object. For example, a brand is not only able to communicate to a consumer; a brand can also listen to the consumer (e.g. feedback given by the consumer). A fine example is Best Buy, an online retailer of consumer electronics. Best Buy made use of social media in order to give consumers the opportunity to ask questions to consumer electronic-experts about the products on the Best Buy website. The focus on the consumer has led to the development of a Best Buy fan base, in which the consumers had some kind of relationship with the Best Buy brand (Emarketer, 2009). Another example of the existence of a brand as a relationship-object is the fact that a consumer can develop strong feelings for brands. If one takes a look at Apple, then it is obvious that there are some consumers that develop strong feelings for brands. Apple consumers often declare that they just love the Apple products and the Apple brand. They are willing to spend hours in the queue just to buy the newest Apple products. Some authors even declared that Apple fans suffer from a form of the Stockholm-syndrome, because the irrational praise of the Apple brand leads to their overly positive evaluations of the Apple products (Molblog, 2010).

If one accepts that costumers can see a brand as a dyadic, emotion-eliciting partner in a relationship, the step to see the brand as a personality is easily made. As we will see in later chapters, a brand indeed can be perceived as having a personality because people have the natural tendency to give non-human objects humanlike features (Aaker, 1997). As an example think of the Harley-Davidson brand: if we think of this brand as a person than Harley-Davidson is a tough, wild, adventurous man. If we think of Nike as a person than we can see Nike as a hip, sportive youngster. In other words, the brand personality concept can be used in a similar way as a human personality, and refers to a set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997).

Such a brand personality has multiple advantages. For instance, just like the human personality indicates differences, or agreements, between human beings, a personality of a brand can differentiate a brand. Think of the difference between Grolsch and Amstel. They both basically sell the same product: beer. The main difference however is the personality of the brand. Where Grolsch stands for a sophisticated classy man, Amstel stands for a friendly 'one of the guys' football loving man.

But there are more benefits than differentiation alone. According to Scroggs (1994) a human personality is characterized by consistency, predictability, integration, planning, stability and controlled behaviour. In a similar vein, by treating the brand as a personality, marketers can give the brand a consistent, predictable, integrated, ordered and stable identity. Thus, by using the brand personality as a blueprint for the whole marketing communication mix, marketers can create congruence in the brand associations. The brand personality blueprint also forces the marketers to hold a long-term view of marketing decisions in mind. Finally, adding a soul to a brand can add emotion to a non-living object (Aaker & Fournier, 1995).

The acceptance of a brand personality has led to the development of the brand anthropomorphization literature. Aaker (1997) among others has contributed a lot to our knowledge of a brand as a person. In an attempt to map the personality of brands, Aaker developed a framework of brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. With this she discovered that a brand has got five personality dimensions, just like the Big Five human personality dimensions. People can connect with brand personalities because people can identify with a personality. If a brand has a

personality that corresponds with an individual's actual or ideal self, the individual will prefer that brand to other brands. The greater the congruity between an individual's (actual or ideal) personality and a brand personality, the greater the preference for a brand.

As an example think of the soft drink Red Bull. People who have a extraverted, active, high speed personality, or who wish to have such a personality identify more easily with Red Bull than with another soft drink brand.

Although Aaker's brand personality theory sounds convincing, the theory has some shortcomings. The brand personality is not used as a personality, but rather as a personality trait. In explaining human personalities we can use the Big Five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, Digman, 1990) to determine in which degree the five personality traits are applicable to the personality of an individual. When we describe a friend or a partner, we use multiple personality traits to describe that individual. In contrast, with the five personality traits theory of Aaker a brand personality has only one dominant personality trait. Aaker has distilled a brand personality in to five dimensions, but she does not give a decisive answer on which brand personality dimension is the most successful for a brand.

If one can see the brand as a personality (Aaker, 1997), and consumers can have a relationship with their brands (Fournier 1998), than marketers should create a brand personality that is appropriate for building consumer brand relationships. As said before, the brand personality formerly explained this by the consumer identification process. In other words: a consumer identifies with a brand that has the same personality as his own (or ideal) personality. If we take a look at human relationships, one can see that the identification process is not the only variable that explains the strength of the relationship. A person with one personality trait that corresponds with our own or ideal personality is often liked more, but to become a real friend the partner has to offer more than one similarity. In addition, if we take a closer look at interpersonal relationships, than it becomes evident that the interpersonal behaviour of both partners is very important. A relation stands or dissolves by the behaviour of both partners. For brands this should also be the case, but the brand-as-a-person literature does not account this. In conclusion, we will have to go further than explaining consumer-brand relationships with the identification process.

Having this said, there is yet another important subject that is largely dismissed by the brand-as-a-person theory. In recent years multiple researchers have stressed the importance of affect in consumer behaviour. Yu and Dean (2001) for example found that the affective satisfaction of consumers has a stronger link with their brand loyalty than their cognitive satisfaction. As an example, think of Coca Cola. The cola brand sold a soft drink in the past, but nowadays Coca Cola sells a powerful emotion: happiness. It is far more difficult for Coca Cola to differentiate purely based on the flavour of the Coca Cola drink. The Coca Cola brand, with its emotive associations can add substantial value to the product. The infamous Pepsi paradox proves this (McClure, Li, Tomlin, Cypert, Montague & Montague, 2004). In a blind tasting experiment people normally have a preference for Pepsi compared to Coca Cola. However, when the logo of the brand is shown the preference of the subjects shifts and people prefer Coca Cola to Pepsi. For humans this effect seems to be the same: we have strong feelings for our friends and loved ones that go beyond cognitive associations. When people are asked to describe the reasons of their satisfaction with a relationship with a close friend they will find it difficult to put this into words. This is because the satisfaction is not determined by cognitive factors, but by affective factors. In other words: a recent development in the marketing industry is the focus of brand managers to try to emotionally connect a brand with its consumers. This emotional connection can lead to a brand relationship. The brand anthropomorphization literature should hold this into account.

From the preceding we can conclude: if the goal of brand managers is to build a strong and valuable brand, then there should be a construct that can be used as a tool for developing relationships. That construct should on the one hand develop a wider and more thorough personality theory for brands, and on the other hand holds the affective associations of the consumer in account.

1.2 Problem definition

The personality literature has been a worth full source of ideas for the branding literature. In order to find a construct that can help explain how consumers and brands develop a relationship it is useful to take a closer look at the inter- and intrapersonal relationship literature. There is one very influential personality construct that plays a substantial role in how people build relationships in their personal lives. This factor is termed emotional intelligence, and became popular with Goleman's eponymous book describing the subject (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, assess and manage the

emotions of one's self and of others (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). Goleman started the development of the emotional intelligence theory with the observation that cognitive intelligence (IQ) alone is not sufficient in explaining multiple life outcomes such as job and relationship success. According to Goleman, emotions are very important in relationships, because emotions are powerful 'tools' to communicate. It is often easier to show what you feel than to put this feeling into words. For this reason it should be no surprise that emotional intelligence is a predictor of the quantity and quality of relationships an individual has with other people. Schutte, Malouff, Bobik, Coston, Greeson, Jedlicka, Rhodes and Wendorf (2001) found that participants with a higher emotional intelligence had higher scores for close and affectionate relationships. In addition, participants anticipated greater satisfaction in relationships with partners described as having emotional intelligence. Finally, emotional intelligence was also the most important factor in explaining the successfulness of United States presidents (Greenstein, 2009).

Emotional intelligence can be classified in 4 abilities: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). With self-awareness one has insight in one's own emotions, drives, strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Self-management is the ability to control one's impulses and to channel one's mood constructively. Empathy is the ability to consider another's feelings, to empathize with someone. Finally, social skills is the ability to manage relationships with others.

So it seems that emotional intelligence is an important personality construct that explains the strength of relationships with human beings. Perhaps it is possible that consumers can perceive a brand as emotionally intelligent. If this is the case than emotional intelligence applied to brands will have multiple benefits for academics and practitioners alike. First of all, it can explain why the behaviour of a brand can lead to a brand relationship. Second, emotional intelligence is a wider approach of brand personality than the brand personality construct developed by Aaker (1997). In contrast to the brand personality, an emotionally intelligent personality can be applicable to all brands. Emotional intelligence is a factor that is useful for every relationship. A certain brand personality, however, is only suitable for consumers with the same personality, or consumers who see the brand personality as their ideal personality. Third, as said before emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, assess and manage the emotions of one's self and of others (Goleman, 1995). With the knowledge that affective associations are more important than cognitive factors in explaining brand

relationships, perhaps emotional intelligence can explain how emotions are important in the relationship between a consumer and a brand.

This paper will delve deeper in the emotional intelligence of brands. The most important part of this paper will be an examination whether brands can actually behave as emotionally intelligent. Therefore the problem statement is as follows: Can consumers perceive brands as emotionally intelligent?

1.3 Contribution

1.3.1 Theoretical contribution

Although emotional intelligence has been used before in the consumer behaviour literature (Kidwell, Hardesty & Childers, 2008), emotional intelligence viewed from the perspective of the brand (i.e. the emotional intelligence of a brand instead of the emotional intelligence of the consumer) is a new subject for the consumer behaviour literature. This study will contribute to the brand anthropomorphization literature, and can be seen as a next step in the anthropomorphization of brands, in which brand personality and consumer-brand relationship preceded the emotional intelligence construct. This next step in the anthropomorphization of brands has three theoretical contributions: first, it leads to a wider view of the brand as a person. Second, it can explain why affective reactions of the consumer are important for brand relationships. And third, the emotional intelligence concept can add theoretical contribution to the understanding of the development of these brand relationships.

1.3.2 Managerial contribution

If consumers can perceive brands as emotionally intelligent this should be of great value for brand managers. It can serve as new information for the brand manager in how to approach brands. In particular, it can give a better understanding in the anthropomorphization of brands and how brands can connect with people and thereby develop a brand relationship. For brand managers this should be essential information for a proper brand building strategy.

1.4 Structure of research

This research will start with an overview of the relevant literature. The concept of emotional intelligence is firstly, and above all, a concept that can lead to consumer loyalty. This is why the theoretical framework will start with an overview of the antecedents and consequences of

consumer loyalty. This part will end with the brand relationship theory: a brand and a consumer can have a human-like relationship. If the brand can be seen as a relationship partner it follows that a brand can have a personality. This paper will therefore take a closer look at brand anthropomorphization, and the related brand personality theory. This chapter will end with the conclusion that the brand personality theory has some flaws. What follows is the introduction of emotional intelligence concept. This chapter will try to clarify why emotional intelligence is important for the brand personality and brand relationship literature. From this multiple propositions will be derived. To make the present study more clear, an overview of the research model and methods are presented. Finally, the results are presented as well as the subsequent discussion.

Chapter 2: Building brand resonance

2.1 The importance of brands for companies

For organisations it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate solely on the basis of their product. This has led to a change of focus from tangible aspects (product and product differentiation) to an intangible element of the organisation that is more difficult to imitate: a brand (Kooiman, 2010). In a brand oriented organisation a brand has the highest priority. Research has shown brand oriented organisations are performing financially better than organisations without such a brand focus (Voskuyl, 2009). With the importance of a brand for an organisation in mind, it is useful to develop a broader understanding of the concept of a brand and how brands can create value for consumers.

A brand is defined as a name with reputational associations (Keller, 1993; Franzen, 2000). A brand is an intangible concept because it only exists in the mind of the consumer and should be seen as a network of associations between elements (nodes) in a customer's memory (Franzen, 2000). The brand lies in the centre of these nodes. If the brand node reaches a certain activation threshold than the nodes that are connected with the brand node are activated through a process that we call spreaded activation. The result is that thinking about a certain brand leads to the automatic activation of associations that are linked with that brand. Or the other way around: thinking about certain associations can lead to the activation (and subsequent consciousness) of the brand node.

In order to explain the effect of brand associations on a consumer's response to marketing actions Keller has develop the customer based brand equity model (Keller, 1993). Keller defines customer based brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on a consumer's response to marketing. Keller's customer based brand equity model is probably the most influential, and most cited, model for building strong brands. This chapter will take a closer look at Keller's customer based brand equity model, and explain how brand equity can be built by achieving brand resonance: a complete harmonious relationship between a consumer and a brand. In addition, this chapter will discuss the outcomes and categories of brand resonance and explain why brand resonance is important for every brand (manager). Subsequently, quick overviews of other brand relationships that are comparable with the brand resonance concept are given. Finally, this chapter will take a closer look at the importance of emotions for brand resonance, and other consumer-brand relationships.

2.2 Antecedents of brand resonance

According to Keller (1993) customer based brand equity is achieved when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in his/her memory. These brand associations that the consumer holds in memory is called brand knowledge. Brand knowledge can be divided into brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness (or brand identity) can be divided into the consumer's brand recognition and brand recall. A brand image is developed if the brand awareness is sufficient and the brand node has been established in memory. The image of a brand consists of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory. Brand image can be seen as the meaning of a brand for the consumer. The associations that a consumer holds in memory can be grouped by their level of abstraction: attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a product or service. Attributes can be divided in product-related attributes and non-product related attributes. The product-related attributes are the ingredients necessary for performing the product or service that consumer desire. The non-product related attributes are external aspects of the product or service. There are four main types of non-product related attributes: price information, packaging or product appearance information, user imagery (associations of a typical brand user) and usage imagery (associations of a typical usage situation). User and usage imagery, in turn, can produce brand personality attributes. According to Keller, brand personality attributes, in addition to a consequence of user and usage imagery, can also reflect emotions or feelings evoked by the brand.

The second type of associations is benefits. Benefits are the personal value the consumer attaches to the product or service. Benefits can be divided into: functional benefits, experiential benefits and symbolic benefits. The functional benefits are the intrinsic advantages of a product or service, and are mostly product-related attributes. The experiential benefits are related to what it feels like to use the product or service, and these again are product-related attributes. The symbolic benefits are the more extrinsic advantages of the consumption of a product or service, these are non-product related attributes.

The third type of associations is brand attitudes. A brand attitude is a consumer's overall evaluation of a brand, and can be seen as the response of the consumer to the attributes and benefits of a brand. The brand attitude can be divided into a cognitive and an affective component. The cognitive brand judgement is the opinion of a consumer about the brand,

based on product and non-product related attributes and benefits. The affective brand feelings are the consumer's emotional reactions to the brand.

The above-mentioned types of associations are part of the consumer's brand knowledge. In an attempt to demonstrate the advantages of strongly held, favourably evaluated associations that are unique to the brand Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) looked at the relationship between brand knowledge and current and future purchases of the consumer. They indeed found a positive relationship between the brand knowledge of a consumer and the current purchase intention of that consumer. However, they also found that brand knowledge does not have a relationship with future purchases. Esch et al. (2006) found that for future purchases the brand not only has to be familiar and have a positive image, the brand also has to build a positive brand relationship with the customer.

Keller holds this into account: the final step in his customer based brand equity model focuses on the relationship and level of personal identification the customer has with the brand (Keller, 1993). A brand relationship is not simply achieved. According to Keller the brand has to meet multiple requirements to reach brand resonance. The customer's opinions about the brand in terms of judgements and feelings can lead to identification with the brand resulting in a brand relationship, or brand resonance. According to Keller brand resonance is characterized by the attachment, or psychological bond, between the consumer and the brand.

In an examination of the validation of Keller's model Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) looked at the influence of brand judgements and brand feelings on brand resonance. The authors indeed found a positive relationship between brand satisfaction (cognitive brand judgements) and brand trust (affective brand feelings) with brand attachment. Brand attachment in turn does not only have a positive relationship with the current purchase intention of the customer, but also with the future purchase intention of the customer. Brand resonance is not however only focused on current and future purchase intention; it is a form of intense, active loyalty. In order to explain this intense, active loyalty the next paragraph will take a closer look at the categories of brand resonance.

2.3 Categories of brand resonance

According to Keller (2001) brand resonance can be broken down into four categories: behavioural loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement. Other researchers agree with Keller that the consumer-brand relationship is more than the loyalty of the consumer. Oliver (1999) for example states that a customer's loyalty begins with his repeated purchase: the behavioural loyalty. He defines loyalty as: "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, 1999, p.34). According to Oliver this cognitive loyalty is the first phase of loyalty. The loyalty is based on cognitive brand belief only, there are no feelings involved. Cognitive loyalty alone is not enough for 'true' consumer loyalty. In the automobile industry, where 85% to 95% of the customers are satisfied, only 30% to 40% of the consumers are loyal with the previous make or model (Reichheld, 1996 in Oliver, 1999). In addition to the cognitive side of loyalty, consumers can also become loyal on the basis of their attitude. If the consumer gets satisfied on multiple usage occasions, a liking or attitude has developed for the brand (Oliver, 1999). Loyalty on basis of an attitude, or affective loyalty is a stronger form of loyalty than the cognitive based behavioural loyalty. Where cognitive loyalty is subject to counter argumentation, affective loyalty can survive counter argumentation on the basis of feelings. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) also found a difference between behavioural loyalty (what they call purchase loyalty) and attitudinal loyalty. The consumer's behavioural loyalty has a positive influence on the market share of the brand: the brand is repeatedly purchased by the customer. The customer's attitudinal loyalty, however, has a different effect on the behaviour of the customer. Attitudinal loyalty has a positive influence on the relative price of the brand. In other words: a customer with an attitudinal loyalty is willing to pay more for the brand he is loyal to. So it seems like the attitudinal loyal customer perceives the brand as more valuable than the behavioural loyal customer, who just repurchases the brand.

The consumer's current and future purchase of the brand is not the only consequence of brand resonance. The consumer brand resonance can also lead to a sense of community and active engagement. A sense of community can give the customer a group feeling with other users of the same brand. This sense of community can lead to a brand community. With a brand community multiple customer-centred relationships are enhanced, and the bond between the customer and the brand is strengthened (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). The

second non-purchase related loyal behaviour is the active engagement of the customer. Active engagement is perhaps the strongest category of brand loyalty. According to Keller (1993) active engagement manifests itself in the availability of resources of the customers for the brand, beyond those spent during purchase or consumption. The most important form of the active engagement of the customer is his/her word-of-mouth behaviour. Word-of-mouth behaviour is the implicit or explicit recommendation of the brand to others. Satisfied customers who share their experiences with others can be seen as ambassadors of the brand (Gounaris & Sthathakopoulos, 2004).

In conclusion, a brand relationship or brand resonance can lead to multiple positive outcomes. It is clear from the outcomes of brand resonance that the brand resonance concept can be seen as a reciprocal relationship between the consumer and a brand. The relationship is not only valuable for the brand (i.e. purchase and non-purchase related consumer behaviour), the consumer also benefits from the relationship (i.e. a sense of community). In addition to Keller's interpretation of brand resonance, other researchers have taken the relationship metaphor a step further. These researchers compared the relationship of a brand and a consumer with an interpersonal relationship. The next paragraph will give an overview of these theories to gain a complete understanding of consumer brand relationships.

2.4 Consumer brand relationships

In a first attempt to classify person-brand relationships Fajer and Schouten (Fajer & Schouten, 1995 in Veloutsou, 2007) developed a brand continuum. They identified five potential stages in the friendship: potential friends (brand trying), causal friends (brand liking), close friends (multi-brand resurgent loyalty), best friends (brand loyalty) and crucial friends (brand addiction). In the terminology of Keller's (1993) customer based brand equity model, the person-brand relationships of Fajer and Schouten describe how a brand attitude (causal friends: brand liking) can lead to brand resonance (crucial friends: brand addiction). Indeed brand resonance can be seen as a friendship between a human and a brand. For example, Varley (2008) concludes that consumers can develop a friendship with a brand. Brands can be liked, but it is much more valuable for companies if their customers have some sort of friendship with the company brand: if the brand is loved by the customers.

In a similar vein, Fournier (1998) approached the brand relationship by using theories of human relationships. With three case studies Fournier concluded that: "brand relationships are

valid at the level of consumers' lived experiences" (Fournier, 1998 p. 360). Consumers buy a brand because they have a relationship with that brand. The consumers have a relationship with the brand because the brand adds meaning into their lives. These meanings can be functional and utilitarian (e.g. "this brand is the best in its category"), but they also can be psychosocial and emotional (e.g. "this brand defines an important part of who I am").

On the basis of the case studies, Fournier concludes with the development of seven dimensions of consumer-brand relationships: voluntary versus imposed, positive versus negative, intense versus superficial, enduring versus short-term, public versus private, formal versus informal and symmetric versus asymmetric. From these seven dimensions fifteen relationship forms can emerge. These relationship can be valued with the help of six dimensions of brand relationship quality: brand partner quality (a brand's performance as a relationship partner), intimacy (strongly held knowledge structures of the brand in the mind of the customer), interdependence (frequent brand interactions and brand related activities that are intense of nature), commitment (the customer's intention to behave in a relationship supportive manner), self-connection (the brand expresses a significant aspect of the customer) and love/passion (a customer's strong affect for the brand). In conclusion, the strength of a relationship can be determined by affective and socioemotive attachment (love/passion and self-connection), behavioural ties (interdependence and commitment), and cognitive beliefs (intimacy and brand partner quality).

Finally, Veloutsou (2007) presents empirical findings on the nature of brand relationships. With the use of focus groups, Veloutsou found that although customers did not necessarily accept that they had a relationship with brands, they often build bonds with brands. The results indicated that brand relationship is a concept with two dimensions: two way communication and emotional exchange. Consumers want to communicate with their brand. This means that consumers do not only want to hear from their brand, the brand also has to listen to the customer (e.g. providing feedback). In addition, Veloutsou concluded that consumers appear to develop feelings towards brands. They have some closeness with a brand and feel that they benefit from the interaction with the brand. In conclusion, consumers can develop a relationship with a brand. This can only be done when the brand elicits some strong, favourable and unique associations (Keller, 1993). The next paragraph will take a closer look at a tool that can help in building these particular associations: a brand personality.

Chapter 3: Brand personality

3.1 Brand personality as a tool for developing brand relationships

In the previous chapter we concluded that a consumer can develop a relationship with a brand in a similar way as he/she can develop a relationship with an individual. A brand should elicit strong, favourable and unique associations to gain brand resonance: a complete harmonious relationship between a consumer and a brand (Keller, 1993, 2001). There is one type of association in particular that advertising practitioners and marketing academics alike have used to explain the occurrence of strong, favourable and unique associations and the subsequent brand-customer relationships: a brand's personality (Plummer, 1985; Aaker, 1997).

A brand personality can lead to strong associations because a brand personality can construct a consistent, predictable, integrated, ordered and stable identity in the mind of the consumer (Scroggs, 1994). In a similar vein, a brand personality can lead to favourable associations because it can act as a surrogate for intrinsic product attributes and a point of difference (Freling & Forbes (2005). Finally, a brand personality can create unique associations because the personality is a useful tool for marketers to differentiate among competitors.

The strong, favourable and unique associations elicited by a brand personality have an impact on the judgements and feelings of the consumer about a brand (Keller, 2001). The judgements and feelings that are evoked by the brand can in turn lead to a brand relationship. In other words: with the help of a brand personality the benefits of a brand can be emphasized, which can lead to favourable attitudes of the consumer. A favourable attitude in turn can lead to brand resonance, the highest level of a relationship between a consumer and a brand.

To explain the step from brand personality associations to a brand relationship in greater detail it is important to have a closer look at the brand-as-a-person literature. The second paragraph starts by taking a closer look at the anthropomorphization of brands, to show how brands can get human properties. Subsequently, this chapter will delve deeper in the brand personality literature to see how the literature has developed over time. The final paragraphs will examine the consequences and flaws of a brand personality and discuss the possibilities to overcome the shortcomings of the brand personality theory.

3.2 Anthropomorphization of brands

Anthropomorphised brands are “brands perceived by customers as actual human beings with various emotional states, mind, soul and conscious behaviours that can act as prominent members of social ties” (Puzakova, Kwak & Rocereto, 2009 p. 413-414). Consumers easily view brands as possessing human characteristics. Marketers often encourage this tendency in consumers to differentiate the brand, stick emotion to the brand and foster relationships (Plummer, 1985). According to Aggarwal and McGill (2007) there are three explanations for the tendency of humans to anthropomorphize objects: it comforts people by providing relationships, people anthropomorphise in order to make better sense of the world around them, and anthropomorphization can be seen as a cognitive strategy to make the bet that the world is human-like. In a similar way, Fournier (1998) states that humans have the need to anthropomorphise objects in order to facilitate interactions with the non-material world.

3.3 Brand personality

Brands, just like any particular object, can be anthropomorphised. With the anthropomorphization of a brand the brand can acquire human qualities, and these can eventually lead to the assignment of a personality to a brand by the consumer (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). The consumer’s perceptions of a brand personality is formed and influenced by any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with a brand (Plummer, 1985). The brand personality concept can be used in a similar way as a human personality, and refers to a set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). In a comparison of brand personalities with human personalities, Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001) used the “Big Five” personality model to determine if individuals perceive brand personalities in a similar way as a human personality. The Big Five personality model has been found to be a valid and reliable scale for measuring human personalities and can be divided into five dimensions: agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (Digman, 1990 in Caprara et al., 2001). Caprara et al. (2001) found that the Big Five model was indeed applicable for humans who described their own personality. However, the Big Five model was not applicable to brand personalities. The structure of the ratings for brand personalities substantially differed from the Big Five model. The authors found that the brand personality model was made up of two broad factors that are blends of the Big Five model. These two factors were defined by agreeableness and emotional stability (stability, predictability and pleasantness), and extroversion and openness (dynamism, activity and innovation). The author concluded that although it may be possible to describe brand personalities with a few factors,

it is unlikely that factors used to describe human personality are also suitable for the description of brands. The researchers concluded that the traditional repertoire of human personality may serve for construing a brand personality, but only to a certain extent. This is because the anthropomorphization of brands applies only to a certain extent. The authors concluded that a brand can have human characteristics, but not a complete holistic personality.

Aaker (1997) tried to validate the brand-as-a-person analogy by using a different methodology than used by Caprara et al. (2001). Aaker reasoned that the meaning associated with a brand could be identified by asking individuals to describe a brand as a person. In order to identify the core factors of a brand personality Aaker created 309 candidate traits from three sources: personality scales from psychology, personality scales used by marketers, and original qualitative research. She reduced this set to a more manageable 114 traits. Subsequently the subjects rated 40 brands on the presence of these 114 traits. From the factor analysis a five-factor solution resulted, with the following brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. From this Aaker concludes that a brand personality can be divided into 5 big traits, just like the human personality can be divided into the “Big Five”. Indeed, three of the five brand personality dimensions relate to three of the “Big Five” personality factors. Sincerity covers the same traits as agreeableness, extroversion as excitement and conscientiousness as competence.

From the two studies described above it is clear that the Big Five human personality traits are not applicable to brand personalities without making some adjustments. A brand can be seen as having personality traits, and although these traits have some overlapping with the Big Five human personality traits, there are also some differences.

3.4 Consequences of brand personality

The brand personality concept has multiple advantages for consumers and advertising practitioners alike. For advertising practitioners the brand personality can be used as a blueprint for the whole marketing communication mix. Think of the creation of a brand personality by making use of intangible brand elements as imagery of users, country of origin and advertising, as well as tangible brand elements as packaging, logos and retail environment (Wee, 2004). According to Scroggs (1994) a human personality is characterized by consistency, predictability, integration, planning, stability and controlled behaviour. In a

similar vein, by treating the brand as a personality, marketers can give the brand a consistent, predictable, integrated, ordered and stable identity. With this a brand personality gives marketers the opportunity to differentiate their brand, create congruence in the brand associations, and it also forces the marketers to hold a long-term view of marketing decisions in mind. Finally, by adding a soul to a brand marketers can add emotion to a non-living object (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). As we have seen before, emotions play an important role in the behaviour of consumers (Yu & Dean, 2001).

A brand personality is not only a tool for marketers in their brand policy, consumers as well can benefit from a brand personality. For consumers it can be a tool to simplify their behaviour. In a market environment where most products are not distinguishable on their product features, a brand personality can act as a surrogate for intrinsic product attributes and a point of difference. Freling and Forbes (2005) found that subjects exposed to products with a brand personality were evaluated more favourable than products without a brand personality. In addition, they also found that a brand personality leads to more unique and strong associations. Favourable, unique and strong associations in turn enhance brand equity (Keller, 1993). In other words, a brand personality can add distinctive features and value to a brand. This in turn can simplify a consumer's brand preference.

Another important advantage for a consumer is that a brand personality serves a more complicated human need than the utilitarian functions of product related attributes. Humans have a uniform need for identity, and often search for this through symbolisms and meanings carried by objects. A brand is such an object and can be associated with personality traits that provide self-expressive or symbolic benefits for the consumer (Aaker, 1999). Self-expression in turn can be an important driver of consumer preference and choice (Richins, 1994 in Aaker, 1999). According to Aaker (1999) the traits of a brand personality that we use for expressing our own personality depends not only on our stable personality but also on our personality that is accessible through situational factors. According to Aaker persons who are motivated to express their selves do so through a particular dimension, rather than expressing their whole personality. As an example, when someone is motivated to feel athletic a person may want to express only the athletic dimension of himself through Nike athletic shoes, although L.A Gear shoes better match the consumer's overall personality. In addition, Aaker states that the consumer's self must be seen as a malleable self. People have a need for consistency because of an inborn preference for things that are predictable, familiar stable and uncertainty

reducing. As a result, consumers have a preference for brands with a personality that is congruent with their own personality. Because people normally think illusionary good about themselves, the ability to express their self-schematic traits is associated with positive affect. On the other hand, although self-schematic traits exist, there are deviations from the stable personality. When a person enters a social situation the situational cues are made salient. These situational cues influence the accessibility of certain personality traits. Thus, not only brand personalities that are in accordance with someone's personality are preferred, brand personalities that are in accordance with traits that are elicited by situational cues are also preferred. As an example Aaker uses a manager who goes to his work in a proper suit and behaves like a real businessman, but the same person can ride a Harley Davidson in his spare time. In conclusion: if a brand has a personality that corresponds with an individual's actual or ideal-, good-, bad-, hoped-for-, feared-, not-me-, possible-, ought-self, the individual will prefer that brand to other brands. The greater the congruity between an individual's (type of-) personality and a brand personality, the greater the preference for a brand. This preference in turn can lead to a brand relationship (brand resonance) in the long run.

3.5 Shortcomings of the brand personality theory

The work of Aaker (1997) inspired the majority of the research on brand personality. And although her brand personality concept is confirmed by numerous studies, the proposed brand personality construct has been criticized by multiple authors on multiple grounds. The first criticism of the brand personality concept is the fact that the construct is not used as a personality, but rather as a personality trait (Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001). In explaining human personalities we can use the "Big Five" personality traits to determine in which degree the five personality traits are applicable to the personality of an individual. When we describe a friend or a partner, we use multiple personality traits to describe that individual. In contrast, in the five personality traits theory of Aaker a brand personality has only one dominant personality trait. With this, the brand personality is not a complete analogy of the human personality. At best the brand personality can be seen as having some similarities with a human personality, but it is not entirely the same. In addition, Aaker has distilled a brand personality in to five dimensions, but she does not give a decisive answer on the question: which brand personality dimension is the most successful for a brand?

The second point of critique concerns the definition of brand personality. According to Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) the brand personality construct, as used by Aaker,

contains several characteristics that are not in fact personality characteristics. Aaker started with the personality traits of the “Big Five” to construct a brand personality scale. But she complemented the Big Five personality traits with non-personality characteristics (e.g. socio-demographic characteristics). According to Geuens et al. (2009) this relaxation of the brand personality concept leads to a construct validity problem: the brand personality construct does not measure the personality of a brand. In a similar vein, Azoulay and Kapferer (2004) state that Aaker’s scale of brand personality does not measure brand personality, but merges altogether a number of dimensions of brand identity. According to the authors brand personality is only a part of a bigger construct: brand identity. Other parts of a brand identity are: the brand’s inner values, the brand relationship facet (style of behaviour), the brand’s reflected consumer, and the brand’s physical appearance. In addition, the authors state that psychologists have worked over years to exclude intellectual abilities, gender and social class from the personality definition and –measures. Aaker nonetheless includes these non-personality dimensions in the brand personality scales. As an example Azoulay and Kapferer use one of Aaker’s dimensions: ‘competence’. This term refers to know-how, or to an ability to carry out something properly. This is a dimension that is related to a skill or a cognitive capacity, characteristics that psychologists normally exclude from their personality tests. In conclusion, Azoulay and Kapferer (2004) state that there should be a more narrow definition for brand personality. They propose the following: “Brand personality is the set of human personality traits that are both applicable to and relevant for brands” (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2004 p.10).

A third criticism of the brand personality concept pertains to the absence of cross-cultural reliability (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). Only three of the five factors of the brand personality scale were found in a study done in Spain (Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001 in Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). In this study the authors found peacefulness instead of ruggedness and passion instead of competence. In Japan only four of the five factors emerged, with peacefulness again as a replacement for ruggedness.

3.6 Refinement of the brand personality construct

In order to overcome the above-mentioned shortcomings of Aaker’s brand personality scale Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf (2009) developed a new scale based on a rigorous definition of brand personality without the characteristics that are not part of personality. In doing so the authors developed a new brand personality scale with, again, five dimensions: responsibility

(down to earth, stable, responsible), activity (active, dynamic, innovative), aggressiveness (aggressive, bold), simplicity (ordinary, simple) and emotionality (romantic, sentimental). In addition, and in contrast with Aaker's five dimensions of brand personality, the five dimensions of Geuens et al. (2009) do have cross-national generalizability.

Although the new scale of Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf (2009) is a first step in the right direction, what stays is the fact that the new brand personality scale does not take into account how brands connect with consumers. As said before, the brand personality associations should be useful for building a brand relationship with consumers. A brand can be seen as a one- or two-trait personality, which give the consumer the opportunity to identify with the brand. But from the brand personality literature it does not become clear how a relationship is built with the help of a brand personality. In other words: a brand personality and the identification process is the first step in creating a connection with the consumer. The strong, favourable and unique associations elicited by a brand personality have an impact on the judgements and feelings of the consumer about a brand (Keller, 2001). The judgements and feelings that are evoked by the brand can in turn lead to a brand relationship. But a brand personality is not sufficient per se for the development of a brand relationship. From the literature it is not yet clear how positive brand judgements and –feelings can develop in a brand relationship. To make this point more clearly, it is important to have a closer look at the most intense brand relationships beyond the identification process and find out how brands can create these relationships with consumers.

3.7 The role of emotions in consumer-brand relationships

One of the most important consequences of seeing a brand as a person is the fact that this brings emotion to a brand: the brand gets a soul (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). This makes it easier for the customer to emotionally connect with a brand and develop an emotional bond with a brand. Marketing practitioners have recently stressed the importance of emotions for consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009). These authors all state that the consumer does not consume a product or a service, a consumer consumes emotions (experiences). As an example think of Coca Cola. In the early years of the brand, Coca Cola sold a product: a refreshing drink. Nowadays Coca Cola sells an emotion: happiness. In a similar vein, researchers have recently exposed the importance of affect in consumer behaviour. Yu and Dean (2001) found that emotion is a core attribute in the satisfaction of a customer, and despite the fact that cognitive satisfaction and affective

satisfaction both are correlated with customer loyalty, affective satisfaction has a bigger influence on loyalty than cognitive satisfaction. They explain this effect by looking at the psychological purpose of emotions. Positive emotions are linked with the positive reinforcement (approach) of the associated behaviour, and negative emotions are linked with the negative reinforcement (avoidance) of the associated behaviour. Logically, what follows is that positive emotions are linked with loyalty of the customer, and negative emotions are linked with the disloyalty of the customer. In addition to one's intention to maintain an ongoing plan (to stay loyal), the emotional part of satisfaction is more important than the cognitive part of satisfaction for positive word of mouth, the willingness to pay more for the brand and the switching behaviour of the customer.

Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) examined the relationship between emotions and loyalty in greater detail and found that consumers can get emotionally attached to their brands. An attachment is an: "emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person and a specific object" (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005 p.77-78). The degree of emotional attachment to the brand predicts the commitment to the brand and their willingness to make financial sacrifices in order to obtain it. Commitment is defined as the degree to which an individual views the relationship from a long-term perspective and has a willingness to stay with the relationship. A relevant indicator of commitment is the extent to which a customer remains loyal to a brand. The emotional attachment construct can be broken down into three factors: affection (the warm feelings a customer has towards a brand), passion (the intense and aroused positive feelings a customer has towards a brand) and connection (the connection, bond and attachment a customer has towards a brand). The authors concluded that the most intense form of an attachment can lead to a love relationship that is comparable with a human love relationship.

Recently, multiple researchers (Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007) introduced the term 'brand love' and 'customer devotion' to appoint the emotional attachment between a customer and a brand. Brand love is defined as: "the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). Where cognitive loyalty (repeated purchase) is considered as a transaction-specific outcome, brand love is seen as the result of the customers' long-term relationship with the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Pichler and Hemetsberger (2007) devotion or love consists of passion, intimacy and dedication. For love

to develop two individuals have to possess the ability to fall in love. They have to be prepared to idealize the partner and willing to enter into the commitment of an emotional relationship. Love in its most clear form evolves to an altruistic act of loving, where giving is more important than taking. There are fundamental similarities between interpersonal love and brand-customer love. Interpersonal love is the most intense and profound human relationship. We have strong feelings for our friends and loved ones that go beyond cognitive associations. When people are asked to describe the reasons of their satisfaction with a relationship with a close friend they will find it difficult to put this into words. This is because the satisfaction is not determined by cognitive factors, but by affective factors. In a similar way brand satisfaction-as-love probably is the most intense and profound satisfaction of all (Fournier & Mick, 1999 in Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). And as with interpersonal relations it is quite often driven by irrational and highly emotive associations.

From the above we can conclude that the most valuable brand relationships are the relationships where there are strong emotional connections between the consumer and a brand. This makes it clear that a brand personality concept that holds the importance of affect into account is desirable. When we take a closer look at the brand personality dimensions mentioned above (Aaker 1997; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009) we can see that most of the dimensions indeed are affective in nature. For example, in Aaker's brand personality scale the dimensions excitement and ruggedness could be seen as affective factors. And perhaps sincerity and sophistication are to a lesser extent also affective factors. Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) even termed one of their dimensions 'emotionality'.

However, what remains is the fact that the brand personality literature still not explains how a brand personality can lead to a brand relationship (brand resonance). From the literature described in this chapter it is clear that consumers can identify with a brand personality, which in turn can lead to a connection with a brand. This connection can be seen as the first step in the development of a brand relationship. However, it is not yet clear how a brand relationship develops after the identification process. If we take a look at human relationships, one can see that the identification process is not the only variable that explains the strength of the relationship. A person with one (or two) personality trait(s) that corresponds with our own or ideal personality is often liked more, but to become a real friend the partner has to offer more than one or two similarities. What is missing in the brand-as-a-person literature is the way in which a brand can develop a relationship with the consumer. If we use the brand as a

person analogy we can think of individuals that are attractive because we identify with them, but more often we choose relationship partners because the relationship is satisfying. The brand personality and -relationship literature has not taken a look at a construct that explains how brands can develop, maintain and improve a brand relationship with their customers.

In conclusion, in this chapter we have taken a closer look at the specific associations that can lead to a brand relationship. According to Keller (1993), judgement and feelings about a brand can lead to a complete harmonious relationship (brand resonance). Multiple researchers have proposed brand personality as a tool to create these positive brand judgements and – feelings. Consumers can identify with a brand personality, which in turn can lead to a connection with a brand. This connection can be seen as the first step in the development of a brand relationship. However, it is not yet clear how a brand relationship develops after the identification process. In addition, from the brand relationship literature it is clear that emotions in particular play an important role in the development of a brand relationship. However, it is not exactly clear how an emotional connection between a consumer and a brand can be reached. For this reason, the next chapter will try to account for the gap in the literature and propose a new concept that on the one hand explains how relationship will develop, and on the other hand hold the importance of emotions into account: emotional intelligence.

Chapter 4: Emotional intelligence

4.1 Emotional intelligence as a concept for studying interpersonal behaviour

The previous chapter ended with the conclusion that for a fruitful development of the branding literature in general, and the brand as a person theory in particular, a new branding construct should meet multiple practical and academic requirements. First, the construct should develop a wider and more thorough personality theory for brands. In particular, the construct has to explain in greater detail how brands connect with consumers, and how this connection leads to a relationship between a brand and consumers. Second, recent branding literature has pointed out that in the connection between a consumer and a brand emotions plays an important role (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007). For the development of a new branding construct the emotions elicited by a brand should be a primary focus.

In previous chapters we have seen that academics have used the human personality literature to explain the properties of a brand. A brand can have human characteristics and a consumer can have a relationship with a brand that is comparable with an interpersonal relationship. If we extend this line of reasoning, it is useful to look at the human personality literature if there is an existing model that explains how personality characteristics can explain how the behaviour of individuals leads to an interpersonal connection, and at the same time holds the importance of affect for the connection in account.

The role of emotions in relationships is very important (Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber & Ric, 2006). A proper understanding of each other's emotions is a necessary condition for a smooth interaction. This is because we can use an emotion as an outcome of information about the intentions and thoughts of our interaction partner. In a similar vein we can use emotions to communicate our real thoughts and intentions. With this it becomes clear why the usage of emotions is an important factor in explaining the formation, maintenance and deepening of relationships. If we state this somewhat differently, the usage of emotions in a relationship can be seen as a relationship-ability: individuals that can make beneficial use of emotions in a relationship can develop better relationships.

The insight that the usage of emotions can be seen as an ability has led to a relatively important and influential concept for studying and quantifying interpersonal behaviour. This

concept is called Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is an intra- and interpersonal ability of individuals (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). It is the ability to perceive and use the emotions of others as well as to perceive and use one's own emotions. Where cognitive intelligence can be measured by an IQ scale, emotional intelligence can be measured and quantified with an EQ scale. To explain how emotional intelligence can be a valuable concept for brands, this chapter will discuss emotional intelligence in greater detail. The second paragraph starts with an overview of what the construct is, and what the outcomes of emotional intelligence are. In the third paragraph the criticisms of the Emotional Intelligence concept are presented. Finally, in the last paragraph it becomes clear why the emotional intelligence theory can be of much worth for the branding literature.

4.2 Emotional Intelligence as a counterpart of cognitive intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). In other words, emotional Intelligence can be divided into awareness and management of one's own emotions and awareness and management of the emotions of others (Cherniss, Extein, Golemann & Weissberg, 2006). The first dimension includes self-management abilities, the second social skills. An example of a self-regulating ability is the behaviour of people who follow a diet. Often they have to choose between a short-term benefit of eating unhealthy food, and long-term goals of losing weight. Those who can accurately perceive their emotions (of short-term satisfaction) and regulate these emotions for their own long-term benefit are said to have a self regulating ability. Social skills are abilities that are used in contact with other people. Someone who is adept of perceiving the emotions of others and reacts in an appropriate manner to these emotions is said to have social skills.

Although the first articles about emotional intelligence appeared in the 1980's, the concept really became popular with Goleman's book 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1995. The research topic started with the observation that cognitive intelligence was not sufficient to explain multiple outcomes in life (e.g. academic and job success). As a consequence researchers introduced a model in which a broader form of intelligence could compliment cognitive intelligence. In this model general intelligence is the highest level of a hierarchy of mental abilities. Emotional intelligence, just like cognitive intelligence, should be seen as a group of broad, cohesive abilities at the middle level of the intelligence hierarchy (Izard, 1993). In other words: Emotional intelligence is part of a general intelligence, just like cognitive

intelligence, but emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence are distinctive entities. To explain this in greater detail it is interesting to take a look at neurological evidence of the two distinctive intelligences. Cognitive psychologists have found that higher IQ participants can solve problems with less brain activity than those with a lower IQ. Individuals who use their brain efficiently have a higher IQ than individuals who do not use their brain efficiently. In a similar way, participants that are high in emotional intelligence can solve emotional problems with less brain activity than participants low in emotional intelligence (Jausovec & Jausovec, 2005). In conclusion: cognitive- and emotional intelligence are part of the same intelligence construct, and cognitive- and emotionally intelligent people make more efficient use of their brain than individuals who are less cognitively and emotionally intelligent.

Although emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence are part of a holistic construct, there are clear differences between the two forms of intelligence. Cognitive psychologists found there are specific emotional regions of the brain that process emotional information, and cognitive regions of the brain that process cognitive information (Reis, Bracket, Shamosh, Kent, Salovey & Grey, 2007). Additional evidence for a distinction of the intelligences comes from patients with lesions in certain brain parts. Patients with lesions to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, the amygdala and insular regions display normal levels of cognitive intelligence while having difficulties in social judgements and decision making (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg & Bechara, 2003). In a similar vein, patients with Asperger's syndrome display normal or superior cognitive intelligence, despite gross deficiencies in emotional intelligence abilities such as showing empathy and reading facial expressions (Baron-Cohen, 1995).

4.3 A valid approach to emotional intelligence

As said before, emotional intelligence as a research topic became popular with Goleman's book 'Emotional Intelligence'. In his book Goleman starts with the observation that cognitive intelligence is not a guarantee for success and happiness in life. He states that emotions are crucial for job success, in relationships and for our overall wellbeing. According to Goleman the five most important emotional intelligence characteristics are: self-awareness (the knowledge of one's emotions), self-management (the ability to manage one's own emotions for their own benefit), motivation (the usage of emotions to reach a particular goal), empathy (to feel what others really want or need) and social skills (the ability to use or regulate the emotions of others). After the publication of Goleman's popular book the study of emotional

intelligence began to flourish, resulting in a wide diversity of conceptions. According to Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) there are three prominent approaches to emotional intelligence in the scientific literature: the specific-ability approach, the integrative-model approach and the mixed-model approach. The specific-ability approach of emotional intelligence focuses on skills that can be considered fundamental to emotional intelligence. These abilities are: emotional perception, the use of emotional information in thinking, reasoning about emotions (appraisal, labelling and language), and emotional management. The second approach, the integrative-model, is the joining of several specific abilities to obtain an overall sense of emotional intelligence (Izard, 2001). The most influential integrative-model approach is the four-branch model of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This model views emotional intelligence as a construct that can be divided into: accurately perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. The third approach to emotional intelligence is the mixed-model approach. This approach uses very broad definitions of emotional intelligence. In a comparison of the three approaches of emotional intelligence, Mayer et al. (2008) state that the mixed-in attributes of the mixed-model approach to emotional intelligence lack a primary focus on emotional intelligence. With this the mixed-model approach is lacking content validity. This means that the model does not only measure the emotional intelligence part of a broader intelligence construct. The model also measures parts of cognitive intelligence whereby the two constructs (emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence) get mixed up. For this reason, the mixed model as a construct to measure relationship-binding-components, is not a valid model to use in the present study

In an examination of the validity and reliability of the measures of the specific-ability approach and the integrative-model approach Mayer et al. (2008) state that these models do have content validity, as well as response process validity (the individual's answers match with a criterion of correctness), scale consistency (the participant's responses are consistent across items) and test-retest reliability (test consistency across time). The authors concluded that the integrative-model approach seems more suitable for the concept of emotional intelligence as a whole because the integrative-model joins several specific abilities to obtain an overall sense of emotional intelligence. These specific abilities of the integrative-model are: awareness and management of one's own emotions and awareness and management of other's emotions. These abilities correspond with 4 of Goleman's emotional intelligence characteristics: self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills. The present

study, wherein emotional intelligence is applied to brands, will follow the advice of Mayer et al. (2008) to use the integrative-model approach to emotional intelligence.

4.4 Life outcomes of emotional intelligence

To get an idea what emotional intelligence can do for brands it is useful to look at the consequences of emotional intelligence for persons. The following paragraphs will examine the life outcomes of the emotional abilities for individuals.

The outcomes of emotional intelligence for individuals can be divided into social relationships, school success, work success and psychological and physical well-being. Emotional intelligence consistently predicts positive social outcomes like assertion, cooperation and self-control in children (Eisenbergm Fabes, Guthrie & Reiser, 2000). For adults emotional intelligence also consistently predicts positive social outcomes. For example, the emotional intelligence of a participant correlates with the participant's perceptions of how enjoyable and interested, wanted and respected they felt in interactions (Lopes, Bracket, Nezlek, Schutz, Sellin & Salovey, 2004). An individual with a high EQ leads others to perceive that individual more positively (Bracket, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner & Salovey, 2006). Emotional intelligence is also linked to interpersonal relations (Schutte, Malouff, Bobik, Coston, Greeson, Jedlicka, Rhodes & Wendorf, 2001). Participants with higher scores for emotional intelligence had higher scores for empathic perspective taking and self-monitoring in social situations. High scoring participants had higher score for social skills, displayed more cooperative behaviour towards partners and had higher scores for close and affectionate relationships.

Emotional intelligence also has an impact on academic performance. Five-year-old preschoolers' emotional intelligence predicted third-grade teachers' ratings of academic competencies. The authors concluded that the detection and labelling of emotions can facilitate positive social interactions. The social interactions in turn are essential for the ratification of the learning process, which is seen in academic performance (Izard, Fine, Schultz Mostow, Ackerman & Youngstrom, 2001). In addition, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) correlates with school grades (O'Connor & Little, 2003).

Emotional intelligence has a relationship with work outcomes. Participants with high MSCEIT scores received higher organizational-citizenship ratings from other group members (Day & Carroll, 2004). Emotion Recognition Accuracy, an emotional intelligence ability, can predict workplace effectiveness in professionals (Elfenbein, Foo, White, Tann & Aik, 2007). In a meta-analytical study related to emotional intelligence, Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) found a weak to moderate correlation (.23) between emotional intelligence and performance, across the different performance domains, from workplace to academic.

Finally, emotional intelligence is also linked with psychological and physical well-being. The MSCEIT correlates with psychological well-being (Bracket & Meyer, 2003). And scores on the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale correlates with lower tobacco and alcohol use among adolescents.

In conclusion, from the above we can conclude that emotional intelligence has an impact on social relationships, school success, work success and psychological and physical wellbeing.

4.5 Criticisms of emotional intelligence

As with any other research topic emotional intelligence has not been without criticism. In an extensive study Waterhouse (2006) delineated several weaknesses of the emotional intelligence construct. According to Waterhouse these weaknesses are all part of the fact that the emotional intelligence construct does not add something to cognitive ability and/or personality characteristics. However, Cherniss, Extein, Golemann and Weissberg (2006) state that although there are studies that suggested that emotional intelligence does not add something to the existing constructs cognitive ability and/or personality, the weight of evidence supports the claim that emotional intelligence is distinctive from the two constructs.

A second criticism has to do with the relative importance of emotional intelligence for success and happiness in life (Cherniss, Extein, Golemann & Weissberg, 2006). Although multiple authors argue that Goleman stated in his influential book 'Emotional Intelligence' that emotional intelligence is more important than cognitive intelligence, Goleman in fact never did. He states that cognitive intelligence is a much stronger predictor than emotional intelligence for the jobs or professions people can enter (Goleman, 2005). So cognitive intelligence is a threshold for a certain job or profession. However, cognitive intelligence has a floor effect, and emotional intelligence is a factor that can differentiate between average and

excellent performers. Thus, emotional intelligence will better discriminate those who will be most capable in top positions and matters greatly in selecting, promoting and developing leaders.

Finally, there has been some concern regarding the convergent validity of emotional intelligence (Waterhouse, 2006). In multiple measurements of emotional intelligence the different abilities of emotional intelligence do not converge toward a common criterion, they lack a sufficient correlation. However, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test is an exception. The four branches of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), a measurement of the four-branch model, are in fact intercorrelated.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is a concept that is studied in great detail. Although there has been some criticism about the concept and the measurement of emotional intelligence, the four branches model of the integrative approach to emotional intelligence is a valid and reliable measurement of a concept that helps us in our understanding of multiple outcomes in life. As said before, emotional intelligence can be a useful concept for brand marketers and the branding literature. Now it is clear what the outcomes of emotional intelligence are for inter- and intrapersonal relationships the next paragraph will give an introduction to emotional intelligence in the consumer behaviour literature.

4.6 Emotional intelligence in the consumer domain

Kidwell, Hardesty and Childers (2008) argue that consumer emotional intelligence can be seen as a person's ability to skilfully use emotional information to achieve a desired consumer outcome. The authors developed a Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale (CEIS), based on the four-branch model of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), to measure a consumer's emotional intelligence. The authors found that consumers scoring high on the CEIS scored lower on compulsive behaviour than consumers scoring low on the CEIS. Although compulsive consumption can produce a short-term positive emotion, this short-term benefit is eliminated by a variety of negative consequences in the long run. Consumers scoring high in consumer emotional intelligence are able to control their short-term emotions to prevent the negative emotions in the long run. In their final study the authors examined the effects of emotional intelligence on the product choice of consumers. The consumers had to choose between known brands that were heavily branded and thus elicit strong emotions, and a lesser-known brand. The lesser-known brand was superior in product specifications

compared to the heavily branded brands. Consumers high in Consumer Emotional Intelligence were less prone to the emotion eliciting heavily branded brands and more often chose the lesser-known brands that delivered superior product features compared to consumers scoring low in Consumer Emotional Intelligence.

Kidwell et al.'s (2008) study is the first of its kind. It is interesting to see that emotional intelligence can be an influence on consumer's decisions. Kidwell et al. (2008) used emotional intelligence as an ability of the consumer (the consumer's emotional intelligence). The present paper however will take a look at emotional intelligence as an ability of a brand. The next paragraph will discuss how emotional intelligence can be applied to brands.

4.7 Emotional intelligence in the branding literature

To date there is not a single article that looks at the emotional intelligence of brands. However, the emotional intelligence construct applied to brands seems to be very plausible. As stated in previous chapters, brands are perceived as persons by consumers, and brands can be seen as dyadic partners in a relationship. In addition to these findings one can argue that brands have to deal with one's own emotions and awareness as well as managing the emotions of consumers. Multiple authors (e.g. Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009) state that consumers consume emotions via a brand. Thus a brand should be able to connect with the consumer's emotions. If we indeed apply emotional intelligence to brands than we should use the emotional intelligence construct in a similar manner as it is used to describe human abilities. In other words, we should see emotional intelligence as an ability of a brand. For humans the integrative-model is the best approach to emotional intelligence (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). This means that if we use the human personality brand analogy in a proper manner we also should use the integrative model for brands. Remember that the integrative model integrates the ability to perceive and use one's own emotions with the ability to perceive and use the emotions of others. In Goleman's terms this means that an emotionally intelligent brand should have: self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills. If we translate these abilities to brands, the 4 emotional intelligence brand abilities are:

- Self-awareness = a brand that knows the emotions it uses in contact with a customer. An example is Coca Cola, who consistently communicates happiness.

- Self-management = a brand that can use its emotions for its own benefit. An example is Miele, who is premium priced to keep a valuable brand image, and will not give discounts for a short term profit.
- Empathy = brands who know what consumers really need or want. An example is Apple: they develop products that meet customer needs.
- Social skills = a brand that uses and regulates the emotions of others. An example is Hema, who has a very friendly image. An image that communicates that they consider everyone.

In addition to the plausibility of the emotional intelligence construct applied to brands, the emotional intelligence theory seems to be a fertile construct for the brand literature. The construct can develop a wider and more thorough personality theory for brands. If we apply emotional intelligence to brands it perhaps can tell us more about how brands interact with consumers, and with this add more to our understanding of the brand as a person theory. Second, emotions are becoming more and more important in consumer behaviour (e.g. Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009), and the application of emotional intelligence to brands can tell us more about the role of emotions in a consumer-brand relationship. Finally, the application of the emotional intelligence construct can have important practical contributions for brand managers. If brands indeed can be perceived as emotionally intelligent by consumers than this should provide brand managers a blueprint for building brands that can connect with consumers in a superior way. In conclusion: the emotional intelligence construct can be an interesting and exciting addition to the brand as a person literature. Having this said, it is important to discuss one final subject before we can study if emotional intelligence is applicable to brands.

In the personality literature emotional intelligence is often used as a counterpart of cognitive intelligence. If we apply this two-sided definition of intelligence to a brand, than a brand should not only be perceived as capable of being emotional intelligence but also as capable of being cognitive intelligence. This seems plausible, according to Keller (2001) a brand must be seen as a name with associations. These associations can be divided into cognitive associations and emotional associations. If we delve deeper in the cognitive intelligence of a brand, than a brand with a high IQ should be seen as a brand with strong and favourable cognitive associations. Cognitive associations can be split into performance associations and judgements associations (Keller, 2001). In other words: a brand with a high IQ is seen as a

competent brand. According to multiple authors (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009) markets are sutured and there are no brands that are not seen as competent by consumers, because these brands will not survive in an intensely competitive environment. These authors state that there are no brands that can differentiate purely based on their competence-positioning. To make this point more clear, it is useful to take a look at points of parity and points of difference. Keller (2003) states that strong brands have points of parity and points of difference associations. Category points of parity associations are: “those associations that consumers view as being necessary to be a legitimate and credible offering within a certain product or service category” (Keller, 2003 p. 133). Cognitive intelligence, or a brand’s competence, usually can be seen as points of parity: these associations are necessary for a brand to compete with other brands, but the associations are not sufficient to gain a competitive advantage compared to other brands. According to Keller (2003) a brand can gain a competitive advantage compared to other brands when the brands have associations that are strong, favourable and unique. He calls these: point of difference associations. Recently, as stated in the previous chapter, it has been stressed that the emotional associations of a brand can be an easier way than cognitive associations to gain strong, favourable and unique associations (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009). For this reason emotional intelligence can be a valuable and important construct for brand marketers and the branding literature. The main purpose of the recent paper is to study if the emotional intelligence construct is indeed applicable to brands. Interviews with consumers should provide more insight in this subject. The next chapter will give an overview of the propositions that can be derived from the previous chapters, and should be seen as input for the interviews.

Chapter 5: Propositions

In previous chapters we have seen that a brand, like any other object can be anthropomorphised. People can see a brand in a similar way as they see an individual: as having a personality, and as a relationship partner. From this the first proposition can be derived:

Proposition 1: the consumer can perceive a brand as an individual with certain behaviour.

However, as concluded in the previous chapter, the brand literature does not delve deeper in the way in which the behaviour of a brand can lead to a harmonious brand relationship with all its favourable consequences. If we indeed can see the brand as a behaving entity, than it is possible to make a difference in brands that behave in a for consumers positive or negative way. In other words: consumers can perceive brands as skilled or non-skilled. The consumer can see a brand as having certain skills.

Proposition 2: the consumer can perceive a brand as having certain skills.

According to Keller (2003) the consumer's associations can be divided into cognitive and emotional associations. As reasoned in chapter 4, the cognitive skills of a brand can be seen as the brand's cognitive intelligence or IQ, and consumers can perceive a brand in such a way

Proposition 3a: the consumer can perceive a brand as having cognitive intelligence.

Recent studies have shown that the cognitive ability of a brand (e.g. a brand's competence) has become a point of parity because of the saturation of markets (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009). The authors of these studies claimed that a brand should elicit certain emotions to gain a competitive advantage. As noted in the previous chapter, I have proposed the emotional intelligence construct as a construct that can explain how these emotional associations can be built. Emotional intelligence is an ability based construct that looks at the skill to perceive and use one's own emotions, as well as the skill to perceive and use the emotions of others. If companies indeed do not sell products but emotions to their customers, the emotional intelligence construct can be valuable for academics and practitioners alike.

If we apply the emotional intelligence construct to brands, we can state that emotionally intelligent brands are able to perceive and use one's own emotions, and perceive and use the emotions of consumers. This leads to proposition 3b:

Proposition 3b: the consumer can perceive a brand as having emotional intelligence

In order to investigate in greater detail how and if emotional intelligence is applicable to brands we can look in isolation at the different components of emotional intelligence. The global emotional intelligence construct can be divided into four abilities (Goleman, 1995). These variables correspond with the in literature influential four-branch model of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This model views emotional intelligence as a construct that can be divided into: understanding emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, accurately perceiving emotions, and managing emotions. These abilities correspond with Goleman's popular terms of the abilities of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social skills.

If we apply Goleman's four variables and the influential four-branch model to brands we can develop four additional propositions. The first ability of the four-branch model pertains to accurately understanding one's own emotions: self-awareness. Applied to brands this means:

Proposition 4: consumers can perceive brands as individuals that are able to perceive ones own emotions accurately.

Self-management is Goleman's second variable of emotional intelligence. It corresponds with the second ability of the four-branch model: making use of emotions to facilitate thought is.

Proposition 5: consumers can perceive brands as individuals who can self-manage their emotions.

The third ability is empathy. Empathy is the accurate perception of the emotions of others. This leads to the fifth proposition:

Proposition 6: consumers are able to perceive brands empathic individuals.

The last ability is social skills. An individual is socially skilled if he or she is able to manage the emotions of others in a relationship. Applied to brands this means that:

Proposition 7: *consumers are able to perceive brands as individuals that know how to regulate the emotions of others in a relationship.*

If emotional intelligence and the underlying variables are indeed applicable to brands, then this should be of great value for a brand. First of all, emotionally intelligent brands are more able to empathise with its customers in comparison to brands that are less emotionally intelligent. With this, an emotionally intelligent brand is more likely to know what is important for a consumer in comparison to a brand that is not emotionally intelligent. For this reason, emotionally intelligent brands are probably more attractive for consumers than brands that are less emotionally intelligent.

Proposition 8a: *emotionally intelligent brands are more attractive for consumers compared to brands that are not emotionally intelligent.*

In addition, according to the emotional intelligence literature, one of the outcomes of emotional intelligence is that it leads to satisfying and enduring relationships. If we translate this to brands, this implies that consumers have better relationships with emotionally intelligent brands compared to brands that are not emotionally intelligent.

Proposition 8b: *consumers have a stronger brand relationship with brands that are emotionally intelligent compared to brands that are not emotionally intelligent.*

Chapter 6: Methodology

6.1 Study design and data collection

The purpose of the present paper is to discover certain behaviours of a brand personality that resembles the human skill emotional intelligence. In the previous chapter multiple propositions were formed on basis of human personality and brand personality literature. These propositions will be the starting point of the exploratory research. The study will be exploratory because emotional intelligence applied to brands is an underdeveloped subject in the branding literature (Kidwell, Hardesty & Childers, 2008). The present paper will therefore explore if and how emotional intelligence is applicable to brands. Because of the exploratory nature of this research the methodology the author adopted was qualitative in nature, which is often used to develop a more in-depth understanding of an under-researched area (Yin, 2003). Eight semi-structured interview questions are used to delve deeper in the anthropomorphization by consumers of brands in general, and the skills of brand personalities in particular.

Throughout the interview the interviewer will be pursuing a constant line of inquiry, reflected by a focused interview (Yin, 2003) in which the interviewer will follow a certain set of questions derived from an interview protocol. The interview protocol is structured according to the propositions described in the previous chapter. This means that the beginning of the interview is designed to prime the respondents to see the brand as a person. To make the brand personality more explicit for the respondents, they are asked to describe the personality of a brand when they will meet the brand on a party. How will the brand behave? And what are particular personality characteristics that you can see if you will meet that brand personality on a party? This is a tool commonly used to make the brand as a person construct more accessible (e.g., Fournier, 1998).

After this is properly done, the interview can focus on the behaviour of the brand personality, the skills of a brand, and the cognitive and emotional intelligence of the brand respectively. Emotional intelligence is not a concept that is known to everybody, in contrast to cognitive intelligence, which is a fairly popular and familiar concept. For this reason emotional intelligence as a concept is explained, using the following definition: emotional intelligence is the skill to perceive and use one's own and someone other's emotions for beneficial use (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). With this definition the following examples of

emotionally intelligent behavior are given: suppose that you are trying to lose weight, and you can choose between two different meals. The first meal is a typical fast food meal, high in calorie low in vitamins. The second meal is more appropriate for losing weight, with a lot of vegetables and low calorie ingredients. Of course your body craves the fast food and communicates an emotion of appetite. However, if you are emotionally intelligent then you are able to perceive your own emotions, and use these emotions for your beneficial use. You ignore the primitive emotion and choose the healthier and wiser option (Goleman, 1995). The same can be said if you are in a discussion with someone who looks very angry. If you are emotionally intelligent you are able to perceive that individual's emotion, and use it to ease the interaction by showing empathy. In addition to the holistic definition of emotional intelligence, two of the four components are explained in greater detail. Emotional intelligence consists of: self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills. The concepts are explained by using their definition for brands:

- Self-awareness = a brand that knows the emotions it uses in contact with a customer. An example is Coca Cola, who consistently communicates happiness.
- Self-management = a brand that can use its emotions for their its benefit. An example is Miele, who is premium priced to keep a valuable brand image, and will not give discounts for a short term profit.
- Empathy = brands who know what consumers really need or want. An example is Apple: they develop products that meet customer needs.
- Social skills = a brand that uses and regulates the emotions of others. An example is Hema, who has a very friendly image. An image that communicates that they consider everyone.

Because self-management and social skills are vague concepts, the participants are given the following examples. For self-managing behavior: imagine that you are in a fight with a friend. You are very angry and this emotion makes you want to say things you rather would not like to say. If you are able to regulate your emotions, you try to keep calm and don't let the anger persuade you to say things you would not like to say. Social skills is made clear with the following example: imagine that you talk with some other individual. While talking with the other you see by his facial expression that he is sad. If you react to this sadness of the other, and try to comfort the individual, than you are able to use the emotions of the other in facilitating the relationship. In other words: by reacting to the emotions of the other you

display your social skills. The above-described examples are all derived from the works of Goleman (1995).

The interview will make use of an interview protocol with a structured set of questions; the interview will be open-ended in nature. This gives the author the opportunity to ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about those facts. With this the role of the respondent can be considered as one of an informant rather than a respondent. The respondent knows best why he/she observes certain brands as a person with certain skills, thus the role of the respondent as an informant is very important.

Informants were selected to maximize the chance of uncovering important insights on the emotional intelligence of brands. This is a legitimate goal in this exploratory research phase (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The respondents were interested in brands, and used multiple brands for multiple purposes. A total of 8 respondents were interviewed, 4 men and 4 women, with an age ranging from 21 to 59. Informants were interviewed within a time span of 45 minutes till an hour, depending on how the respondents answered the questions. The author conducted all interviews and analyses.

6.2 Data analysis

The data collection led to 8 usable recorded transcripts of the interviews. The interpretation of the transcripts was done with the help of the general principles of the grounded theory (Straus & Corbin, 1990). By making use of the grounded theory the collected data is marked with a series of codes. The coding of the data was done in two phases. In the first phase, each proposition was coded with the corresponding data. As said before, the interview was structured on the basis of propositions that derived from an extensive literature study on human personality and brand personality theories. The propositions facilitated the grouping of similar concepts, or axial coding, of the interview data. Axial coding is the integration and segregation of coherent and respectively incoherent data (Fassinger, 2005). The axial coding was done for every individual interview to make the concepts more workable (Straus & Corbin, 1998). The second phase of the data analysis involved the selective coding of the data (Fassinger, 2005). This is the categorization of the concepts into one core category. The core category in this paper is the emotional intelligence of brands, and the individual interview data were categorized in such a manner that they would lead to this construct. This

categorization led to a set of probability statements about the relationships between the underlying concepts of emotional intelligence (Glaser, 1998).

Chapter 7: Results

The interviews are conducted to unravel if consumers have particular brand associations, brand attitudes and brand relationships. More concrete, the first goal of the interview is to replicate earlier research about the personality of brands: do consumers have brand personality associations? The second goal of the interview is to take a closer look at the attitudes of the consumers relating to the brand personality. In particular, the respondents are asked if they see brands as a personality with certain traits or skills. Specific attention is paid to cognitive and emotional intelligence. In this paper emotional intelligence is the primary research construct. Emotional intelligence is a four-component construct; the participants are asked if they have brand attitudes that corresponded with each construct. Finally the brand resonance of the participants with emotionally intelligent brands is examined, using two measures: the attractiveness of emotional intelligence brands and the brand relationship with emotionally intelligent brands.

7.1 Brand personality associations

The participants do not find it difficult to think of brands as humanlike personalities. The 8 participants immediately say yes when they are asked if they can see brands as having a personality. Indeed, the participants are able to think of multiple brands that they can see as having a personality. To make the brand personality more explicit for the respondents, they are asked to describe the personality of a brand when they will meet the brand on a party. As described in the methodology section this is a tool commonly used to make the brand as a person construct more accessible. With this situation in mind the participants give accurate descriptions of the traits of certain brand personalities. For example, a participant gives the following description of the personality of the consumer goods brand Miele: "If Miele was a person, it would be a classy man, well dressed and mannered. But Miele is not a boring man, in fact I think that Miele can be very funny." The same participant also gives a very visual description of car manufacturer Citroen: "Citroen is, of course, a Frenchman. One who lives in a big city, Paris maybe? Citroen is a Burgundian, and has a well-groomed appearance. Citroen is not caddish, and he enjoys all the things life brings." A female participant has the following personality associations for clothing company Hennis & Mauritz: "H&M is a young, hip female who likes to combine crazy things. H&M is living life to the fullest, and because of that attitude H&M is very popular, among boys and girls." Multiple respondents mention supermarket brand Albert Heijn as a brand with a personality. It is interesting to see

that the respondents are very congruent in their description of Albert Heijn. One respondent for example, says: "Albert Heijn is a nice and funny man. He is highly educated, and very well-groomed." Another respondent has basically the same associations of Albert Heijn: "You can see that Albert Heijn is an above average earner. He is vain and very well dressed. He has a slightly expensive-looking appearance. In addition, I think that Albert Heijn is a very funny and enjoyable man."

In conclusion, all the respondents could think of brand personalities, and they often gave lively descriptions of the personalities that they had in mind. To investigate the associations of the respondents about brand personalities in greater detail the respondents were asked to give their attitudes about the brand personalities.

7.2 Brand personality skills

The goal of the second phase of the interview is to discover if respondents have a certain attitude about brand personalities. Indeed, from the above it can be concluded that the respondents do have certain attitudes about the brand personalities. From the answers of the respondents it gets clear that a brand attitude is interwoven in every brand personality that the respondents describe. Every respondent has some judgments or feelings about brand personalities. Citroen for example is seen as Burgundian, well-groomed and a life-enjoyer by a respondent. These performance or imagery characteristics of a brand personality are evaluative in nature. In a similar vein Miele is seen as classy, well dressed and mannered. And Albert Heijn is a well-groomed, highly educated and an above average earning man.

In addition to their general attitudes about brand personalities, the respondents were asked about particular attitudes: their perceived skills of brand personalities. Once again the respondents could think of an extensive range of skills for brands. A respondent said the following about Coca Cola: "Coca Cola is cheerful, happy, creative and playful. Coca cola definitely is a man. It is a man with a lot of ball control, I don't think he is in a good condition but he has great soccer skills. Coca Cola also has got a very well developed musical feeling, I think he is a black-music lover, funky and soulful." Other skills that the respondents mention: "Miele is a person that can easily persuade others that he is a very trustful person." And about car manufacturer Audi: "Audi is well groomed, trustful, and someone who makes a lot of money because he is good at what he is doing. And he has a lot of stamina." One respondent

says the following about retailing brand Hema: "Hema is very handy, I see her as a housewife who is doing all kind of jobs in and around the house."

So it becomes clear that the respondents perceive brands as personalities with certain skills. The respondents could think of multiple brands with many different skills. Now we have uncovered this it is possible to make a categorization of the skills of brand personalities.

7.3 Cognitive intelligence as a brand personality skill

In the recent paper we are interested in the two forms of intelligence skills. The respondents are asked if they can see the brand as having cognitive intelligence. The respondents found it difficult to think of a brand as cognitively intelligent. However, they did mention some brands that they perceive as cognitive intelligent. For example, one respondent said the following about car brand Toyota: "I think Toyota is a very intelligent brand. Toyota has always got the most innovative products, and the value for money is always very high." The same respondent said about electronics brand Apple: "Apple always delivers what the customer wants. For me that makes Apple a very intelligent person." Another respondent thought of Apple as a cognitive intelligent person, but for another reason: "I see Apple as an intelligent person, Apple is a computer nerd. Apple knows a lot about how computers and electronics work." From these answers it seems that the cognitive intelligence of a brand personality is very dependent on the product that the company delivers, or as one respondent mentioned: "I see this brand (Bose, an electronics brand) as an intelligent brand because they are responsive to the wishes of the consumer. With this information about the consumer in mind they always make high quality products." The fact that the cognitive intelligence of a brand personality is determined by the performance of a brand's product is mirrored by the overrepresentation of electronics and car brands. When asked to think about examples of cognitively intelligent brands, seven out of eight respondents mentioned brands from the automotive- or electronic devices industry.

In conclusion, the respondents can see brands as having cognitive intelligence, but this certainly is not applicable to every brand. The tendency to see a brand as cognitively intelligent seems to be category dependent.

7.4 Emotional intelligence as a brand personality skill

In addition to the cognitive intelligence of a brand personality, the respondents are asked if they can see the brand as emotionally intelligent. Just as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence is a typical human skill. For this reason the respondents found it quite difficult to apply the emotional intelligence concept to brands. After reconsideration all the respondents however could mention brands that they perceive as emotionally intelligent. The empathy part of emotional intelligence was mentioned quite often by the respondents. One respondent mentioned: "As a brand you try to deliver something to people, for this reason you should try to empathize with your customers. For a brand it is necessary to track the emotions of a customer, to predict if something gets picked up or not. So I really think that empathy is a precondition for every brand." Another respondent said: "H&M and Vera Mode are two clothing companies who are in touch with the needs of their customers, they know what's important for their customers, what they are looking for, and this makes them emotionally intelligent." Albert Heijn is another example of a brand that is perceived as very empathic: "Albert Heijn knows exactly what their customers are thinking and how they are feeling. I think that Albert Heijn holds the thoughts and emotions of their consumers in mind when they develop new products, or when they design the interior of new supermarkets." Three respondents also mentioned some brand personalities that they found emotionally intelligent because these brands are, according to the respondents, able to communicate where they stand for. A female respondent said: "Coca Cola clearly communicates happiness and a happy feeling in all their communications. And I think that this is one component of emotional intelligence. I don't know if Coca Cola is emotionally intelligent, but they certainly know where they stand for." Or as another respondent said: "Bang & Olufsen (electronics brand) doesn't only deliver products, they also deliver a certain image or emotion." It was striking that five respondents mentioned Apple as a very empathic brand. A typical answer about Apple: "Apple is emotionally intelligent because it can see the needs of their customers, and it makes products accordingly to these insights. Apple is user friendly, innovative, and create a sense of belonging or a group feeling."

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is not a concept that is top of mind with the participants. Most participants found it difficult to think of emotionally intelligent brands when initially asked to name emotionally intelligent brands. But after some thoughts about brand anthropomorphization and additional questions of the interviewer the respondents did think that brand personalities can be emotionally intelligent. After the respondents were able to

apply emotional intelligence to brands they indeed could think of many examples of brand personalities that they saw as emotionally intelligent.

To investigate the application of emotional intelligence to brand personalities in greater detail, the respondents are asked if they also can apply the underlying components of emotional intelligence to brands. As said before, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and use one's own and someone else's emotions (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). In this definition of emotional intelligence are four underlying components of the emotional intelligence construct, namely the ability to 1) accurately perceive one's own emotions, 2) self-regulate one's own emotions, 3) empathize with others and 4) beneficially deal with the emotions of others. To investigate the associations of the consumer that are part of an emotionally intelligent brand personality in greater detail, the participants were asked if they had brand attitudes that correspond with each emotional intelligence component.

7.5 A brand personality's self-awareness of emotions

The first component of emotional intelligence is the ability to accurately perceive one's own emotions. The participants were asked if they knew brand personalities that are able to accurately perceive their emotions. The participants could indeed think of brands that communicate the emotion they stand for. Some interesting examples: "I think Apple is an example, they focus on emotions, and they know how to do that. I mean, they know which emotions their customers want and they know for which emotion they stand." Or: "Harley Davidson (motor brand) knows which emotions they elicit by their customers. The sound of their engine for example is very emotional. Harley Davidson sells a particular emotion, and they are very aware of that I think." Another respondent saw car brand Volvo as an example of a brand that can accurately perceive one's own emotions: "Volvo always communicate that they make the safest cars. I think that the people at Volvo know that car drivers find this particular emotion very important. So they choose to consistently communicate that Volvo is equal to safety." According to multiple respondents it is very clear that Nike stands for a particular emotion: "Nike is always about the competitive, sportive, winning thing. In each and every advertisement of Nike you see winners, never losers, who wear Nike equipment. I think Nike communicates a clear message: if you want to win, you should buy Nike equipment. Nike is really for winners." Although most respondents were positive about the application of the self-awareness of emotions to brands, is one participant made an interesting remark about the possibility of the self-awareness of emotions of brand personalities: "I do

think that brands as personalities are able to perceive their emotions. Brands know where they stand for. But I don't know if brands can also perceive other emotions than their primary emotion. So they can perceive one or two emotions, but I don't know if brands are capable to perceiving all their emotions.”

In conclusion, the respondents can apply the first component of emotional intelligence, perceiving one's own emotions, to brand personalities. For the respondents it is very clear that some brands stand for a particular emotion.

7.6 A brand personality's self-management of emotions

The second component of emotional intelligence is the ability to regulate one's own emotions. Although the participants stated that they could understand what self-regulating behavior is, they found it difficult to apply this kind of behavior to brands. Five out of eight respondents said that they think that brand personalities can be self-regulating. However, only two respondents were able to give examples of brands that are self-regulating. One respondent gave a fine example for car brand Toyota: “Toyota's recent behavior is a very good example of self-regulating behavior. I think that Toyota wants to be a very reliable brand. And they do everything to achieve this. The recall of several car models in the last few months was a way to communicate to their customers that they are very persevering in their reliability. They simply could have said that their cars aren't unsound, and that there is nothing wrong with their cars, but they didn't. They chose for a different kind of strategy, they didn't try to defend their selves. They chose to go for building on their image of reliability.” The other example of a brand that a respondent saw as self-regulating is about Miele. The respondent said: “If you are a brand like Miele, you make sure that all your products are of exceptional quality. But it is not only the product that is important; I think the brand is equally important. For example, I know that Miele never gives a discount on its products. They do this because they know that the price of a product does not only influence the objective value of a product, but also the subjective value of a product, the perception of the quality of a product by the consumer. I think that this is a good example of the self-regulating behavior of Miele, because with this strategy they can keep their quality image. They could also think that with a discount they can sell more products, but I think that in the long run the discount can lead to a reduction of the quality-image of Miele.”

In conclusion, the respondents find it difficult to apply self-management to brands. The respondents said that they understood the concept, and five respondents also thought that brand personalities indeed can be self-regulating. But only two respondents could actually give examples of brand personalities that are self-regulating.

7.7 A brand personality's empathy

A third component of emotional intelligence is the ability to empathize with another. It is the ability to know or feel what others are feeling. For the respondents empathy was easy to apply to brands. All the eight respondents can think of empathic brands. Some examples: "I have just read something about NH Hotels that is very smart. NH Hotels promote that they have beds in their hotel rooms that can be compared to the beds that their customers have at home. I think that is very smart, and also very empathic because NH Hotels know that it is important for their customers to feel like home, and sleep as well as they do at home." One respondent said the following about beer brand Heineken: "Beer is a typical male product. So for Heineken it is very important to empathize with men. I think they do this very good. Every time when I see their advertisements I get a typical 'I'm proud to be a man' feeling." One respondent even said that he thought that every brand is empathic, but he nonetheless saw differences between brands: "The first brands that come to mind are Nike and Douwe Egberts (coffee brand). Nike knows which emotion is important for athletes, and they communicate with a winning mentality. However, Nike does not apply to everyone who plays sport. There are also athletes who play sports because they like to play sports, and not only because they like to win. I think it is a different story with Douwe Egberts. Douwe Egberts is very smart because they have claimed the 'feel at home' emotion, something which is very important for everyone. I think Douwe Egberts is sincerely interested in everyone, and Douwe Egberts can empathize with everyone. In sharp contrast with Nike. Nike can only empathize with winners; they don't understand athletes who don't want to win. So Nike can empathize, but only with winners, and only winners can identify with Nike. Douwe Egberts can empathize with everyone, and everyone can identify with Douwe Egberts." One participant claimed that the ability to empathize with consumers is vital for brands to survive: "Brands should know what their customers want, I think that's probably the most important for every brand. When you think of Albert Heijn then it is obvious that they do their very best to find out what their customers want. They constantly look at the behavior of their customers to find out what works and what doesn't. They use their 'bonus card' (a discount card) to track the behavior of

their customer, and they can immediately see if the adjustments that they made work or don't work.”

From the above it is clear that a brand's empathy is a very important and visible component of the emotional intelligence of a brand's personality. The respondents found it easy to come up with empathic brand personalities. And they could also explain why they perceived certain brand personalities as empathic.

7.8 A brand personality's social skills

The fourth and final component of emotional intelligence is the ability to use the emotions of others to facilitate the interpersonal relationship. This component of emotional intelligence is equal to social skills. The application of social skills to brands was easily done by the eight respondents. The respondents also found it easy to think of examples of brands that use emotions in a relationship with the customer. In a large part this was because the previous subject, the empathy of a brand personality, made the usage of emotions in a relationship accessible for the respondents. From the answers of the respondents, it is clear that they saw a brand personality's empathy and social skills as two dependent components. As an example, one respondent said: “I think that the social skills of a brand personality depends on the ability to empathize with a customer. So the social skills and empathy are very dependent on each other. I mean, when you know what is important for the customer, when you empathize with a customer, than you probably also use these emotions of the customer for the relationship with that customer. As I said before, Albert Heijn knows what's important for its customers. And they use that information in the relationship with their customers. I think the bonus card is a very good example of the empathy and social skills of Albert Heijn.” Another respondent said: “Like I said in the previous question I think that Heineken empathize with men, and they use this empathy in all their advertisements. So you could say that Heineken uses these male bonding emotions in their relationship with its customers.” There were respondents who said that they found it difficult to see brands as truly social skilled because they thought that brands have one image and one specific target group. And although these brands know how to deal with the emotions of that target group, it is not clear for the respondents if the brands can deal with the emotions of other target groups. A respondent struggling with this one-sidedness of brands said: “Bacardi (drinks brand) is very social, but only to people who want to party. So if you don't want to party, and you're not into sociability, and you just would like to have a good conversation, than Bacardi probably is not very social skilled for that particular

person. So I think brands can be social skilled, but only for a certain group.” But on the other hand, there also were participants who could think of brands that are truly social skilled. For example, one respondent said: “Every time when I am there I am amazed by the truly useful products Hema delivers. I think Hema makes products for everyone, and I personally don’t know someone who has never been to a Hema store. So I think Hema is very social skilled, they just are everyone’s friend. And this image of Hema is strengthened with the help of the advertisements, especially the television commercials.”

In conclusion, in accordance with empathy, social skills is a very important and visible component of emotional intelligence for brand personalities. Indeed, according to the respondents empathy and social skills are interdependent. For the respondents it is clear that a brand personality with empathic abilities is also social skilled. In other words, according to the respondents it is obvious that a brand that knows which emotions are important for its customers also uses these emotions to facilitate the relationship. Although most respondents could see a brand as socially skilled, there were some restrictions to the application of social skills to brands. For example, most brands are only socially skilled within its target group.

7.9 The influence of a brand’s EQ on the attractiveness of the brand

In general, the respondents did not find an emotionally intelligent brand an attractive brand. Only three out of eight respondents said that they found an emotionally intelligent brand an attractive brand. Although respondents did not find an emotionally intelligent brand attractive per se, they did find brands that they used and are emotionally intelligent more attractive than brands they used and are not emotionally intelligent. One respondent said: “If you have a good product and you are emotionally intelligent, than you are more attractive compared to a brand with only a good product.” The emotional intelligence of a brand can lead to increased attractiveness of the brand if the brand has the right products. There were however respondents who claimed that every emotionally intelligent brand is automatically attractive. An example: “All the brands that are emotionally intelligent are also attractive. This is because emotionally intelligent brands are brands that can empathize with a customer, and respond to the needs of the customer. So they know what is important for the customer, and they fulfill this need of the customer. Inshared (insurance brand) for example knows exactly what I want as a customer, and they put that in their products.” Another respondent claiming that emotionally intelligent brands are also attractive said: “If you have the idea that a brand can identify with yourself, than it also works the other way around. So I think it is logical that an

emotionally intelligent brand attracts, because individuals favor people or things that are like themselves.”

In spite of the two exceptions described above, it is interesting to see that the other respondents gave more or less the same answer on why they did not per se find an emotionally intelligent brand attractive. One respondent said: “If you are emotionally intelligent than you can control every emotion. But I’m not searching for a brand that controls every emotion; I just want a brand with one particular emotion, which I can identify with. For example as I said before I think that Douwe Egbert is very emotionally intelligent, but it doesn’t relate to me, I’m a Nespresso (coffee brand) drinker.” Another respondent said: “Emotional intelligence doesn’t always lead to a more attractive brand. If you are in the right target group then emotional intelligence indeed can lead to more attractiveness, but if you are not in the target group then the brand doesn’t satisfy the right emotions. For example: Dove (soap brand), the target group probably thinks that Dove is emotionally intelligent. But Dove isn’t a brand that is attractive for everyone; it is more a female brand than a male brand. And males probably don’t find Dove emotionally intelligent for themselves.”

In conclusion, the respondents thought that emotional intelligence can be a factor that leads to increased attractiveness. Some factors of emotional intelligence can lead to increased attractiveness and this is only true for the target group of the brand. Favorite brands of the respondents are almost always brands that can focus their empathy: they are only good in empathizing with the target group. So, a brand can be emotionally intelligent, but if you are not in the target group then the emotional intelligence of the brand does not lead to increased attractiveness. It was interesting to notice that the respondents only found the last two components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills) important for the attractiveness of a brand. For the respondents the brand’s self-awareness and self-regulating skills were did not have an impact on the attractiveness of the brand.

7.10 The influence of a brand’s EQ on the customer-brand relationship

In addition to the influence of emotional intelligence on the attractiveness of a brand, the emotional intelligence of a brand can also have an influence on the brand relationship between a brand and a customer. The respondents indeed found that the emotional intelligence of a brand is beneficial for the relationship they have with that brand. As one respondent said: “Emotionally intelligent brands are pleasing brands, they offer what I need. I

buy their products and they again look at my needs, and with this extra information they can better meet my needs. This strengthens the relationship. Albert Heijn is a good example of this process.” There were multiple respondents who could mention brands they use who are emotionally intelligent. The respondents said they have a better relationship with these brands than with brands they use and are not emotionally intelligent: “I’m more loyal to brands with emotional intelligence than brands without emotional intelligence. I do buy product of brands that are not emotionally intelligent, but I think that if there is a comparable product with emotional intelligence I will choose for the emotionally intelligent brand. Yes, I think that brands can develop a better relationship with me if they are emotionally intelligent.” One respondent said that she had a better relationship with a brand that she buys that is emotionally intelligent compared to a brand that she buys and is in a lesser extent emotional intelligence: “I’m loyal to Hennis & Mauritz but I’m more loyal to Albert Heijn, and I think this is because Albert Heijn is more emotionally intelligent than Hennis & Mauritz.” There was one respondent who did not find that emotional intelligence leads to a better brand relationship. He said: “I like my favorite brands because they give me something that suits my personality. They only give me a part of personality; I mean not all emotions are important. For example, Coca Cola is only happy, never said or cranky. I assume that Coca Cola can’t be said, and Coca Cola can’t recognize someone’s sadness. Nevertheless I have a very good relationship with Coca Cola.”

In conclusion, for most respondents emotional intelligence can lead to a better relationship with a brand, but only if the brand sells products or an image that is attractive for the respondent. In other words, emotional intelligence only ‘works’ if the brand is properly positioned and only for the brand’s target group. According to the respondents the emotional intelligence of a brand leads to a better relationship because emotionally intelligent brands keep looking at the needs of a customer, and try to fulfill those needs with the right products, image and feelings. Again, further inspection revealed that only the last two components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills) were important for the respondents in a brand relationship.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper was to delve deeper in the emotional intelligence of brands. The overarching question was whether brands can actually behave as emotionally intelligent. In other words: can consumers perceive brands as individuals who are able to perceive and use one's own emotions and the emotions of others? From the preceding chapter it is clear that consumers can indeed perceive brands in such a way. The respondents were able to see a brand as a personality, with certain behaviors and skills. Some brand personalities, depending on the product type, were seen as cognitively intelligent by the respondents. Brand personalities were also seen as emotionally intelligent. The respondents found it easier to apply emotional intelligence to brands than cognitive intelligence.

In a similar way, the first two factors of emotional intelligence (perceiving one's own emotions and regulating one's own emotions) are more difficult to apply to brands than the last two components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills). Self-management in particular was difficult for the respondents to apply to brand personalities. The respondents could however think of many examples of brands that, according to them, behaved in an emotionally intelligent way. The respondents could also think of examples of the application of the different components of emotional intelligence to brands: self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills.

Emotionally intelligent brand personalities were not per se attractive for the respondents. Emotional intelligence only increases attractiveness of a brand when the brand delivers a wanted product or image. The same thing can be said for the customer brand relationship: the emotional intelligence of a brand facilitates the relationship between a customer and a brand. If a brand delivers a wanted product or image than the emotional intelligence of a brand can strengthen the relationship between a customer and a brand.

So it seems that emotional intelligence is a valid construct to apply to brands. To take a closer look at how emotional intelligence can be suitable for brands it is useful to look in detail at the different processes that are necessary to make emotional intelligence a valid concept for brands.

8.2 Feedback to the literature and knowledge problem

8.2.1 A brand as a person

To perceive a brand as emotionally intelligent it is first of all necessary to see a brand as a personality. As expected, and in accordance with the works of Aaker (1997), the respondents could indeed see a brand as having a humanlike personality. In Aaker's research she developed a framework of brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. With this she discovered that a brand has got five personality dimensions, just like the Big Five human personality dimensions. In the recent paper it was evident that the respondents could also mention multiple brands with human characteristics. It was not difficult for the respondents to think of brands as personalities, and they often gave lively descriptions of the personalities that they had in mind.

8.2.2 Brand personalities and their abilities

Emotional intelligence is an ability construct; it is part of a general intelligence. More specific, it is the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). In addition to the application of a human personality to brands, emotional intelligence can only be applied to brands if consumers can see a brand as having certain abilities. As expected, the respondents could indeed think of brand personalities with certain abilities. If we take a closer look at the answers of the respondents, it becomes clear that they mentioned certain associations that correspond with what Keller (1993) termed judgements and feelings. In other words: the respondents used positive, accessible associations to describe the abilities of the brand personalities that they had in mind. It is not strange that the respondent used these associations, because judgements and feelings are indeed a consumer's response about a brand's abilities.

8.2.3 IQ and EQ of brand personalities

As said before emotional intelligence is part of a general form of intelligence. According to Carroll (1993) this general form of intelligence is made up of cognitive (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). Although emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence are part of a holistic construct, there are clear differences between the two forms of intelligence. Cognitive psychologists found there are specific emotional regions of the brain that process emotional

information, and cognitive regions of the brain that process cognitive information (Reis, Bracket, Shamosh, Kent, Salovey & Grey, 2007).

When looking at the answers of the respondents it is evident that there is also a clear difference between emotional and cognitive intelligence as an ability of brands. There was however no difference between the difficulty with which the respondents applied cognitive and emotional intelligence to brands. The respondents found it hard to see emotional and cognitive intelligence as constructs that are straightforward applicable to brands. This is probably so because the two forms of intelligence are typical human abilities. In other words, as other research has also shown (Keller, 2001; Aaker, 1997), it was easy for the respondents to see a brand as a person, with certain abilities, but in first instance the step to apply typical human measures of these abilities to brands was too large to make. This finding was not expected, but a recent neurological study might give an explanation for the fact that consumers can see a brand as having certain human characteristics, but that this analogy has its restrictions (Yoon, Gutches, Feinberg & Polk, 2008). In this study the participants had to see certain couples of human names and human characteristics and brand names with human characteristics while lying under a MRI scanner. With the help of a fMRI methodology the authors could see if the same brain structures were involved when seeing the human-human characteristics couples as with the brand-human characteristics couples. The authors found that a brand elicits activation in brain areas responsible for object processing, and a person caused greater activation in areas responsible for the recognition of people. The authors concluded that our brain does not process a brand in a similar manner as a person. However, the authors also concluded that a brand can indeed have certain human characteristics and abilities. In other words, our brain can see a brand as having certain human characteristics, but it will never see a brand in a precisely similar manner as it sees a person. In the present study this was indeed evident. To overcome this problem the interviewer used stories (described in the methods chapter) to ensure that the respondents could take the brand anthropomorphization a step further. Indeed, after some thoughts the respondents could think of brand personalities that they perceived as cognitively and emotionally intelligent.

There was no difference in the difficulty to apply emotional or cognitive intelligence to brands; it was however unexpected to find a difference between the examples of emotionally and cognitively intelligent brands the respondents gave. The respondents found it much more easy to think of examples of emotionally intelligent brands than cognitively intelligent brands.

In trying to find an explanation, it is useful to take a look at the two forms of intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a form of intelligence that is much more easy to see for a consumer than cognitive intelligence. Emotional intelligence is an intra- and interpersonal ability of individuals (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). It is the ability to perceive and use the emotions of others as well as the ability to perceive and use one's own emotions. On the other hand, cognitive intelligence is an intrapersonal ability of individuals. In other words, emotional intelligence is easier to see for consumers in their contact with their brands than cognitive intelligence. The consumers can only see the cognitive intelligence of a brand by the products the brand delivers.

Indeed, in the present study it was evident that the respondents saw cognitive intelligence as an association of the product that the brand delivers. The tendency to see a brand as cognitively intelligent was therefore category dependent. The cognitive intelligence of a brand personality is determined by the performance of a brand, and this was mirrored by the overrepresentation of electronics and car brands in the examples the respondents used. When asked to think about examples of cognitively intelligent brands, seven out of eight respondents mentioned brands from the automotive- or electronic devices industry. In these industries technological knowledge is a prerequisite to be able to manufacture a product. Stated in other words, one has to have a lot of cognitive knowledge to make a car or an mp3 player. These associations probably are linked to the brand personality, as reflected by the answers of the respondents. It seems that the behavior of the brand does not have an impact on the cognitive intelligence of a brand personality. In contrast, the behavior of a brand is important for the perceived emotional intelligence of brand personalities. The respondents indeed mentioned that emotional intelligence, in contrast to cognitive intelligence, is not restricted to certain product categories. For this reason, the respondents could think of many examples in multiple product categories of brands that they perceived as emotionally intelligent.

It could well be that the current methodology (interviews) caused the difference between the ease with which the respondents could think of cognitively intelligent brands compared to examples of emotionally intelligence brands. Clearly, emotional intelligence is more top of mind than cognitive intelligence; in contradiction to cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence is applicable to multiple categories. It can be that cognitive intelligence as well is associated with brand personalities in multiple categories, but that this association is less well

developed. Further research, with another methodology (e.g. implicit association test, which measures association strengths), should address this.

8.2.4 The intrapersonal EQ components of brand personalities

To investigate the application of emotional intelligence to brand personalities in greater detail, the respondents were asked if they could also apply the underlying components of emotional intelligence to brands. As expected, the respondents could apply the first component of emotional intelligence, perceiving one's own emotions, to brand personalities. For the respondents it is very clear that some brands stand for a particular emotion. Indeed, multiple authors have stressed the importance of emotions for consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gobé, 2001 and van Kralingen & van Kralingen, 2009). These authors all state that the consumer does not consume a product or a service; a consumer consumes emotions (experiences). Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) examined the relationship between emotions and loyalty in greater detail and found that consumers can get emotionally attached to their brands. Recently, multiple researchers (Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007) introduced the term 'brand love' and 'customer devotion' to appoint the emotional attachment between a customer and a brand. Brand love is defined as: "the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). Apparently the consumers in the present study were aware of the fact that brands try to sell emotions, and they also knew that it is vital for brands to know where they stand for.

The second component of emotional intelligence, self-management, relates to a brand that can use its emotions for its own benefit. This component of emotional intelligence was, unexpectedly, much more difficult for the respondents to apply to brands. The cause of this unexpected finding can be that the concept of self-management as such is difficult to grasp for the respondents. However, this seems unlikely because the respondents understood the concept and they said that the given examples by the interviewer were recognizable. Another possible explanation of the unexpected finding can be that it is difficult for the respondents to think of brands that behave in a self-regulating way because it is not easy to see the self-regulating behavior of brands. This is illustrated by the fact that only two respondents could actually give examples of brand personalities that are self-regulating. One respondent gave an example of a self-regulating brand personality of a brand that had a problem. The other respondent mentioned a strategy of a brand that he knew, and where he knew some inside

information. It could be that it is difficult to see the self-regulating behavior of brand personalities without inside information or with a brand without a problem. Remember that emotional intelligence consists of intra- and interpersonal abilities of individuals (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). Self-awareness and self-management are the two components of the intrapersonal ability. Despite the fact that self-management is visible for the consumers (because the brand does not only know the emotions it has, or the emotions it stands for, it also communicates these emotions to the consumer), the other component of the intrapersonal ability, self-management, is not. Only when the brand has a problem, or when the consumer really knows the strategy of a brand, the self-management of a brand becomes visible for the consumer. In all other instances the self-management of the brand is not communicated to the consumer, and thus invisible.

Again, it could well be that the current methodology (interviews) caused the effect described above. Self-management is not top of mind for the consumer, but it could be that the concept nevertheless is part of a brand personality in the subconscious mind of the consumer. A methodology that can take a closer look in the unconscious mind of the consumer can help in answering this question.

8.2.5 The interpersonal EQ components of brand personalities

The first component of the interpersonal ability of emotional intelligence is empathy. As expected, the respondents stated that this part of emotional intelligence is a very important and visible component of emotional intelligence. In a similar vein as the self-awareness part of emotional intelligence, empathy deals with the emotions that are consumed by the consumer. As we have seen by the response of the consumer, they are well aware that brands try to communicate a certain emotion. Consumers are also aware that brands try to unravel what emotion is important for a consumer. To do this a brand should empathize with its target group, to gain a better understanding of the needs and wants of the consumer. This is exactly the reason why the respondents in the present study thought that brands can be empathic. They also gave many examples of brands that they perceived as empathic. It was interesting to see that the respondents brought up very positive examples of empathic brands. They all thought that empathy is a very desired association for a brand personality. One participant even claimed that the ability to empathize with consumers is vital for brands to survive

Social skills is the second component of the intrapersonal emotional intelligence ability. Again as expected, it was clear for the respondents that a brand personality can be socially skilled. In fact, the respondents thought that a brand with an empathic ability is also socially skilled; the two are interdependent. This is because a brand that knows which emotions are important for its customers also uses these emotions to facilitate the relationship. There was however one restriction of the application of social skills to brands, which was not expected. The respondents did not find that brands are truly socially skilled. They could see that a brand is socially skilled within its target group, but a brand is not socially skilled for everyone. This result can be explained with the fact that brands indeed have to position themselves for a certain target group to be successful (Ries & Trout, 2001). This means that a brand has to communicate an emotion that is important for that target group. It could well be that this particular emotion is not important for other consumers in other target groups. Or as one respondent mentioned: “Bacardi is very social, but only to people who want to party. So if you don’t want to party, and you’re not into sociability, and you just would like to have a good conversation, than Bacardi probably is not very socially skilled for that particular person.”

In a comparison of the four components of emotional intelligence, it becomes clear that the first two components (self-awareness and self-management of emotions) are much more difficult to apply to brands compared to the last two components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills). As said before this is probably because the first two components of emotional intelligence are intrapersonal abilities, and the later two are interpersonal abilities. In other words, it is probably much easier for a consumer to think of a brand personality that deals with the emotions of the consumer, than a brand personality that deals with its own emotions. This is probably because the consumer sees more behavior of a brand personality that deals with the consumer’s emotions than behavior of a brand personality that deals with its own emotions. Despite the fact that the respondents found it more difficult to think of self-awareness and self-management brand behavior, some respondents nevertheless could think of brand personalities with these particular skills.

8.2.6 The attractiveness of a brand personality’s EQ

The final phase of the present paper was to find out what the results of an emotionally intelligent brand personality are. To study this in detail a division was made between short-term (the attractiveness of a brand) and long-term (the consumer-brand relationship) effects.

Unexpectedly, the respondents did not find an emotionally intelligent brand an attractive brand per se. This was because a brand that has not got the right products, but nevertheless is emotionally intelligent, still is not attractive for a consumer. It is perhaps possible to explain this effect with the human emotional intelligence literature. As explained in chapter 4 emotional intelligence has a relationship with work outcomes. This however does not imply that someone is successful by being emotionally intelligent. Goleman (2005) states that cognitive intelligence is a much stronger predictor than emotional intelligence for the jobs or professions people can enter (Goleman, 2005). Cognitive intelligence is a threshold for a certain job or profession. However, cognitive intelligence has a floor effect, and emotional intelligence is a factor that can differentiate between average and excellent performers. Thus, emotional intelligence will better discriminate those who will be most capable in top positions and matters greatly in selecting, promoting and developing leaders. This could well be the same for brands. In other words, to be attractive a brand should have a cognitive threshold (a good product). If this threshold is met, emotional intelligence can lead to increased attractiveness. This was exactly what the respondents said: the emotional intelligence of a brand can lead to increased attractiveness of the brand if the brand offers the right products.

In addition, the respondents noted that only the interpersonal components of emotional intelligence were important for the attractiveness for a brand. If a brand can empathize with its target group and use these emotions in the relationship with that target group, than the brand is perceived as more attractive than brands that cannot empathize or use emotions to facilitate the brand relationship with the target group. The fact that only the two interpersonal parts of emotional intelligence can lead to a brand's attractiveness seems quite logical in hindsight. Appreciation of the consumer can more easily be reached by a brand that knows the needs and wants of a consumer and subsequently deals with these needs and wants, than a brand that knows where it stands for and can manage its own emotions. These last two intrapersonal components of emotional intelligence are perhaps attractive in the long run, because it ensures a proper positioning (self-awareness) and a consistent image (self-management), but the short term attractiveness seems to be less clear for the consumer than the consequences of the interpersonal emotional intelligence components.

8.2.7 Brand relationship effects of EQ

The long-term effects of emotional intelligence were measured by looking at the relationship of the consumers with an emotionally intelligent brand. As expected, the respondents indeed

found that the emotional intelligence of a brand is beneficial for the relationship they have with that brand. The respondents said they have a better relationship with these brands than with brands they use which are not emotionally intelligent. According to the respondents the emotional intelligence of a brand leads to a better relationship because emotionally intelligent brands keep looking at the needs of a customer, and try to fulfill those needs with the right products, image and feelings.

These results correspond with the interpersonal emotional intelligence literature. For adults emotional intelligence is also linked to interpersonal relations (Schutte, Malouff, Bobik, Coston, Greeson, Jedlicka, Rhodes & Wendorf, 2001). Participants with higher scores for emotional intelligence had higher scores for empathic perspective taking and self-monitoring in social situations. High scoring participants had higher scores for social skills, displayed more cooperative behaviour towards partners and had higher scores for close and affectionate relationships. In addition, emotional intelligence consistently predicts positive social outcomes. For example, the emotional intelligence of a participant correlates with the participant's perceptions of how enjoyable and interested, wanted and respected they felt in interactions (Lopes, Bracket, Nezlek, Schutz, Sellin & Salovey, 2004). An individual with a high EQ leads others to perceive that individual more positively (Bracket, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner & Salovey, 2006).

However, unexpectedly, further inspection again revealed that only the last two components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills) were important for the respondents in a brand relationship. Of course the interpersonal components of emotional intelligence are more important for a consumer-brand relationship, but the interpersonal emotional intelligence literature states that the intrapersonal components are also important for an interpersonal relationship (e.g. Goleman, 2005). It is notable that the intrapersonal components of emotional intelligence are, according to the respondents, not of importance for the relationships they have with brands. It could well be that the intrapersonal components of emotional intelligence are important, but maybe this is not straightforward for the consumer. Without self-awareness and self-management it is not clear where the brand stands for, and which emotion the brand is selling. Although these aspects probably are quite important, it is not top of mind for the consumer. Again, this can be explained by the fact that the intrapersonal components are important for a brand in the long run. It ensures a proper positioning (self-awareness) and a consistent image (self-management). But perhaps it is not

clear for the respondents how these components of emotional intelligence are beneficial for the relationship they have with a brand on a short term. The methodology used in the present study could not give an answer on the assumption that consumers only see the short-term benefits of an emotionally intelligent brand. Future research, perhaps with a different methodology, should give an answer on this question. In addition, a methodology that measures the long-term consumer effects of an emotionally intelligent brand could also be of much worth.

8.3 Theoretical and managerial implications

The present paper has made clear that emotional intelligence can be a valuable construct for the branding literature. Previous studies have shown that consumers can identify with a brand personality, which in turn can lead to a connection with a brand (Aaker, 1997). This connection can be seen as the first step in the development of a brand relationship. However, it was not yet clear how a brand relationship develops after the identification process. In addition, from the brand relationship literature it was clear that emotions in particular play an important role in the development of a brand relationship (e.g. Yu & Dean, 2001). It was still not exactly clear how an emotional connection between a consumer and a brand could be reached.

The present paper has expanded the brand anthropomorphization literature by showing that a brand personality can have certain abilities. More specific, it was shown that emotional intelligence applied to brands can be a way to explain the connection between a consumer and a brand in greater detail. The results clearly showed that consumers can see a brand as emotionally intelligent. The current study is unique in its kind; emotional intelligence has not been applied to brands before. The results of the current study are hopeful and suggest that emotional intelligence applied to brands can be a research topic that helps in the further development of the existing brand anthropomorphization literature. In addition, in the present study it was found that consumers have better relations with brands that are emotionally intelligent. This connection is made because of the empathy and social skills of a brand, two interpersonal components of emotional intelligence. With this, the results found in the present paper add to our understanding of the development of a brand relationship. Emotional intelligence can be a challenging new way to study a brand relationship and can explain in greater detail how brand resonance is reached.

For managers alike, the emotional intelligence concept can be a valuable tool to build strong brands, resulting in brand resonance. The brand personality concept was a useful tool to link the right associations with a brand. However, it was not clear how a strong, long-lasting relationship can be formed with a consumer. The emotional intelligence concept might be a tool that can explain how these relationships are formed. The respondents in the present paper indeed saw emotional intelligence as something that adds value to a brand. And they also stated that they had better relationships with emotionally intelligent brands. For an example think of Coca Cola. Nowadays Coca Cola sells a powerful emotion: happiness. This is a very valuable emotion for the consumer. The fact that Coca Cola knows that they stand for happiness can be seen as self-awareness. The fact that Coca Cola consistently communicates this particular emotion can be seen as self-management. Coca Cola knows that happiness is important for consumers, and this can be seen as Coca Cola's empathy. Finally, Coca Cola uses happiness to further develop its relationship with the consumer, and this can be seen as Coca Cola's social skills. The result is that Coca Cola is a very emotionally intelligent brand. The consequence of Coca Cola being a very emotionally intelligent brand is a loyal consumer with a clear preference for Coca Cola. In other words, Coca Cola has a well-developed valuable brand relationship with its customers. The infamous Pepsi paradox proves this (McClure, Li, Tomlin, Cypert, Montague & Montague, 2004). In a blind tasting experiment people normally have a preference for Pepsi compared to Coca Cola. However, when the logo of the brand is shown the preference of the subjects shifts and people prefer Coca Cola to Pepsi. Coca Cola, with its emotionally intelligent brand personality adds particular value to its customers. This makes Coca Cola the most valuable brand in the world with an estimated value of over \$70 billion (Interbrand, 2010).

8.4 Comments and suggestions for future research

Although emotional intelligence seems to be a valid construct for the branding literature, there are some comments. First of all, there are some issues that came to light in the present study. Although the respondents could apply the different components to brands, this was not easily done for the self-management component. Apparently the regulation of emotions is not something that is straightforward applicable to brand personalities. It could be that this indeed is not something that is suitable for brands, but it can also be that it is not quite visible for consumers because of the intrapersonal nature of the component. Future research, with perhaps a different methodology, should show whether this component is applicable to brands.

Second, when looking at the consequences of emotional intelligence it was notable that only the interpersonal components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills) had an impact on the short-term (attractiveness) and long-term (consumer-brand relationship) effects. Although it is clear for the respondents that the interpersonal components of emotional intelligence are of added value on the short and long-term, the same cannot be said of the intrapersonal components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness and self-management). It can be that the intrapersonal components of emotional intelligence are adding value in the long run, but this is not visible for the consumer. Future research can take a look at the long-term effects of brands with high intrapersonal skills compared to brands with low intrapersonal skills.

In addition, there are some issues that should be explored independently of the results of the current study. The recent paper was an exploration of the emotional intelligence concept applied to brands. The results were encouraging, but further research should confirm if emotional intelligence is indeed a construct that is of added value for brands. A quantification of the results found in this paper should be a valuable first step. An experiment in which emotionally intelligent brands can be compared with brands that are not emotionally intelligent can be another way to explore the subject in greater detail.

Nonetheless, a start has been made. The recent paper showed that consumers can indeed perceive brands as emotionally intelligent. With this, emotional intelligence can be a new and unique way to look at brands. This makes the concept, for practitioners and academics alike, a very valuable subject.

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