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Discovering the Interpersonal Relationship between Luxury Perfume Brands and Consumers

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Abstract

Luxury perfume brands are an integral part of the luxury brands sector globally and nationally. One of the main reasons for the same is that luxury perfume brands have had an extended usage across cultures and traditions. Additionally, luxury perfume brands are a high involvement category (high engagement of the consumers with the products leading to decision making). Thus, this category needs to be developed and promoted with a specific means. This means is the development of a strong and reflexive relation between the luxury perfume brands and the consumers. Further, it should be premised on both value based and utility based satisfaction (the benefits derived from using the perfume). Despite this, there is a dearth of studies that have consolidated the means of developing strong interpersonal relations between this category and consumers. Therefore, this paper aims at discovering a framework for consolidating and developing a strong interpersonal relation between the luxury perfume brand and the consumers. To this effect, we have used qualitative research in the form of semi structured personal interviews supplemented by Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique. The findings from these explorations were developed into a robust framework using the precepts of Brand Personality, CAC (Cognitive- Affective-Conative) model and the Triangular theory of love.

Keywords: Service encounters; language; foreign consumers; language preference.

Introduction

The Luxury brands sector is one of the most dynamic sectors in the market space. In this sector, one of the most important segments is personal care. According to Bain & Company's 2015 report, the luxury personal care segment, which includes cosmetics, accessories and fragrances accounted for €251 billion globally. This growth has been especially seen among the new consumers in developing economies

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in Asia. With an increase in the middle class and an up-gradation in lifestyle across rest of Asia, there is an increased demand for luxury brands (Bain & Company, 2015). In line with the same, Japan leads in terms of growth in the luxury personal segments, with China also contributing to it. Besides these nations, other emerging economies in Asia such as India have also contributed exponentially to the luxury consumption. At a more granular level, the overall luxury consumption is projected to cross $18.3 billion in 2016 from current $14.7 billion, growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 25% in India (ASSOCHAM, 2016). This consumption rate can be attributed to increased disposable income and brand awareness (increased knowledge about the brands) in this country.

The high demand of luxury brands is also seen in the fragrances segment with a projected 13% Compounded Annual Growth Rate and projected sales of 33 billion by 2020 (Euromonitor, 2016). One of the reasons for the same is that fragrances have been a part of Indian tradition in different forms (Krishnamurthy, 1986). Additionally, consumers of fragrances have high levels of involvement with the category. This happens because the fragrance a person favors differentiates them from another person. Thus, the process of selection of that fragrance is an important choice for the consumer to make. As a part of this process, the consumer associates a set of characteristics to a brand (Aaker, 1997). This association will determine the choice of perfume in terms of the value or satisfaction it offers. In this context, purpose refers to the objectives that a consumer sets prior to a consumption decision. Thus, this study explores how consumers interact with luxury fragrance brands from which they choose the ones they favor. In order to do the same, the brands present in luxury perfumes segment in India will be explored from the perspective of interpersonal relationships to serve this purpose which can be defined as an association between two or more people that is close, strong and deep. However, there are no papers that focus on the interpersonal relations between luxury perfumes brands and the consumers. Thus, earlier studies have mentioned that this relation requires a deeper study with a qualitative approach. This is because there are almost no studies that have comprehended this relation using a qualitative approach. Further, there is only one study which has studied the effects of brand relations on brand love quantitatively. Therefore, the objective of the paper is to develop a framework that explores the factors that strengthen this relation between luxury perfume brands and the consumer. Therefore, this study aims at develop a better understanding of the interpersonal relationships of this segment and fill this gap. The following sections give a review of the existing research present in the

area of discussion. In order to do so the literature review will focus on aspects of love, relationships and consumption.

Literature Review

Love in the Context of Brands:

Love has been studied by researchers as a biological, psychological and philosophical phenomenon (Chapman, 2011). Biologically, it is associated with the release of certain neurotransmitters and their reaction in the body (Sherwood, 2006). Psychologically, Maslow's need hierarchy theory (1943) stated that individuals need intimate relationships. Specifically, the qualities of affection, love and belonging are sought to mitigate loneliness (Varcarolis & Halter, 2010). Depending on the nature of the relationship, love takes different forms.

Some of these forms last a long time based on the level of commitment. Further, attachment between individuals increases the level of intimacy. This leads to a more passionate and committed relationships (Busby, Holman, & Niehuis, 2009). Additionally, the love in a relationship is based on the balance between expectations and actual experiences. Thus, understanding the behavioural aspect of relationships and satisfaction thereof becomes imperative (Miller & Tedder, 2011). In an analogous manner, the consumers' love for a brand shows similar characteristics. Specifically, an individual's motivation for consumption is dependent on the level of satisfaction derived from that particular consumption experience. The motivations of consumption can be hedonic or utilitarian (Batra & Ahtola, 1990) depending on the individual. In this context, utility is described as the measure of what a consumer is willing to pay for the satisfaction derived by him or her for the consumption of a product (Albert, & Merunka, 2013). On the other hand, the customer may associate emotions and feelings with the consumption of a particular product. The usage and nature of consumption can make the same product either hedonic or utilitarian (Pham, 1998). This can be on the basis of how a consumer 'feels' about a brand. This feeling with high engagement can take the form of 'love'. The understanding developed thus far will be imperative to the development of a strong interpersonal relationship between the luxury perfume brand and the consumers. Having considered the interaction of love and brands, we can now concentrate on the understanding of brand love.

Brand Love

Love being a highly subjective term, the development of the concept of love in consumer-brand framework has been studied from varied perspectives (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998). One of the

most important perspectives about brand love is its acknowledgement of consumers' needs and better understanding of the behaviour in order to fulfill them. This development of brand love is contingent on the individuals' personalities and attitudes that respond to and vary according to particular external stimuli. The concept of brand love is defined as "the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer has for a particular trade name" (Wallace, Buil, & Chernatony, 1992). Thus, it was found that "at the core of all brand relationships was a rich affective grounding reminiscent of the concepts of love in the interpersonal domain" (Fournier, 1998). This strengthens the process of forming an image of the brand in the mind of the customer. Their engagement with the brand image takes the form of a relationship.

Thus, the consumer identifies with the brand as he or she can see a reflection of personal attributes that he or she possesses in that brand image. (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2007). Having substantiated the means of developing strong relationship between the luxury perfume brands and the consumer, the subsequent section will focus on consumer brand relations. This focus will help us develop a deeper understanding of the subject.

Consumer Brand Relationships

Brands and consumers interact with each other at various levels. Subsequently, they form a relationship with the brands playing the role of a partner (Kang, 2015). This means that consumers associate personality types with the images that are portrayed by different brands. On the other hand, the brand's perspective is the way the brand wants to be perceived by its consumers. This is what distinguishes one brand from the other. Thus, if a brand has to function as a relationship partner, it should move ahead from the personification and become a contributing member of the relationship. A brand can establish itself as a reciprocating partner through communication (Fetscherin, & Heinrich, 2015). Every activity, that includes any type of engagement with the consumer at any touch point, is assumed to be an extension of how the brand behaves. The bond between the consumer and the brand is more effective in engaging the former beyond the monetary transaction. The consumer does not usually seek only monetary or tangible benefits from consumption. This includes an active involvement of the consumers in the process of development of a product that completely fulfils the needs (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Thus, brands are often used as media of self-expression (Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canlie, 2007). An individual who identifies with a brand will express the same by consuming it. In line with this, research shows that

loyal customers not only purchase a product more frequently but are highly engaged in "positive non-purchase behaviour" (Lam, 2005). Such a customer is more likely to be emotionally committed to the brand than any other set of consumers (Baloglu, 2002). Thus, intimacy and passion, as a part of the customer brand love paradigm, can be utilised by a company for consolidating this connection with their consumers (Yim, Tse, & Chan, 2008). Extending further, consumer brand relationships become even more personal when the level of involvement of the consumer is high. Luxury brands, with their attributes that affect a person directly, have such high involvement and culminate in the consumption of the luxury brand. Going further, the next section will engage with the various aspects of luxury consumption.

Luxury Consumption

Luxury has had a constantly changing definition according to the time period and context. Luxury is inherently relative and subjective. The factors in the form of geographic location, availability, socio-economic class of the consumer and societal prevalence of any luxury trends can make the consumption of a product 'luxurious' (McMahon-Beattie & Yeoman, 2006).Research emphasizes the relative aspect of luxury and assign various attributes to determine what luxury is for consumers in different segments (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003).A consumer's perspective is important in determining the extent and nature of luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Therefore, established brands often leverage their identification and differentiation over and above the product quality in terms of the luxury brands (Atteslander, 2010). A luxury perfume brand similarly has associations to being a special way to enhance an individual's personality. In the product category of perfumes and fragrances, the customers' ability to identify with the brand attributes is not only through the scent but also on the brand portrayal in that communication. Consumption is very personal in this category and takes the form of personality extension for an individual. This high level of involvement makes it highly likely for brand loyalty to be developed. This subjectivity and emerging nature has been predominantly observed in the Indian market. The reason for the same is the Indian consumers are highly partial to the qualities of beauty, magic and uniqueness when selecting luxury brands. Here, they are considerably sceptical of Western luxury brands which may conform to their expectations of quality but may not match their requirements of customisation. Another reason why luxury brands of non Indian origin, especially, Western might find it difficult to appeal to the Indian market is that western luxury brands might not be able to develop the

deeply socio religious resonance that Indian consumers associate with luxury consumption (Kapferer and Bastein, 2012). These observations are quite applicable to luxury perfume brands as well. Therefore, the understanding thus gained will help us understand the means of developing a strong relationship between the former and the consumers. In line with the same, the following sections focus on the theoretical frameworks proposed to understand the concept of brand love, customer relations and their intersection with luxury perfume brands.

Theoretical Frameworks

C-A-C Model (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004):

The model explains attitude formation by ascribing three aspects to it; the cognitive component, affective component and conative. The affective component describes the feelings that an individual has or the emotion that is generated in the individual after receiving an external stimulus. The cognitive component describes the evaluation of the external stimuli by the individual. It is an evaluation of an individual's opinion (belief/disbelief) about the object. It also refers to the thoughts and beliefs individual has about an object. These beliefs are based on the information a person has about an object. This information specifically links an object and attribute. Thus, the cognitive component is the storage section where an individual organizes the information. Conative or behavioural component describes the response that the individual gives to that external stimulus. It is verbal or nonverbal in nature.   (Wicker 1969). In fact, the behavioral tendency of an individual consists of actions or observable responses that are the result of an attitude object. It involves favourable or unfavourable regards an attitude object. In fact, the attitudinal responses are more or less consistent. The affective component is the liking or disliking towards an attitude object. Specifically, an individual's attitude towards an object cannot be determined by simply identifying their beliefs. This is because emotions function simultaneously with the cognitive process with regards to an attitude object (Agarwal & Malhotra 2005). The understanding of these three elements is integral to the development of a close relationship between the luxury perfume brands and the consumers. In order to better understand the interpersonal relationship between luxury perfume brands and the consumers, the subsequent section will focus on the triangular theory of love. The reason for the same is that this theory clearly explains the interpersonal dimension of love and brands.

Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 2004)

In inter-personal relationships, Sternberg describes three factors, namely Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. Intimacy is described as being inclusive of feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness and bonded-ness (Sternberg, 1986). Passion is shown to emerge from both limerence and sexual at traction. Commitment can be both short term and long term. In the short term, it is the decision to remain with the partner and in the long term it can take the form of the plans made with that partner.

The theory proposes that extent of love is dependent on the strength of these factors while the type of love is dependent on the combination of these factors. In this research, a parallel is drawn between inter-personal love and luxury brand consumption. This theory helps explore the aspects of human relationships that can be studied in understanding the relationships of interpersonal relations with the consumers. After understanding the two theories of the cognitive, affective and interpersonal relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers, the subsequent section will further explain the gaps that exist in the literature.

Research Gap and Objectives

This study focuses on exploring inter-personal relationships in the context of the luxury perfume brand category. This is done by qualitatively exploring various attributes related to the same. Specifically, it studies the influence of anthropomorphism on the interpersonal relationship between a luxury brand and a consumer. The reason for the same is that the social implications and their influence on interpersonal brand relations are unexplored (Rauchnabel & Ahuva, 2014). Additionally, the attributes of brand relationship and their effect on brand love has been studied quantitatively in the past (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Therefore, this study focuses on the antecedents and consequences of inter personal relations between luxury perfume brands and consumers through qualitative research. Thus, this study aims to determine the causes of the same in the context of luxury perfume brands. Consequently, the phenomenon needs to be explored in order to identify the attributes that influence them. There also exists a gap in the study of this phenomenon with respect to luxury products category especially, luxury perfume brands. Luxury consumption is close to the idea of inter personal brand relations as it is more personal and has a high degree of involvement. Therefore, this study focuses on the factors that will prolong and enhance a consumer's relationship with a luxury perfume brand. To do so, the subsequent section will explain the methodology used to achieve this objective.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted qualitatively because we needed to identify the dimensions of the interpersonal relationship between luxury perfume brands and the consumers. The study was exploratory as most of the dimensions of the phenomenon were unexplored (Malhotra & Dash, 2015). The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage of the study was in-depth interviews embedded with projective techniques. These helped obtain individual insights pertaining to consumption and relationships vis a vis luxury perfume brands.

This helped develop the protocol and processes for the second stage that involved the application of ZMET. The application of ZMET investigated the elements of relationships, and usage of luxury perfume brands through the personal anecdotes of the consumers.

Stage 1- In-Depth Interviews

In the first stage of the research, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the users of luxury perfume brands. This technique allowed us to gain insights from the individual consumers in greater depth (Malhotra & Dash, 2015). The interviews assisted in gathering information that is personal and may not be available in a group because of social pressure (Singh, 2015). The study is on interpersonal relations between luxury perfume brands and consumers. Thus, it was of a sensitive and confidential nature. Additionally, the experience of consumption is sensory in the case of luxury perfume brands.   In line with this, in-depth interviews helped us capture the moods, states and emotions (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) of the respondents. In light of this, the semi-structured interview is one of the   most important means of facilitating research because of its balance between flexibility, adaptive   structure and the quality of data derived thereof (Ressler 2009).   Going further, semi structured interviews were integral to the   study as it helped consolidate the emic (the user's inside perspective) perspective of the study. Further, the interviews also consolidated the cues necessary for the next stage the research. Additionally, this process becomes an invaluable segment to be reflexively merged with the next stage. The in-depth interviews consisted of projective techniques to elicit rich and situated data from the respondents. Through this technique, we were able to plumb the attitudes, feelings or motivation regarding luxury perfumes. It also helped us explore more than the explicitly stated perceptions, attitudes and associations (De Carlo, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2009). Thus, association, completion and construction techniques were used in the process. The association technique required the respondents to reply with the first words they associated

with a stimulus. Completion technique used sentence completion to elicit deeper responses from the participants. These responses provided attributes that were studied further in detail via the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique.

Stage 2 Metaphor Elicitation Technique:

Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) employs qualitative methods to elicit the metaphors, constructs and mental models that drive customers' thinking and behavior and quantitative analyses to provide data for marketing mix decisions and segmentation strategies (Zaltman, 1996). Through this technique, we identified characteristics that lead to the elicitation of emotions in consumers along with the consumption pattern. We then categorised these emotions and studied the process through which a consumer goes while forming the relationship with a luxury perfume brand. This provides us with different stages in interpersonal relationship vis a vis luxury perfume brands and consumers. In line with this, the first step was storytelling, which involved the participants describing the content of the picture provided in their own words. Subsequently, the second stage of sorting involved the ordering of the pictures into meaningful clusters. Following this, in the third step, construct elicitation, three of the interviewee's pictures were selected. Going further, the interviewees were asked to describe the similarities and differences between one picture and the other two in the cluster in relation to the research topic. This process was continued until no new constructs emerged (Mulvey and Kavalam, 2010). After this saturation was achieved, the following steps involved selecting the most representative picture(s). The representative capacity is again ascertained by the picture's proximity to the research topic.   Closely followed by the same, the respondents were asked to describe the opposite image that represented the opposite of the image they had chosen. In the last stage, the respondents were required to describe the most predominant sensory perceptions with regards to the images in terms of smell and feel (Närvänen 2013). The reason for the study of these elements is that they are directly related to the objective of the study, viz. developing a strong relationship between the luxury perfume brands and the consumers.

Sampling

A total of 27 respondents were involved in the study. The number of respondents for In-Depth Interviews and ZMET interviews was17 and 10 respectively. The respondents for both In-Depth interviews and ZMET Interviews were in the age group of 20-30 years. The primary reason for the same is that this particular age group is reported to have an

81% rate of predilection for luxury products (with a specific focus on cosmetics and perfumes). This predilection is supplemented by the 440 millions Indians in this age group in both India and abroad. Further, this number is combined with improved education and sustained growth in purchasing power that is expected to maintain its pace over the next 20 years. Finally, it has also been predicted that one of the most important growth areas is luxury weddings, which by its very definition will also include luxury perfumes and accessories (Goldman Sachs, 2016; Deloitte, 2017). From the respondents thus selected, the observations were collected till the framework was stabilized, i.e. the insights were forming consistent patterns (Malhotra & Dash, 2015). The respondents comprised of mostly working professionals.

They belonged to Socio Economic Classes A1 and A2 as our study required respondents with high income level who could afford to indulge in consumption of luxury perfume brands. The respondents were from Delhi NCR and Mumbai. The selection of the cities was based on the fact that over 80 percent of the consumption of luxury products in India can be traced to these cities (McKinsey, 2012). Delhi is the capital of India and Mumbai is the hub of financial activity. The total of millionaires in Mumbai is 45,000 and billionaires are 28. It is the wealthiest city in the country with $820 Billion in total wealth (New World Wealth, 2016). Delhi has 18 billionaires and 22,000 millionaires with $450 Billion in total wealth (New World Wealth, 2016). In line with the same, the details of the respondents have been provided in Appendices 1 and 2. Going further, the number of respondents from Delhi was higher than those from Mumbai. The reason for the same was that they are ostentatious and vocal and impulsive in terms of luxury consumption, which includes perfumes. These traits were not amenable to a more direct form of probing. Thus, we had to use ZMET to understand their emotional stratum. However, in the personal interviews, the requirement of emotional insights was lesser. Thus, the more explicit insights provided by the respondents from Delhi and Mumbai were captured in the personal interviews. Hence, the balance between the emotional probing and explicit insights achieved through ZMET and personal interviews are reflected in the demographic selection from the two cities.

Analysis

In order to understand the phenomenon in question, we deployed three successive phases: initial design, in course extension and full frame development. Initial design was developed through the interaction of a deductive and inductive rationality to understand the dimensions of inter personal relation building of consumers with luxury perfume brands. Subsequently, in course extension was developed by

selecting, operationalizing the observations of our respondents. Finally, in full frame development, a conceptual framework was developed by assimilating and integrating the data collected from the respondents. Thus, we discovered new insights by deeply engaging with the phenomenon of interpersonal relationship development between consumers and luxury perfumes. Further, we used deductive frameworks and inductive investigations to stabilize our findings. With the support of the C-A-C Model (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004) and Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 2004) key dimensions were identified through this study. These dimensions helped us develop specific themes have been specifically developed keeping in mind the fact that luxury perfume brands have to operate in a highly competitive environment.

Table 1: Different categories and the themes emerging from the respondents' data

Category	Themes	Codes
Personal Attributes	Satisfaction of conative needs	Higher Engagement, Responsibility, Value based,
Social Attributes	Enhanced societal recognition	Professional, Well groomed, Complete, Competent
Interpersonal Attributes	Maximum alignment of aspirational qualities	Indispensability, Immediacy, Happiness
Relational Attributes	Provision of consolidatory qualities	Trustworthy, Loveable, Approachable

Further, we realized that these themes were central to the development of long term affective commitments between luxury perfume brands consumers. In this, the dimensions provided by Schiffman & Kanuk (2004) and the observations of Sternberg (2004) provided an invaluable extension and elevation that allowed the retrospective judgment of our respondents to be converted into prescriptive steps. For this, our theoretical base was quite firm. The same needed to be achieved for the corpus of respondent data and our interpretation of the same. Thus the data from the personal interviews and the ZMET analysis were transcribed and analyzed using Butler-Kisber's (2010) two stage thematic analytical approach. Subsequently, the domains and items developed were set in a "continual cycle" (Hennink et al 2011) of rigorous analysis and comparison till the study synchronized the initial coding with the theoretical concepts and research objectives. Subsequently,

information saturation was achieved and the framework was stabilized due to iterations which ensured that replication and theory validation were achieved (Kerr et al., 2015). Based on the same, Table 1 illustrates the different themes and categories that were developed from the data, theories and frameworks.

Results

The insights from the interviews and the ZMET technique application emerged were developed from the verbatim transcriptions of the same. The content was analyzed in line with the dictates of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Categories, codes and themes emerged via open coding (Strauss &Corbin, 1998). Based on the same, the present study rigorously developed the dimensions and the requisite contextual support for framework development. These dimensions were deeply contextual and were cross verified via methodological triangulation. The various categories that emerged in line with the development of a strong and lasting interpersonal relation with the luxury perfume brand were: Satisfaction of conative needs, Enhanced societal recognition, Maximum alignment of aspirational qualities of and Provision of consolidatory qualities. The framework displays the complete and requisite sub themes for each of the themes (Refer to Figure 1). These themes that constitute the framework are explained below:

*Satisfaction of conative needs*

Satisfaction of conative needs is the first key dimension requisite for the development of a strong interpersonal relationship with a luxury perfume brand. This dimension is related to the alignment of personal attributes of the luxury perfume brand with the attributes sought out bv the consumers. We found that the satisfaction of conative needs should be based on two key principles; proximity and reliability. Proximity means that luxury perfume brand should clearly show that their first priority and most important goal are the requirements of the consumers.

Our study found that the luxury perfume brands should position themselves as an entity with whom their personal attributes is maximally aligned. The majority of the respondents stated that a luxury perfume brand should clearly possess the same characteristics that the consumers are seeking. Thus, a respondent stated, "I feel it a part of who I am. This is what people like about me." *(Female, 26, Mumbai).* Going further, the respondents also opined that, "Hence, I feel that perfume is necessary to complement the way I am." (Female, 22, Mumbai). The study realized the principle of reliability was a key factor in developing a strong interpersonal relationship with the

luxury perfume brand. The respondents also stated that reliability meant being unequivocal and unconditional. Extending from this, they also observed that a luxury perfume brand should act as a support system similar to their group of friends. Further, they stated that they maintained this group of trusted people in a very limited number,

Figure 1: Framework for Developing Interpersonal Relationship between the Luxury Perfume Brand and the Consumer
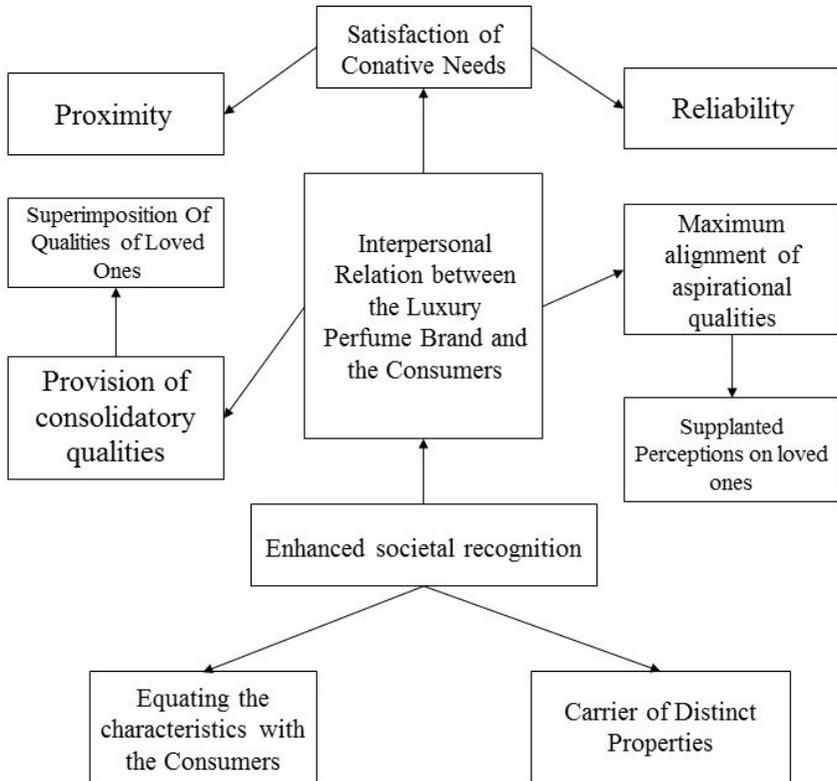
"Friends – I like to keep a small set of friends only" (Female, 24, Mumbai,). As an extension, they expressed that luxury perfume brands were also maintained as a small group as they would need to be trusted. Thus, a respondent opined, "The luxury perfume brands I trust and use is very limited. They have to stand by me in any situation."(Male, 27, Mumbai) These respondents observed that a luxury perfume brand was trusted because it should be like a friend or relative that has been selectively preserved as a confidant. To summarize, a perfume is highly personal. The reason for the same was that consumers stated that they have to trust the brand in terms of its consistency and uniformity. They believe it was essential for them that

the brand deliver the exact same experience each time it is used. There is no scope of failure.

Thus, here is the first proposition of the study based on Satisfaction of conative needs:

Proposition 1: Satisfaction of conative needs is the key dimension that enhances the interpersonal relationship of the consumers with the luxury perfume brand

Enhanced societal recognition

This is the second key theme that is integral to the development of a strong interpersonal relationship with a luxury perfume brand. We identified through our study that enhanced societal recognition refers to the sense of endowment that the luxury perfume brand should bestow on the user. We discovered that this enhancement took the form of increased recognition and positive appraisal by society and peers. The reason for the same is that the consumers feel that a luxury perfume should represent two distinct aspects. The first aspect is that the usage of luxury perfume brands in itself should represent that the user is the carrier of certain distinct properties. Second, the usage of the luxury perfume brand should equate those qualities with the users themselves. In line with this, many respondents have clearly mentioned that these firmaments are imperative to developing and maintaining long term relationships with the luxury perfume brand. This was represented by a respondent who said that "I chose the perfume because the image meant a lot to me. I think it was enhanced, the way I prepared myself for that moment"*(Male, 28, Mumbai)*. The respondents extended this imperative to luxury perfume brand usage. Further, another respondent observed, "I feel like I have finished my dressing up, like I am ready to out, the last touch." (Female, 26, Delhi). The above key insights were developed via the investigations of the ZMET and semi structured personal interviews. Continuing further, a majority of the respondents strongly opined that the luxury perfume brand should ensure that the certain qualities are superimposed on them as users. Thus a respondent stated that after using the perfume they should be perceived as being "Masculine like a family man, Strong headed but kind" (Male, 28, Mumbai). Other respondents were unequivocal to a greater degree. Thus, a respondent stated that after using the perfume they should be seen as someone who is "Complete. As someone who has everything" (Female, 25, Delhi). This resulted in the consumers taking greater ownership of their relationship. Therefore, it can be stated that Enhanced societal recognition is a key element in maintaining a strong interpersonal

relationship with the brand. Thus, here is the second proposition of the study:

Proposition 2: Enhanced societal recognition *is another important factor that enhances the interpersonal relationship of the consumers with the luxury perfume brand*

Maximum alignment of aspirational qualities

The dimension of maximum alignment of aspirational qualities played an important role in the development of a long term interpersonal relationship between the luxury perfume brand and the consumers.

This dimension was elicited based on the emotions the consumers associated with the consumption patterns of luxury perfume brands. We were then able to categorise these emotions and identified that this dimension possessed a specific characteristic. This characteristic was supplanted perceptions on loved ones. This categorization was based on the consensus reached on the basis of individual respondents. This consensus was further solidified further based on the probing the respondents' collective choice of images using ZMET and their responses in the semi structured personal interviews. Based on this probing, the commonalities in the themes emerged. Thus, a respondent stated that the luxury perfume brand should make the person feels the partner who uses the luxury perfume make them feel that "Being around him makes me more confident. I am my happiest version when I am around him. That's my best version." (Female, 26, Mumbai). Further, another respondent unequivocally stated that images that they had consistently chosen images focused on qualities and characteristics they sought out in partners. Thus, we were able to develop the following response, "The luxury perfume brand that I invest in should extend the qualities that I am most proud of about myself." (Male, 27, Delhi). These specific observations received consensual extension from most of the respondents. Further, respondents also expressed that the luxury perfume brand they chose should act as enhancers and factors of concretization. By this, they meant that the luxury perfume they chose should increase and maximize the qualities they seek in their partners. In line with this, a respondent opined, "He would be a perfume that has a strong smell. Something that you can smell even after he has left." (Female, 25, Mumbai). Therefore, it can be understood that maximum alignment of aspirational qualities is a key element strengthening a strong interpersonal relationship with the brand. Thus, here is the third proposition of the study:

Proposition 3: *Maximum alignment of aspirational qualities* is an *important dimension that enhances the interpersonal relationship of the consumers with the luxury perfume brand*

Provision of consolidatory qualities

The dimension of consolidatory qualities is the last dimension that was stabilized in our study of the development of a long term interpersonal relationship with the luxury perfume brand. This dimension emerged from the associations with and transpositions of the characteristics of partners and loved ones on the luxury perfume brands at a granular level. This granularity was sharpened on the basis of the consensual patterns of individual respondents. Subsequently, these patterns were sharpened by plumbing the respondents' consensus.

Based on this consensus, the theme of love emerged. Thus, a respondent who had chosen the characterizations of love specified the same in terms of indispensability and immediate recall of a loved one. In line with this, a respondent stated, "The luxury perfume I invest in is like the one closest to me in my life. The essence of the luxury perfume I choose should be like the one I love the most." (Female, 25, Delhi). Further, most respondents observed that the perfume they had chosen should have the ability to make them recall a special person in their lives. Thus, this was reflected by the following response, "My favourite luxury perfume should be something without which I should feel incomplete." (Male, 26, Mumbai). These observations were further substantiated by the reflections from the ZMET. A respondent observed that "My favourite luxury perfume should be like my best friend. It should make me feel that I am confident and capable" (Female, 26, Mumbai). This was supported by another respondent who expressed that, "A luxury perfume is an investment. Relations are also investments. So, the luxury perfume should be an investment". (Male, 25, Delhi). These specific observations received consensual extension from most of the respondents. Therefore, it can be stated that love is a strong factor influencing the development of interpersonal relationship with the luxury perfume brand. Thus, here is the fourth proposition of the study:

Proposition 4: The factor of consolidatory qualities plays a central role in the development of a strong interpersonal relationship of the consumers with a luxury perfume brand

Discussion

The objective of the research was to develop a framework to comprehend the means of developing a strong interpersonal relationship of the consumers with luxury perfume brands. The development of a strong and long term interpersonal relationship with

a luxury perfume brand is a very effective means of developing cognitive and conative links between the brands and the consumers. Due to its complex nature, building strong interpersonal relationships with luxury perfume brands has to be developed in specific contexts. In line with this, this study offers very important contributions. First, the framework we have developed (Refer Fig. 1) will be instrumental for luxury perfume brands and managers in comprehending the aspirations, relational dimensions and reflexivity that are central to the development of strong and long term interpersonal relations with luxury perfume brands. Subsequently, this comprehension will help them explore the means of developing strong interpersonal relations that are sensitive to the contingencies of emotional and self directed aspirations.

Third, the evolution and development of strong inter personal relationships between luxury perfume brands will maximize the reciprocity. Fourth, there are very limited studies that focus on the dimensions of developing of a strong interpersonal relation with luxury perfume brands. In line with this, we have developed a systematic process that will develop a strong interpersonal relationship with luxury perfume brands and consumers. This conceptualization was developed by modulating the principles of interpersonal relations, luxury brands, human love, cognitive and conative studies. Thus, our study was able to develop the characteristics required for the development of a strong interpersonal relationship between luxury perfume brands and consumers. Certain characteristics were stated by the earlier studies in terms of functional values and utility (Keller, 2014). These characteristics were intensity, activity, brand resonance and being in sync. Earlier studies had stated that the operationalization of a strong interpersonal relationship with brands requires a composite and complex approach (Binti Abd Ghani, & Wahab Tuhin, 2016). This complexity is primarily evidenced in the dyadic relations brands have with consumers, which leads to brands becoming relations partners. This complexity has been further increased in the development of anthropomorphism as a means of consolidating the strength of a brand's relations with the consumers. Further, (Parikka, 2015) studied the interface between luxury brands and utilitarian and conative dimensions. This study focused on the development of Social Media Based Brand Communities to explore the influence of consumers' participation in the luxury brand's social media on brand experience. Here, they studied brand affect, brand trust, and brand loyalty to examine the effectiveness of social media and its role in enhancing the reach of luxury brands. Finally studies such as those of the brand intimacy agency, MBLM have studied the nature of escapist brands such as HBO and entertainment based

channels that have fared quite well in 2016 and 2017. These studies also focused on the simplicity required of any pleasure offered by a luxury brand (2017). Similarly, studies like those of Kauffman et al. (2016) have also deeply engaged with the interlinking of brand love and co-creation. Here, they have focused on the imperative of brands to create intense emotional and psychological reminders of having been associated with the brands. Yet, these studies did not provide for the means for integrating self-directed aspirations, luxury perfume brands and the cognitive and conative dimensions. Thus, our study was able to develop the means of developing sustainable long term relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers based on four dimensions: satisfaction of conative needs, enhanced societal recognition, maximum alignment of aspirational and provision of consolidatory qualities**.**

These dimensions were stabilized after integrating and synthesizing extant studies focused on luxury brands, human interpersonal relations and self-directed aspirations. Through this framework, our study has been able to contextualize the sustainability of long term interpersonal relations between luxury perfume brands and consumers.

Implications and Scope for Future Research

The first element of the framework is satisfaction of conative needs. This is of extraordinary importance for luxury perfume brands, managers and academicians. This importance is that they can develop bases of reciprocity with consumers in terms of the prioritization needed by luxury perfume brands in terms of characteristics deemed indispensable by consumers. The second implication for luxury perfume brands and managers is that they should align their mediations with the utilitarian, cognitive and conative dimensions. Further, the development of strong interpersonal relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers should be maintained by maintaining the line of execution throughout the structure of the luxury perfume brand especially by providing complete scope for the maximization of positive appreciation of the consumers. The third implication focuses on the maximum alignment of aspirational qualities**.** Thus, luxury perfume brands need to be a reflection of the perceptions and aspirations of the consumers superimposed on the basis of their loved ones. Further, the luxury perfume brands should be solidly premised on prioritization of the consumers' aspirations and needs vis a vis love and security. The final implication is based on consolidatory qualities. This dimension covers the aspects of associations with and transpositions of the relational dynamics on luxury perfume brands. These aspects need to be

supported by perfect clarity in terms of attention to providing the same aspects catered to by the relations of the consumers. Thus, luxury perfume brands can develop strong interpersonal relationships by using the four dimensions defined above. This extension could include experimentation where researchers can comprehend the causal relationship between the conative dimensions, luxury perfume brands and the dimensions discovered in this study. The current study has been limited to specific socio demographics of class A, age group of 20-30 and specific to luxury perfumes. These limitations were present due to the nuanced nature of the study of the demands of its objectives. In order to address these concerns, future studies can also focus on gender specific dynamics. In line with this, a more nuanced engagement with the congruence of developing interpersonal relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers with regards to genders can be effected. Researchers can also examine separate age groups and their dynamics with regards to developing strong interpersonal relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers.

Extended studies can also be conducted to understand how these dimensions related to interpersonal relationship which we found in this study can enhance story telling by the luxury perfume brand. This is because these dimensions are closely related and this research could help the luxury perfume brands in increasing their engagement level with the consumers. Future studies can be conducted on different socio-demographic segment which is the B class (immediately after the elite class of the society). The current research on this set of consumer could help the brand to develop affordable range. In addition, similar research can be conducted on other categories of luxury such as apparels and accessories. In line with the same, future similar research can also be conducted on a different age group of the consumers such as middle aged and old aged consumers. Supporting these dimensions, scholars can study the cross cultural complexity of strengthening the interpersonal relationships between luxury perfume brands and consumers across different national and cultural contexts. Finally, researchers can undertake longitudinal studies to understand the most important developments and modifications required for the development of strong interpersonal relationship between luxury perfume brands and consumers.

Conclusion

This current investigation is very novel and of considerable relevance. This is because it integrates brand personality and love to understand how interpersonal relationship can be enhanced between the luxury brand perfume and consumers. Here, after conducting qualitative

studies, we found that that the relationship between the luxury brand perfume and consumers can be enhanced when the brand is able to fulfill the conative needs and requirements of the consumers. This means that the brand has to align its attributes with the personal attributes of the consumers. Additionally, we found that consumers are deeply connected with the brand when their societal recognition is increased by their using the brand. Thus they receive praises from their social circles and peers after wearing the luxury brand perfume. Further consumers also want to be unique and distinctive in themselves and distinctive from others in their social circles. Equally importantly, the relationship of the brand and consumers is increased when the brands align themselves with the individual' aspiration and emotions. Finally, this relationship can be maintained over the long term when it culminates in long term love which would be beneficial for the consumers as well as the brand.

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10.1 Appendix 1: Respondent Details for ZMET

Age	Gender	City	Occupation	Education
22	F	Mumbai	Digital marketing	MBA
22	F	Mumbai	Media professional	MBA
22	F	Delhi	Digital marketing	MBA
26	F	Delhi	Student	MBA
24	M	Delhi	Sales & Marketing Professional	MBA
23	M	Delhi	Management Professional	MBA
22	F	Mumbai	Communications Professional	MBA
23	F	Delhi	Development professional	Post Graduate
20	M	Delhi	Student	Fashion Technology
23	M	Delhi	Article Associate	CA

10.2 Appendix 2: Respondent Details for Personal Interviews

Age	Gender	City	Occupation	Education
24	F	Delhi	Healthcare Marketing	Bachelors in Biological Sciences
26	F	Mumbai	Associate	LLB
26	F	Mumbi	Business Manager	MBA, Instrumentation Engineer
24	F	Delhi	Marketing Manager	MBA
22	F	Delhi	Management trainee	B.A. (Economics) Hons.
24	F	Mumbai	Account Planner	Bachelors in Commerce
27	M	Delhi	Analytics	B.Tech
27	F	Delhi	Student	Masters in Environmental Studies
28	F	Delhi	Chartered Accountant	CA
26	M	Mumbai	Film Production	B.Com
22	M	Mumbai	Student	LLB
25	M	Delhi	Engineer	B.Tech
24	M	Delhi	Family Business	B.Tech
27	F	Mumbai	Marketing and PR Professional	MBA
24	M	Mumbai	Student	MBA
25	M	Mumbai	Advertising Professional	MBA
27	M	Delhi	Analyst (Strategy Consulting)	MBA