Exposé

When Does Brand Love Imply Brand Hate?

How Opposite Brand Love Affects Consumers’ Attitudes Towards Rival Brands

Submitted by:

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Abstract

Keywords: brand love, oppositional loyalty, brand communities, symbolic anti-consumption, expression of identity and self-concept

BACKGROUND. Brand love has been discussed in the context of brand loyalty and symbolic consumption as it describes a romantic relationship between brand and consumer (Schlobohm, Zulauf & Wagner, 2016). Thereby brand love tries to explain how people relate to a brand that corresponds to their individual self-concept. Going beyond brand loyalty, brand love seems to establish a more emotional tie between brand and consumer. Taking this into account, brand love might also trigger negative feelings towards rivals of the preferred brand, leading them to defame the brands or even their consumers. This behavior relates to oppositional loyalty, firstly defined by Muniz & Hamer (2001), who argue that “[…] consumers define themselves by the brand they consume as well as by the brand they do not consume.” (Djedidi, 2016).

PURPOSE. Still brand love has not been regarded in the context of competing products. Therefore, this paper aims at examining how brand love affects consumers’ minds in their choice of rival brands’ products. Consequently, the research idea of this paper is to proof a negative effect of brand love on rival brands, which emerges through the tie that brand love evokes in the consumer. Analogously to oppositional loyalty, this concept will be called ‘opposite brand love’. This paper will examine the effect of brand love on the anti-consumption of competing brands, its antecedents and effects.

METHOD. The impact of opposite brand love on the defamation of rival brands and their consumers and how this can affect brand equity will be measured in an empirical study. An online survey will be prepared to spread among users of respective brands. Personal contacts, social media channels and forums will serve as a source of participants. This will serve as a more standardized approach revealing the effect of opposite brand love on the defamation of rival brands and their consumers.
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List of Abbreviations

BC - Brand Community
OBL - Opposite Brand Love
OL - Oppositional Loyalty
WOM - Word-of-mouth

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1 Introduction

Consumer behavior and brand preference are among the most popular areas in marketing research, since it is crucial to know what drives consumers to choose or avoid a particular brand. Brand loyalty serves as one major concept regarding the consumer’s commitment to a given brand and stating to rebuy it consistently in the future (Oliver, 1999). Brand love emerged out of the brand loyalty concept, when examining consumer-brand relationships in more detail (Fournier, 1998). Some studies suggest that the concept of brand love is strongly connected to brand loyalty (Shimp & Madden, 1988). Brand love is defined as “the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name.” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Thereby brand love tries to explain how people relate to a brand that corresponds to their individual self-concept (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love seems to establish an emotional tie between brand and consumer and can therefore lead to commitment and loyalty towards a brand (Batra et al., 2012).

Taking this into account, brand love might also trigger negative feelings towards rivals of the preferred brand, leading them to defame the brands or even their consumers. This behavior relates to oppositional loyalty, firstly defined by Muniz & Hamer (2001), who argue that “[…] consumers define themselves by the brand they consume as well as by the brand they do not consume.” (Djedidi, 2016). Studies suggest that a strong emotional bond to one’s favorite brand can not only lead to ignorance for competing products (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) but also to an ironic rivalry between the favorite and the oppositional brand and even discrediting behavior towards consumers of the rival brand (Muniz & Hamer, 2001). This is likely to emerge in a kind of symbolic anti-consumption towards rival brands to defend not only the desired brand, but also one’s individual self-concept (Muniz & Hamer, 2001). But the reasons for brand love do not only stick to the correspondence to one’s own self-concept and therefore the congruence theory (Djedidi, 2014), also the feeling of belonging to a community, perceived brand quality and symbolism are relevant factors for brand love to emerge (Bergkvist & Berch-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Since brand love has not been regarded in the context of competing products, this paper aims at examining how brand love affects consumers’ minds in their choice of rival brands. Consequently, the research idea of this paper is to proof a negative effect of brand love on rival brands, which emerges through the tie between brand and consumer evoked by brand
love. This concept will be called ‘opposite brand love’. The main question of research is whether the reciprocal effect of oppositional loyalty can be found in brand love, leading it to avoid and even defame rival brands and their consumers. Practically, the love towards a brand evokes negative feelings towards competing brands. This paper will examine the effect of brand love on the defamation of competing brands, leading to decreased perceived brand equity. Since brand loyalty is the desired consumer-brand relationship by companies, this paper will identify strategies for defending brand equity as well as resisting competitor’s attacks.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The following table demonstrates the reviewed and investigated literature in the fields of brand loyalty and love, oppositional loyalty, brand communities and anti-consumption.

Table 1 Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author (Year), Title, Journal</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
>Initiation of research directions for theorizing symbolic anti-consumption  
>Anti-consumption incorporates the relationship between distastes and the undesired self |
>Focus on simplifiers and global impact consumers as types of anti-consumers  
>Identification of anti-consumption attitudes |
| Brand Avoidance     | Lee, M. (2007), Brands we love to hate: An exploration of brand avoidance. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of Auckland, New Zealand. | >Integrative and comprehensive approach to understanding brand avoidance  
>Qualitative data research gathered through 23 in-depth interviews  
>Identification of four main types of brand avoidance  
>Concept of original negative brand promises framework |
>Qualitative empirical study  
>Three types of brand avoidance are revealed |
<p>| Brand Communities   | O’Guinn, T. &amp; Muniz, A. (2005), Communal consumption and the brand. In:                         | &gt;Introduction of forms of communal consumption and                         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
>Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory  
>Investigation and measurement of brand equity  
>Measurement beyond immediate product classes and markets for the development of a valid brand equity portfolio |
>Emphasis of relevant antecedents and consequences |
| **Brand Love** | Carrol, B. & Ahuvia, A. (2006), Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. In: *Marketing Letters*, 17 (2), pp. 79–89. | >Satisfied consumers’ love is greater for hedonic and symbolic brands  
>Definition of brand love  
>Overview of consumers’ feelings towards brands  
>Prediction of desirable consumer behavior  
>Brand love as form of brand loyalty |
>Based on liking, yearning and commitment  
>Identification of eight possible consumer-object relationships |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
>Romantic brand love leads to behavioral loyalty  
>Stimulated by brand symbolism |
>Mechanisms that influence the effect  
>Anthropomorphism as relevant antecedent of brand love |
>Brand love is driven by rational benefits  
>Loved brands evoke less positive feelings than loved persons  
>Loved brands relate to emotional memories |
>Notation of importance of love in consumers’ long-term relationships with brands |
| **Brand Loyalty** | Chaudhuri, A. & Holbrook, M. B. (2001), The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. In: Journal of Marketing, 65(2), pp. 81-93. | >Investigation of the brand loyalty aspects purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty as linking variables in the chain effect from brand trust to brand performance |
| **Brand Loyalty** | Hwang, J. & Kandampully, J. (2012), The role of emotional aspects in younger consumer-brand Relationships. In: Journal of Product & Brand Management, 21 (2), pp. 98 – 108. | >Role of emotional factors (e.g. brand love) in younger consumer-luxury brand relationships  
>Emotional attachment has the strongest effect on brand loyalty  
>Self-concept connection increases brand love |
| Oppositional Loyalty | Djedidi, A. (2013), *Individual oppositional loyalty: are loyalty and resistance two sides of the same coin?* LCBR European Marketing Conference, Frankfurt, Germany. | Study of OL on smartphone brand consumers in France. Usage of netnography to explore the nature of OL and the consumers’ different behaviors. Different levels of classical and oppositional loyalty emerge. |
Oppositional Loyalty


Exploration of OL among consumers of Coke or Pepsi

Findings on OL in a social environment, Usenet news groups

Analysis of consumer messages

Oppositional Loyalty


Impact of brand community membership on new product adoption from opposing brands and preferred brands

Data collection on participation behavior, membership duration and adoption behavior of 7506 members of four brand communities and two product categories

Higher levels of participation and longer-term membership decrease the likelihood of adopting new products from opposing brands

Overlapping brand community membership increases the likelihood of adopting new products of rival brands

2.2 Theoretical Background and Status Quo

The literature review reveals that opposite brand love is based on the brand love concept (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) on the one hand, and the theoretical concept of oppositional loyalty (Muniz & Hamer, 2001) on the other hand, as well as related fields such as brand communities (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001) and symbolic anti-consumption (Hogg et al., 2009). In this chapter, an overview of the status quo of each concept that may help to build the theoretical background of the topic will be arranged.
2.2.1 Brand Love

The concept of brand loyalty which has later been extended to brand love by researchers started with the “consumer-object love theory” of Shimp and Madden (1988). In accordance with Sternberg (1986), they argue that brand loyalty can be achieved when the components liking, yearning and commitment are met in a brand. Fournier (1998) builds upon this theory by identifying forms of consumer-brand relationships through long-term consumer observations and in-depth interviews. She finds that love is an important component in consumers’ long-term relationships with brands so close that they can be compared to interpersonal relationships. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) were among the first to define the concept of brand love as “the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name.” They give an overview of consumers’ general feelings towards and relationships with brands. They find that brand love is greater for self-expressive brands and brands with a high hedonic and symbolic meaning, which is a relevant point for further research in oppositional brand love.

Besides that, Sakar (2013) investigates romantic brand love as one form of consumer-brand relationships and argues that romantic brand love leads to behavioral loyalty. Moreover, he concludes that romantic brand love is stimulated by brands with a high symbolic meaning. In connection to that, Batra et al. (2012) stress the difference between emotional short-term brand love as an emotion and long-term brand love as a relationship between brand and consumer. Moreover, they stress quality as a requirement for perceived brand love. Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014) examine the influence of anthropomorphism on brand love in the context of defensive marketing strategies. The define anthropomorphism as a relevant antecedent of brand love. Langner and Schmidt (2015) analyze whether interpersonal love and brand love are similar concepts and conclude that interpersonal love is more emotional and that brand love is driven by rational benefits, such as quality. However, emotional memories can also lead to brand love.

Consequently, one can say that it is not quite clear whether brand love constitutes itself through commitment and long-term relationships with a brand, but respectively of its definition, it can be seen as an antecedent of commitment and brand loyalty (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Different from brand loyalty, brand love is perceived through a strong emotional attachment towards a brand and contains components such as passion and affection (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Hedonic and symbolic products and self-expressive brands can be
seen of antecedents of brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Other important antecedents are product quality, brand identification and sense of community, and a self-concept-connection between consumer and brand (Batra et al., 2012; Bergkvist & Berch-Larsen, 2010; Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Consequences of brand love are willingness to pay a premium price and spend time and energy beyond actual consumption on loved brands (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Bergkvist & Berch-Larsen, 2010). Moreover, repeated purchases and ignorance for competing products (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), as well as positive WOM and resistance to negative information towards the loved brand (Batra et al., 2012) have been reviewed as consequences of brand love.

### 2.2.2 Oppositional Loyalty

Another fundamental approach is the concept of oppositional loyalty. Muniz & Hamer (2001) were the first to investigate oppositional loyalty on the example of the opposing brands Coke and Pepsi. They explored the phenomenon among consumers in a social environment, Usenet news groups, where they analyzed relevant messages. They find that “consumers do not only define themselves by the brand they consume, but also by the brand they do not consume”, and therefore set a milestone for the research on oppositional brand loyalty. Furthermore, they state that consumers would initiate playful rivalries with users of the competing brand to state their opposition to the competing brand. This was elaborated by Muniz and Schau (2005) who term the defaming behavior of rival brand communities “trash talk”. They note that schadenfreude is one important emotion felt by community members of rival brands. Thompson and Sinha (2008) examine the relationships between community membership and oppositional brand loyalty. This might be reasonable, since sense of community is said to be an antecedent of brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Berch-Larsen, 2013). Concretely, they investigate the impact of brand community membership on new product adoptions on opposing as well as preferred brands. They collected data on community participation behavior, membership duration and adoption of new products among members of four different brand communities from two product categories, and found that higher levels of participation and longer-term membership decreases the likelihood of adopting new products from opposing brands. Another finding was that overlapping brand community members,
who are part of opposing brand communities, are more likely to adopt new product of rival brands.

While the above-mentioned studies merely focus on brand communities and therefore on collective oppositional loyalty, Djedidi (2014; 2016) provides evidence on individual oppositional loyalty in two studies. In her first study on oppositional loyalty (2014), she analyzes oppositional loyalty connected to smartphone brand users in France, and used netnography to explore the nature of the concept and the consumers’ different behaviors. She defines dimensions and consumer profiles for oppositional loyalty which expand the view of traditional brand loyalty concepts. According to Djedidi (2014), oppositional loyalty can be explained through the congruence theory, which states that consumers are in favor of brands that correspond to their own psychological characteristics (Sirgy, 1982). If there is no connection between the brand and the consumer’s self-concept, a brand might even be rejected. In a later study, Djedidi (2016) identifies antecedents and effects of oppositional loyalty on consumer behavior and brands. Through an analysis of online internauts’ comments, interviews and life stories, the identifies three antecedents of oppositional loyalty: brand behavior, brand experience and consumer image. Moreover, she finds that an oppositional loyal consumer contributes to brand equity in his choice for a brand as well as in his liability for the choice of the anti-brand. In an actual study by Brick & Fitzsimons (2016), oppositional loyalty in relationships is examined. They note that individuals respond to relationship frustration through their choice of brands resulting in an opposing choice to their partners’ preferred brands. This is does therefore not particularly relate to oppositional loyalty but to oppositional brand choice, because the chosen brand is in no relation to one’s own preferred brands.

2.2.3 Related fields

With regard to Muniz and Schau (2005), one must consider the relation between classical or oppositional loyalty and brand communities. The first to elaborate on the topic of brand communities were Muniz and O’Guinn (2001). They introduce the idea of brand communities and use ethnographic and computer-mediated data to explore the characteristics, processes and particularities of three brand communities. In a later article, Muniz and O’Guinn (2005), talk about forms of communal consumption and brand relationships and stress the relevance of this topic. Hickman and Ward (2007) elaborate on Muniz and Schau’s (2005) theory in discussing inter-group stereotyping, schadenfreude and
“trash-talk” in brand communities. The create structured measures on how the involvement in brand communities encourages participants to adopt disparaging views of rival brands and their users. Moreover, they investigate the relationship between the identification with a brand community and inter-group stereotyping, “trash-talking” rival brand communities and feeling a certain pleasure about it, which they call schadenfreude. Laroche et al. (2012) then turn to the next step in analyzing social media-based brand communities. They conclude that social media brand communities value brand trust and brand loyalty. They discuss the effects of community markers and argue that brand trust incorporates a mediating role in converting value creation practices into brand loyalty. Lastly, Kuo and Feng (2013) examine relationships between OL and different factors of online automobile brand communities in Taiwan, one factor being the impact of community commitment on OL. They conclude that members of online brand communities develop OL to stand up for the brands they support.

To expand the view of oppositional loyalty, also some literature about (symbolic) anti-consumption and brand avoidance has been reviewed. Lee (2007) provides an innovative approach to understanding brand avoidance in his doctoral thesis. He identifies four types of brand avoidance through a qualitative study of 23 in-depth interviews. In addition to that he introduces the concept of an original negative brand promises framework. Lee et al. (2009) argue that brand avoidance is one form of anti-consumption. Hogg et al. (2008) examine the relationship between rejection and symbolic anti-consumption. They state that anti-consumption incorporates the relationship between distastes and the undesired self. Banister et al. (2005) find evidence for stereotypical negative consumption between members of rival football clubs. They argue that members of the chosen club have a negative perception of the rival club. Since the negative perception of rival brands and their consumers is part of the research, this concept could serve as a helpful approach to investigate opposite brand love.
3 Research

3.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Opposite brand love shall describe the reciprocal effect of oppositional loyalty that consumers demonstrate their love towards a brand by boycotting and defaming the opposing brand and its consumers. This attitude is therefore symbolic and related to the consumers’ self-concept. From this point of view opposite brand love might contribute to the theories of brand love and oppositional loyalty.

For the concept to be examined properly, it is crucial to distinguish brand love from brand loyalty. To conceptualize the idea of opposite brand love better, table 2 shall help to understand brand love and loyalty in a product-competitor context, and to differentiate the concepts from one another. Brand love is thus identified as a mere affective and passionate brand relationship, whereas brand loyalty is defined as a consumer’s long-term commitment to a brand. Still, it depends on definition, whether brand love is a form of brand loyalty, or whether it leads to brand loyalty (Wang, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Sakar, 2013). In this research, I will handle brand love as an antecedent of brand loyalty. Thus, the reciprocal effect of brand love may analogously lead to oppositional loyalty in the context of competing brands. Opposite brand love is then defined as an emotional anti-relationship towards a rival brand evoked by brand love in the context of competing products.

Table 2 Own representation following Fournier (1998): Brand love in the context of competing brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand relationship quality/Brand Context</th>
<th>Love, Passion &amp; Self-Connection</th>
<th>Commitment &amp; Interdependence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Brand love</td>
<td>Brand loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product and competitor</td>
<td>(Opposite)</td>
<td>Oppositional loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brand love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research aims at proving an influence of brand love on the defamation of rival brands and discrediting behavior towards their consumers. In other words, oppositional loyalty towards rival brands is a consequence of opposite brand love. It is a highly symbolic relationship between consumers and brands, which is likely to result in an anti-attitude towards the rivals of the loved brand. Opposite brand love might therefore contribute to
further research of brand love and oppositional loyalty and set a new perspective on these topics. Moreover, it could be argued that it is a form of symbolic anti-consumption. By illuminating the concept from these angles and putting it together in a frame, brand love in the context of competing brands can be seen as an antecedent to oppositional loyalty and therefore serves as a theoretical approach for defending brand equity and be resistant to competitor’s attacks.

Consequently, the first research question is:

**RQ1: What are the consequences of brand love in the context of rival brands?**

To study whether there is a link between brand love and the defamation of rival brands, one should consider the following statements. According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love can lead to ignorance for competing products. Moreover, they argue that positive WOM is a consequence of brand love. Here the question emerges, whether brand love also leads to negative WOM for rival brands. Moreover, according to Muniz & Schau (2005) and Djedidi (2014;2016) discrediting behavior towards rival brands and its consumers is described as a key aspect of oppositional loyal consumer behavior. Muniz & Hamer (2001) state that consumers express their loyalty towards the chosen brand through playful rivalries with consumers of the avoided brand, whereas Hickman & Ward (2007) in accordance with Djedidi (2016) give evidence for violent behavior towards consumers of rival brands as a result of oppositional loyalty. To study the outcomes of brand love on rival brands, the following assumptions are made:

- **H1**: Brand Love has a positive influence on oppositional loyal behavior.
  - **H1a**: Brand Love has a positive influence on negative WOM towards the rival brand.
  - **H1b**: Brand Love has a positive influence on the spread of fake news about the rival brand.
  - **H1c**: Brand Love has a positive influence on stereotyping consumers of the rival brand.
  - **H1d**: Brand Love has a positive influence on schadenfreude towards the rival brand.
- **H2**: Consumers who feel greater Brand Love engage more in active rivalries with consumers of the rival brand.
Djedidi (2016) argues that depending on whether a brand is chosen or avoided, oppositional loyalty can contribute positively or negatively to its brand equity, because besides criticizing the rival brand, consumers also tend to defend their chosen brand against negative WOM. Therefore, the next research question and corresponding hypothesis is:

**RQ2:** *What are the consequences of brand love in the context of rival brands towards the chosen brand?*

- **H3:** Brand Love has a positive influence on the defense of the preferred brand.

The third research question aims at examining whether there is a connection between self-brand integration and the defamation of rival brands. Djedidi (2016) argues that oppositional loyal behavior is a result of the integrity between brand and self-concept of the consumer. Since the consumer identifies with a brand, he may feel offended by rival brand that oppose his/her self-concept. Moreover, Caroll & Ahuvia (2006), Bergkvist & Berch-Larsen (2010) and Batra et al. (2012) argue that self-expressive brands, brand identification or self-brand integration are antecedents of brand love. Hence, the third research question and the corresponding hypotheses are:

**RQ3:** *How does self-brand integration (inner/social) influence the defamation of rival brands?*

- **H4:** Self-brand integration has a positive influence on oppositional loyal behavior.
  - **H4a:** Self-brand integration (inner) has a positive influence on oppositional loyal behavior.
  - **H4b:** Self-brand integration (social) has a positive influence on oppositional loyal behavior.

The following chapter will explain how to proceed methodologically to examine these questions.
3.2 Methodology

Online-questionnaire

• **Intervention Materials/ Data Collection**: Survey will be created on SoSci-Survey to be spread online among users of respective brands. Personal contacts, social media channels and forums will serve as a source of participants.

• **Procedures**: Present respective lovemarks and their competitors. Choose favorite brand. Filter participants according to their choice and proceed to questions.

• **Data Analysis**: Data will be analyzed quantitatively in SPSS

3.2.1 Constructs and Operationalization

**Brand Love**

In a first step, it is planned to measure the respondents’ degree of brand love for their choice with a multi-item scale developed by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006).

**Self-brand Integration**

Self-brand Integration will be defined as a construct which expresses the degree to which the chosen brand enhances one’s inner and social self. The inner and the social-self serve as two possible dimensions of self-brand integration and are measured on multi-items scales according to Carroll & Ahuvia (2006).

**Oppositional Loyalty**

To approach Oppositional Loyalty, projective techniques will be implemented asking the participant to imagine a “persona” who consumes, loves and identifies with the chosen brand. This will help to avoid social desirability biases.

Oppositional Loyalty will be subdivided into the dimensions Oppositional Attitude, Competitive Behavior and Defamation of Rival Brand. Oppositional Attitude will be measured on a two-item scale developed by Kuo & Feng (2013). Competitive Behavior will be subdivided into the two factors Engagement in Rivalries and Defense of the chosen brand, which will be measured on a single-item scale according to Djedidi (2016). Defamation of the rival brand will be subdivided into Negative WOM, spread of Fake News, Stereotyping consumers of the rival brand, and the expression of Schadenfreude. Negative WOM will be measured on a multi-item scale following Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) and Goyette et al. (2010).
Stereotyping will be measured on a multi-item scale according to Hickman & Ward (2007) and Fiske & North (2015). Spread of Fake News and expression of schadenfreude will be measured on single-item scale each following Hickman & Ward (2007) and Dalakas & Melacon (2012).

3.2.2 Selection of Brands
This study refers to the study of Djedidi (2014) on individual oppositional loyalty behavior of smartphone brands. Smartphone brands have been chosen for their conspicuous consumption and symbolic meaning to consumers (Djedidi, 2016). According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), oppositional loyalty can be observed best when considering brands that hold the biggest market shares. Therefore, this study concentrates on the smartphone brands Apple and Samsung.

The author decided to incorporate further brands. For their hedonic dimension and symbolic meaning for consumers (Vecchi, 2016), the sports fashion brands Nike and Adidas have been chosen to expand the view of the study. According to Statista (2016) Adidas and Nike hold the highest global market share by revenue in billion euro with 19,29 and 29,1 billion euros in 2016.

3.2.3 Data Collection and Sample Requirements
The hypotheses will be tested in a quantitative research. Data will be collected by running an online questionnaire spread among personal contacts, social media channels and forums. The questionnaire will be developed on SoSci-Survey, since this platform allows filters, is free of charge for academic usage and data can be exported in SPSS-readable files. Since a partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) will be implemented to analyze the data, SPSS Amos or SmartPLS will be used to test respective hypotheses and measure an interaction of variables.

Participants will be presented four brands of two opposing pairs (Nike vs. Adidas/ Apple vs. Samsung) and be asked to choose their favorite of these four. They are then filtered according to their choice and proceed with the questionnaire of their chosen brand. In order to avoid social desirability biases, projective techniques will be implemented. Therefore, participants will be presented a fictive persona who loves brand X or Y. Respondents are then asked questions about the behavior and attitudes of this persona towards the rival brand. Possible
answers are provided and structured on five point Likert scales (e.g. 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree).

The requirements for participating in the survey are that respondents must know at least one pair of opposing brands. Moreover, the sample should include respondents who consume at least one of the four brands. Therefore, they must be either fashion-affine, sporty active or own an electronic device and consume either Nike, Adidas, Apple or Samsung. Since Apple, Samsung, Nike and Adidas are globally successful brands, respondents can be of any nationality.
4 Preliminary TOC

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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.04.-31.05.2017</td>
<td>Discussion of exposé &amp; Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.05.-15.06.2017</td>
<td>Research design (programming on SoSci Survey &amp; pretest) and further conceptualization of theoretical part</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.06.-15.07.2017</td>
<td>Running of survey &amp; Writing of theoretical part</td>
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<td>15.07.-01.08.2017</td>
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