Brand attribute associations, emotional consumer-brand relationship and evaluation of brand extensions

Naser Pourazad*, Lara Stocchi, Vipul Pare

College of Business, Government and Law, Flinders University, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide 5001, South Australia, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 11 January 2019
Revised 2 July 2019
Accepted 27 July 2019
Available online xxx

Keywords:
Brand attribute associations
Emotional consumer-brand relationship
Brand extensions
Luxury brands
Iranian consumers

ABSTRACT

This research aims to test the power of brand attribute associations and emotional consumer-brand relationship (E-CBR) as drivers of the intention to purchase brand extensions, while taking into consideration the moderating role of perceived fit. These aspects are examined in the context of luxury brands, given their expressive and hedonic nature. In more detail, using survey data from a population of Iranian consumers and covariance-based structural equation modelling (SEMM), this study confirms that E-CBR has a positive impact on the intention to purchase a luxury brand's extension. The study also confirms that E-CBR mediates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand's extension. As such, this research sheds light on the synergic effects of cognitive (brand attribute associations) and emotional (E-CBR) factors in relation to extensions of luxury brands. With respect to perceived fit, the results highlight that it moderates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand's extension. These findings advance existing knowledge of how consumers see extensions of luxury brands, revealing important underlying mechanisms that tie rational and emotional aspects, shaping consumers' intent. Accordingly, this research yields important implications in relation to the marketing tactics that could be utilised to promote the acceptance of luxury brands' extensions, especially in growing middle-Eastern markets such as Iran.

© 2019 Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Brand extensions, i.e. the use of established brand names to launch new products (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Vollcker and Sattler, 2006) remain a common practice and a prominent aspect of strategic brand development (Keller et al., 2011). Brand extensions are also identified as an essential driver of luxury brands' growth (Kapferer, 2008). For example, managers have successfully extended luxury brands into traditional (e.g., perfumes and jewellery) and non-traditional categories (e.g., accommodation and technology - Albrecht et al., 2013; Kapferer, 2008). However, only limited research has addressed the determinants of luxury brands' extensions success (e.g., Eren-Erdogmus et al., 2018; Haghtvedt and Patrick, 2009; Martin & Stewart, 2001; Monga and John, 2010). Specifically, past studies have addressed this matter have generally assumed that the intention to purchase a brand extension is primarily determined by the extent to which a consumer perceives how the extension ‘fits' with (or is similar to) the parent brand. For instance, when a consumer perceives a brand extension similar to the parent brand's product category, the attitude toward the parent brand is transferred to the extension, facilitating purchase decisions (Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Fiske and Pavelchak, 1986; Yeung and Wyer, 2005). Past studies have also examined the effects that cognitive factors have on brand extension, such as parent brand's image (e.g., Salinas and Pérez, 2009) or parent brand values (i.e., value vs. luxury brands, see Haghtvedt and Patrick, 2009). At the same time, extant studies have investigated the influence of relational factors as drivers of the intention to purchase brand extensions (see Arikian et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2014; Magnoni and Roux, 2012; Bazaeeem et al., 2009). Nonetheless, there seems to be a shortage of studies that simultaneously investigate the effects of cognitive and relational factors (and possible synergies) in relation to brand extensions. This is an important oversight due to the following reasons.

First, past research has highlighted the importance of the interplay between cognitive and relational factors, which can influence consumer decisions. In particular, scholars have argued that the development of consumer emotions towards brands can have cognitive roots (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Keller, 2012). For example, brand attribute associations retained in consumers' mind can lead to the establishment of consumer-brand relationships (see Bhat and Reddy, 2001; Esch et al., 2006). In fact, consumers often develop salient schemas linked to the brand in memory, which facilitate the establishment of emotional bonds with the brand...
(Japutra et al., 2018; Vlachos and Vrechopoulos, 2012). Second, the growth in global consumer spending often challenges firms’ ability to establish meaningful brand relationships (Gómez-Suárez et al., 2017); hence, it is worthwhile determining if it is possible to generate and enhance emotional links between luxury brands and consumers by leveraging cognitive aspects, such as the brand associations that consumers hold in memory. It is also worthwhile ascertaining if marketers can attain desired outcomes, such as encouraging the intention to purchase extensions of an existing luxury brand, by leveraging the interplay between these mechanisms. Finally, previous studies have focussed either on emotional aspects (e.g., affect, commitment, feeling, etc.) or on cognitive effects. However, such a clear-cut distinction is not sustainable in practice, especially in the context of luxury brands.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that past studies that have dealt with the issues discussed so far share some conceptual and empirical limitations. For example, Fedorikhin et al. (2008) and Hagtveldt and Patrick’s (2009) conceptualisation of customer-brand relationship was limited to the notions of emotional attachment and hedonic values. Similarly, Hem and Iversen (2003) focused only on affective commitment, and Yeung and Wyer (2005) emphasised brand-elicited affects (i.e., feelings that consumers experience when they encounter a brand, which is different to the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand). Similarly, when theorising cognitive factors, existing studies have often emphasised brand quality (Arikan et al., 2016) or brand values (i.e., value brands vs. luxury brands, see Hagtveldt and Patrick, 2009). Also, some studies also lacked generalisability, due to specific assumptions that may have impacted the interpretation of findings. For example, Fedorikhin et al. (2008) demonstrated that emotions are more effective than attitudes in predicting consumers’ reactions to brand extensions, but only when the consumer perceives a high or moderate level of fit between the parent brand and the extension. In contrast, Kim et al. (2014) confirmed that strong brand relationship quality enhances consumer judgments about brand extensions, but only for moderate to low fit extensions. In light of these limitations, the key aim of the present research is to introduce and test an empirical model that examines the power of brand attribute associations and emotional consumer-brand relationships (E-CBRs) in explaining the intention to purchase luxury brands’ extensions. This study defines E-CBR as emotional connection consumers develop over time with their favourite brands. When doing so, this study also takes into consideration the likely underlying effect of perceived fit.

In addition to the key aims outlined so far, the present research has two additional objectives. First, through focusing on the specific context of luxury brands, this study adds to existing knowledge on luxury consumption. Compared to other contexts, luxury brands have specific characteristics that make them ideal for the examination of all aspects discussed so far. Namely, luxury brands provide consumers with benefits that are transferable across different product categories (Hagtveldt and Patrick, 2009, p. 608). Luxury brands also typically entail high levels of expressive and hedonic characteristics (Choo et al., 2012; Hagtveldt and Patrick, 2009; Okonkwo, 2007; Tsai, 2005; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004) and offer a combination of emotional and cognitive-laden values such as superior quality, aesthetics, experiences and entertainment (Atwal and Williams, 2009). Second, this study analyses the views of Iranian consumers, which offers several theoretical and practical contributions. Above all, in recent years, the interest in global luxury brands and luxury lifestyle has experienced an extraordinary growth in Iran (Jafari and Süderm, 2012; Takali et al., 2012; Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2011). This has turned the spotlight on the Iranian luxury market (Takali et al., 2012; Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2011), as signalled by the fact that several businesses are now offering a wide range of prestigious international luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton, Versace, Calvin Klein and Prada (Jafari and Süderm, 2012; Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2014). Moreover, Iranian consumers display some interesting behavioural patterns, such as the marked effects of cultural and religious factors, which are worth understanding for many global brands and investors (Forghani et al., 2019; Rouhani and Hanzaee, 2012). Finally, in comparison to Western (Tynan et al., 2010) and Asian contexts (Jung Jung et al., 2014), Iran and other Middle Eastern countries are generally less understood (Takali et al., 2012; Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2014).

2. Conceptual background and hypotheses development

2.1. E-CBRs and intention to purchase the brand extension

Drawing upon the findings of the theory of Triangle of Love (Sternberg, 1986) and consumer self-image connections (Kemp et al., 2012), Fournier (1998) theorised consumer-brand relationships as individually crafted bonds that consumers use in powerful ways that serve to authenticate and create their ‘selves’. These emotional bonds go beyond consumer perceptions (or attitudes) and determine important marketing outcomes such as purchase intentions, willingness to pay, WOM and forgiveness (Fedorikhin and Cole, 2004).

Researchers have often theorised consumer-brand relationship as a multi-faceted concept, encompassing cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects (e.g., Bagozzi et al., 2017; Keller, 2001, 2009; Park et al., 2006). However, some scholars have focussed primarily on the emotional aspects. In particular, researchers focused on consumer emotions towards brands when outlining guidelines for the development of interactive, consumer-centric and story-based brand-building strategies (Gobé, 2001; Leventhal and Papadatos, 2006; Roberts, 2005). Accordingly, researchers have recommended the use of emotional narratives (i.e., a display of consumers’ perceptions of an ideal life and achievable expectations) to create strategies for engaging consumers on an emotional level (Belk and Tumbat, 2005; Hanlon, 2006; Muniz and Schau, 2005; Thompson et al., 2006). Through these strategies, several forms of brand-specific emotions can be elicited in consumers’ mind, including feelings of oneness with the brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012); general emotional attachment (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011); and excitement and passion towards the brand (Albert et al., 2013; Bauer et al., 2007).

Past research has often incorporated these aspects in the theorisation of consumer-brand relationship. For example, Thomson et al. (2005) incorporated affection (love), connection and passion to theorise the emotional bond between brands and consumers. Hwang and Kandampully (2012) confirmed that high quality emotional brand relationships (conceptualised using self-concept connection, emotional attachment and brand love) drive brand loyalty. Loureiro et al. (2012) reached a similar conclusion by theorising consumer-brand relationship using self-expressive attributes, brand attachment and brand love. Albert and Merunka (2013) drew upon the findings of Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) and Brown et al. (2009), and implied the following: besides love, passion and attachment, the consumer’s tendency to self-identify with brands is also a key element in the development of consumer-brand relationship, as it embodies the consumer’s trust in the brand. Moreover, Hudson et al. (2015) revealed that placing emphasis on the emotional factors such as love, passion and self-connection can enhance the quality of the emotional bond between brands and consumers.

In line with the literature highlighted so far, this study conceptualises emotional brand relationship (E-CBR) as a robust emotional connection between consumers and their favoured brands, which comprises the following four dimensions:
• **Brand love**: a consumer’s emotional bond with a brand, characterised by the positive evaluation of the brand and declarations of love for the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81).

• **Brand attachment**: the psychological bond between consumers and brand in which both parties are willing to allocate resources to maintain the relationship (Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005).

• **Brand passion**: a consumer’s affective and extremely positive attitude towards a brand (Bauer et al., 2007; McEwen, 2005), typically expressed through feelings of ‘excitation, infatuation and obsession’ towards the brand (Albert et al., 2013, p. 2).

• **Self-brand identification**: a consumer’s perceived state of oneness with a brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012, p. 407), which implies perceiving, feeling and valuing a psychosomatic connection with the brand (Lam et al., 2013).

It has been established that the emotions that consumers experience when using a brand have a strong bearing on the impression of likely extensions of the brand (see Yeung and Wyer, 2005). It has also been documented that this impression is likely to impact consumers’ evaluations of the extension. For example, emotions are proven to be more effective than attitudes and perceived fit in predicting consumers’ reactions to brand extensions, as they facilitate consumer’s decision of categorising the extension as ‘a member of the parent brand family’ (Fedorikhin et al., 2008, p. 281). More generally, consumers with a strong relationship with a parent brand may react to brand extensions more positively (Arikan et al., 2016). These consumers may even rely entirely on this relationship and ‘skip’ cognitive evaluation of the features of the extension (Yeung et al., 2005). In such instances, emotional consumer-brand bonds may reduce the risk of decision making when buying a brand extension for the first time (Hem et al., 2003). In more detail, consumers that have developed a strong emotional relationship with a brand view the brand’s extensions as ‘in-group’ members of the brand’s family, and are more likely to be evaluated favourably (Brewer, 1991; Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Perdue et al., 1990).

For luxury brands, the promise of pleasure offers a feelings-based pathway, which consumers ‘transfer’ across a variety of product categories (especially hedonic and affective benefits), can lead to intention to purchase the brand extension (see Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2009, Tsai, 2005). Furthermore, the quality or strength of consumer-brand relationship can impact the way in which consumers evaluate a parent brand’s claimed benefits with respect to its extensions (Park et al., 2002).

Nonetheless, extant studies that have considered the role of consumer-brand relationships in the evaluation of brand extensions have returned some noteworthy conceptual and empirical limitations. For example, Fedorikhin et al. (2008) only focused on emotional attachment and Hagtvedt and Patrick (2009) focused primarily on the hedonic benefits of the parent brand (i.e., pleasure-based emotions). Similarly, Hem and Iversen (2003) focused only on the affective loyalty and Yeung and Wyer (2005) emphasised brand-elicited affects (i.e., feelings that consumers experience when they encounter a brand). In a more recent study, Arikan et al. (2016) showed that brand relationship quality and perceived fit exert independent effects on consumer responses and complement each other as they jointly influence evaluations of brand extensions. However, their results only showed a significant effect on behavioural responses towards brand extension, failing to support the same effect on attitudinal response. Kim et al. (2014) demonstrated that strong brand relationship quality enhances consumer judgments about brand extensions, but only for moderate-to-low-fit extensions. Other studies focused on the opposite effect, i.e. the impact of brand extensions on consumers’ relationship with the parent brands (e.g., see Magnoni and Roux, 2012). Finally, Baazem et al. (2009) found that related brand extensions (e.g., Apple wrist watch) strengthen parent brand relationship quality and unrelated extensions (e.g., Apple-branded shoes) weaken parent-brand relationship quality.

In light of the reflections outlined so far, this study tests the following:

**H1**: E-CBRs positively influence the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension.

### 2.2. Brand attribute associations

#### 2.2.1. Brand attribute associations and intention to purchase the brand extension

In line with the seminal works of Keller (1993) and Low and Lamb (2000), brand attribute associations can be defined as descriptive features that help characterise a brand such as the image the consumer associate with a given brand, the intangible benefits it offers, and the factors involved in the process of purchasing or consumption of the brand. In terms of conceptualisation of brand attribute associations, this study embraces the views of Vigneron and Johnson (1999, 2004), Dubois et al. (2005) and Wiedmann et al. (2007). In more detail, Vigneron and Johnson (1999, 2004) identified five dimensions as main attributes that consumers value the most in luxury brands. Among these, three dimensions (i.e., perceived conspicuousness/elitism/prestige, perceived uniqueness and perceived quality) reflect non-personal-oriented attributes, whereas the other two (i.e., perceived hedonism and perceived extended self) represent personal-oriented values. Dubois et al. (2005) confirmed only three dimensions (i.e., elitism/prestige, distinction and hedonism) that reflect luxury values. Also, Wiedmann et al. (2007) corroborated that quality and uniqueness (as functional values), hedonism and materialism (as individual values), and prestige and conspicuousness (as social values) are among the key luxury dimensions that consumers typically perceive. Based on these findings, the present study focuses on the following sub-components of brand attribute associations for luxury brands:

• **Brand image** is described as the network of brand-related information that consumers retain in memory, which captures the ‘perceptions and preferences for a brand’ (Keller, 2012, p. 143).

• **Hedonic attributes** refer to benefits such as the feelings of fun, pleasure and enjoyment a consumer may gain through owning or consuming a brand (Chandon et al., 2000).

• **Brand prestige** relates to the hedonic and social aspect of brand values (Steenkamp et al., 2003).

• **Uniqueness** is defined as ‘the degree to which consumers feel the brand is different from competing brands—how distinct it is relative to competitors’ (Netemeyer et al., 2004, p. 211).

Past research has highlighted the role of brand attribute associations as driver of the intention to purchase brand extensions (Aaker, 1990; Broniarczyk and Alba, 1994). For example, when consumers encounter a new brand extension, they are likely to evaluate it based on their existing knowledge of the product category, as well as the attributes of the parent brand (Bhat and Reddy, 2001). Moreover, there is theoretical support for the influence of each of these dimensions on intention to purchase the brand extension. First, with respect to brand image, researchers report that consumer’s perception about a brand’s image impacts perceived quality even before the actual purchase (Dillon et al., 2001). This, in turn, influences consumer evaluation of the brand’s new products, including brand extensions (Aaker and Keller, 1990). Second, the hedonic attributes of parent brands influence the way consumers think and feel about the brand (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004) and trigger the development of consumer feelings towards the brand...
Hedonic attributes can be extended to new products, even in dissimilar categories (Bhat and Reddy, 2001; Yeung and Wyer, 2005). Third, in relation to brand prestige, researchers have noted that the extent to which consumers find a parent brand to be ‘likeable’ and ‘relatable’ can impact the extent to which new brand extensions are positively evaluated (Völkner and Sattler, 2006, p. 32). Studies have also confirmed that the values that a brand provides (e.g., prestige and/or functional values) impact consumer attitudes towards a brand extension (Ly et al., 2001). For example, prestigious values may influence the purchase decision of the extension by enhancing perceptions of quality (Albrecht et al., 2013; Baek et al., 2010). Finally, brand uniqueness describes the interpersonal or extrinsic benefits of brand consumption that are pivotal when consumers communicate with other consumers about their experiences with the brand (Vigner and Johnson, 1999). It is documented that brand extensions can inherit such benefits (see Albrecht et al., 2013).

Although existing studies have assessed the impact on the intention to purchase brand extensions for each of these components of brand attribute associations (individually), to the best of the authors’ knowledge, there is no simultaneous examination of the effects of all these components in relation to brand extensions. Moreover, literature on luxury brands suggests that consumers rely on a parent brand’s attributes to develop perceptions about its products (Hill and Lee, 2015). Consumers also draw on these attributes to infer the quality or benefits of the brand’s new products prior to purchase (Bhat and Reddy, 2001; Broniarczyk and Alba, 1994). In the presence of positive attributes, consumers develop positive brand attribute associations that, when transferred to a brand extension, enhance the evaluation of the extension even before a purchase is made (Bhat and Reddy, 2001). For example, it has been argued that for luxury brands having a ‘symbolic muscle’ is a key success factor to extend into new product categories (Reddy et al., 2009). Finally, Albrecht et al. (2013) suggested that the hedonic, prestige and unique values of luxury brands have the power to positively influence consumers’ attitude toward brand extensions.

In light of the literature considered so far, it is plausible to assume all sub-components of brand attribute associations (i.e., brand image, hedonic attributes, prestigious values and uniqueness) are expected to play a role in influencing intention to purchase a luxury brands’ extension. However, the focus of this study is to extend this knowledge by investigating whether the impact on intention to purchase luxury brands’ extension is mediated by E-CBR.

### 2.2.2. The theoretical link between brand attribute associations and E-CBR

Previous studies have discussed the importance of the interplay between cognitive and relational factors, and the resulting influence on consumer decisions. For example, Keller (2001), Wyner (1999), Dyson et al. (1996) and Chang and Chieng (2006) have all concluded that successful brands create a special relationship with their consumers by offering a unique combination of perceptual brand and product benefits. Similarly, Fournier (1998), Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), Blackston (2000) and Vlachos & Vrechopoulos (2012) suggested that brand image aids the development of brand relationships, especially if consumers perceive it to be consistent with their self-image. Tian et al. (2001) and Chitturi et al. (2008) have also highlighted that consumers use a brand’s unique intangible benefits to cultivate self-connection with the brand.

These assumptions find further support in the Theory of Optimal Distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991), which proposes that individuals join moderately inclusive and distinct groups to satisfy the need for inclusion and the need for differentiation. In addition, consumers often express their identities by associating themselves with brands that are perceived to be prestigious (Belk, 1988) in order to gain exclusivity, respect and status (Elliott and Davies, 2005). This is also in line with the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which states that individuals embody the characteristics of a social identity that help them to achieve positive aspirational goals. In fact, Baruch-Runyon et al. (2009) confirmed that brands as social identities portray prestigious characteristics that trigger consumer self-identification with the brand and attachment to the brand. Moreover, Japutra et al. (2018) highlighted that congruency between the brand and the consumer’s ideal self positively influences brand attachment. Studies have also suggested that symbolic and hedonic benefits can lead to the establishment of love for the brand (e.g., Chandon et al., 2000; Vlachos et al., 2010) and the development of a personalised brand relationship (Park et al., 2006).

In the context of luxury brands, the importance of creating symbolic meanings for consumers such as prestigious benefits has been well documented (e.g., Dubois and Czellar, 2002; Jinsoo Hwang and Han, 2014). In addition, scholars believe that luxury consumers base their purchase decisions on the self-expressive attributes of a brand, i.e. attributes that help them reflect their personal and social value (Bian and Forsythe, 2012). Past studies have also suggested that offering such values helps luxury brands to develop a sense of emotional closeness with consumers, fostering consumer-brand relationships (Choo et al., 2012).

In line with the reflections presented so far, it is reasonable to expect a degree of synergy between brand attribute associations and E-CBR when influencing intention to purchase the brand extension. This assumption is also based on past findings, which suggest that emotions facilitate the weight of brand-related information in purchase decisions (see Yeung and Wyer, 2005), especially when the decision is influenced by hedonic, unique and conspicuous attributes (Morris et al., 2002; Voss et al., 2003). Furthermore, scholars have noted that consumer relationship with a brand can act as a mediator of the theoretical link between cognitive factors (such as brand image or perceived quality) and purchase decisions of brand extensions (see Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2009). The mediating role of brand relationship can also be explained if one takes into consideration that the emotions embedded in consumer bonds with the brand can be part of a relational schema closely linked to the information memorised about the brand, which can be activated upon exposure to a relevant cue (see Park et al., 2002). Accordingly, these emotions can be used during decision-making (Kim et al., 2014; Yeung and Wyer, 2005).

In addition to the above, a few existing studies (see Table 1) have considered the effects of brand attribute associations and E-CBR on brand extensions. For example, Arikan et al. (2016) revealed that brand relationship quality mediates the impact of brand quality effects on consumer responses to brand extensions. Similarly, Kim et al. (2014) showed that brand relationship quality mediates the relationship between perceptions of the overall extension-parent fit and trust towards the brand, and also brand extension judgments.

While insightful, these works share some important conceptual and theoretical shortcomings that warrant further empirical analysis. For instance, although Fedorikhin et al. (2008) demonstrated that emotions are more effective than attitudes and perceived fit in predicting consumers’ reactions to brand extensions, the effect was confirmed only for high and moderate levels of parent vs. extended brand fit. Furthermore, Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2009) framework focused only on one aspect of the development of brand relationships – i.e., the hedonic benefits of the parent brand. Similarly, Arikan et al. (2016) theorisation of perceptual factors only focused on the quality of the parent brand and brand portfolio breadth (the number of product categories and the degree of similarity amongst

Please cite this article as: N. Pourazad, L. Stocchi and V. Pare, Brand attribute associations, emotional consumer-brand relationship and evaluation of brand extensions, Australasian Marketing Journal, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.07.004
these categories, Boush and Loken, 1991). Moreover, Arikan and colleagues appraised brand relationship using a dyadic approach (i.e., high vs. low brand relationship quality), which may hinder the generalisability of their conclusions. Based on the literature considered so far, the present study tests the following second research hypothesis:

**H2:** E-CBR mediates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand's extension.

### 2.3. The role of perceived fit

Perceived fit is defined as the number of shared associations between the brand and the extension (Bridges et al., 2000; Czellar, 2003). Existing studies have provided support for the role of perceived fit in consumer evaluations of brand extensions (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Park et al., 1991). In particular, it has been shown that consumers evaluate brand extensions with higher perceived fit more favourably (e.g., see Aaker and Keller, 1990; Ahluwalia, 2008; Barone et al., 2000). In practice, perceived fit between the parent brand and the brand extension has been associated with lower the potential for extension failures (e.g., Bottomley and Holden, 2001; Pina et al., 2013). This is because high levels of perceived fit enhance a consumer’s ability to categorise the brand extension with respect to other products affiliated with the parent brand (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Farquhar, 1989; Herr et al., 1996). Categorisation also facilitates the transferal of brand-elicited emotions from the parent brand into the brand extension (Abosag et al., 2012; Broniarczyk and Alb, 1994; Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Isen and Daubman, 1984). That is, a brand extension that fits with the parent brand can leverage consumer’s emotional readiness to influence their attitudinal and behavioural responses (Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Holmes, 2000). In particular, in product categories where hedonic aspects comprise the core benefits of consumption, such as luxury brands, perceived fit could transfer the hedonic and emotional benefits associated with the parent brand to the brand extension (Hagtvædt and Patrick, 2009).

In line with the above reasoning, this study proposed that perceived fit is likely to play significant moderating role in the links amongst brand attribute associations, E-CBR and intention to purchase the brand extension. In more detail, Aaker and Keller (1990) revealed that greater perceived fit increases the likelihood of perceptions and preference accompanying the parent brand being successfully transferred to the brand extension product. In addition, Völckner and Sattler (2006, 2007) have suggested that perceived fit moderates the link between high levels of favourable predispositions about the parent brand and consumers’ evaluation of brand extension attributes. Also, Ferguson et al. (2016) showed that the positive relationship between brand personality fit and attitude towards brand extensions is mediated by perceived fit. Hence:

**H3a:** Perceived fit positively moderates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension.

**H3b:** Perceived fit positively moderates the relationship between E-CBR and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension.

Fig. 1 presents the resulting research model, to be tested empirically via structural equation modelling.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Sampling and data collection approach

The study used a purposive sampling approach, targeting a population of Iranian consumers likely to share a common passion and interest in luxury brands. The use of purposive sampling when investigating luxury brands is common in the literature (e.g., see Kim, 2019; tom Dieck et al., 2017). This study also used a combination of online and face-to-face data-collection methods. Using identical items for face-to-face and online surveys enhanced response rate and minimised any potential issues that could have resulted from sources of errors in the survey such as coverage error, sampling error and nonresponse error (Alsnih, 2006; Groves and Lyberg, 2010). Online responses were gathered via distributing a web link via email and/or social media websites (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) and encouraging respondents to distribute the link to their own networks to maximise the reach wider demographics. Face-to-face responses were collected via intercepting respondents nearby luxury leather stores...
and jewellery shops in busy shopping malls, chosen to maximise the chance of reaching consumers interested in luxury brands. The data-collection locations were situated across multiple areas of Mashhad (second most populated city in Iran, United Nations, 2016).

Combined, the questionnaires distributed online and face-to-face returned 210 responses, out of which 189 were deemed usable. Removed responses were either incomplete (i.e., more than 50% of questions unanswered) or invalid (i.e., all items with a similar response, or illogical/inconsistent responses). The final sample size is adequate for covariance-based structural equation modelling- SEM (see Wolf et al., 2013).

The majority of respondents (62%) were aged between 26 and 35. This is in line with the characteristics of the demographic profile of the Iranian consumers interested in luxury brands, as implied by many sources (e.g., Exportiamo, 2016; HKTD, 2016; Paivar and Sadeghzadeh, 2015). Almost 90% of the sample had university-level education. Approximately 54% were female and nearly 60% were unmarried. Respondents also had diverse occupations and living arrangements. Finally, with respect to income, more than 41% earned between USD $5800 and USD $9600 annually (average annual net salary in Iran is roughly USD 4670).

3.2. Measurement items and survey structure

The study used established measures from previous research, tailored to fit the context of luxury brands. In terms of E-CBRs, brand attachment was measured using items adapted from Park et al., (2010) and Thomson et al. (2005). Brand love measurement items were based on the works of Batra et al. (2012) and Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). Scales developed by Albert et al., (2013) and Bauer et al. (2007) were used to measure brand passion. To measure brand identification, items were adapted from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012). To measure the sub-components of brand attribute associations, items were derived from Jinsoo Hwang and Hyun (2012) and Lye et al. (2001). The intention to purchase the brand extension was measured using items developed by Taylor and Baker (1994). Finally, the perceived fit measure was adapted from Fedorikhin et al. (2008).

The selected language for the study’s questionnaire was Persian, prepared and crosschecked by mother tongue researchers involved in this study. The questionnaire included three sections. In the first section, the survey asked respondents to identify one brand as their ‘most favourite brand’ from a list of 54 luxury brands (including globally popular brands such as Louis Vuitton and Hermès, as well as Iranian popular brand such as ECUT and Mashhad Leather) selected on the basis of publicly available ranks (e.g., www.forbes.com and www.toptenteh.com/brands). Respondents were also given the option to name their own luxury brand of choice if their favourite brand was not listed. In the following section, the survey invited respondents to complete all scale-item questions (6-point Likert) about their chosen brand.

The survey then asked the respondents to select a brand extension, choosing from a list of six hypothetical products (pre-tested, as explained next). Namely, respondents were first asked the following: ‘Imagine that your selected brand is considering manufacturing some of the products provided in the table below. Which product would be your favourite new product?’ Then, in the last section of the questionnaire, respondents answered questions about the brand extension including purchase intentions, the level of perceived fit and product category involvement.

The proposed brand extensions featured in the survey and their level of similarity/dissimilarity were pre-tested, using a small convenience sample of 20 consumers recruited from the same pool of participants as the main study (albeit reached only online, via social media). The pre-test allowed identifying an equal number of similar and dissimilar products, in line with the definition of perceived fit from the literature (Park et al. 1991). The resulting brand extensions were: (i) a luxury smartphone, a luxury skincare set and a luxury leather suitcase as hypothetical extensions likely to be perceived as very similar to the luxury parent brand; and (ii) a microwave oven, smart fit-band and fountain pen as hypothetical extensions likely to be perceived as dissimilar to the parent luxury brand.

4. Results

The study analysed two of the key concepts (i.e., brand attribute associations and E-CBR) as second-order latent constructs. Second-order constructs are applicable when measuring several related constructs, each of which is measured by multiple items (Awang, 2012). In this study, brand love, brand attachment, brand passion and brand identification are seemingly distinct, but related constructs (first order), which can be accounted for by one common underlying second order construct (E-CBR). Similarly, brand image, hedonic attributes, prestigious values and uniqueness can be represented by one underlying second order construct (i.e., brand attribute association). In comparison to first-order models with correlated factors, second-order constructs allow a more parsimonious and interpretable theorisation of the target concepts (Awang, 2012).

Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the study validated that items associated with each first order dimension load strongly on
Table 2
Measurement items, factor loadings, and descriptive analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First order constructs</th>
<th>Item statements</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand attribute</td>
<td>In my opinion, this brand is attractive</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>associations</td>
<td>In my opinion, this brand is exciting</td>
<td>0.831</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In my opinion, this brand is reliable</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand gives me pleasure</td>
<td>0.887</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand gives me a good feeling</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand expresses my personality</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand symbolizes my status</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand is very prestigious</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In my opinion, this brand is a well-esteemed brand among other luxury brands</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand is a first-class, high-quality brand</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand is unique</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand stands out from its competitors</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand provides me with an opportunity to stand out</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-CBR</td>
<td>I feel that I am attached to this brand</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel personally connected to this brand</td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel emotionally bonded to this brand</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have come to realise that at the end, I always choose this brand.</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can say that I really love this brand</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand creates warm feelings among its customers</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can say that I feel passionate about this brand</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My relationship with this brand is very important to me</td>
<td>0.703</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel I have an ‘alive’ connection with this brand</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just seeing this brand is exciting for me</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I strongly identify myself with this brand</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand is a part of me</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand has a great deal of personal meaning for me</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived fit</td>
<td>This brand would be a good fit with this brand’s products/services</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand would be consistent with this brand’s products/services</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This brand would be a representative of this brand</td>
<td>0.922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to purchase</td>
<td>The next time I need the product/service from this category, I will choose this</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>6.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the brand extension</td>
<td>brand if I had needed the product/service from this category during the past year</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the next year, if I need the product/service from this category, I will select this brand.</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
CFA and validity measurements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent variables</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>Maximum shared variance</th>
<th>Max. reliability (H)</th>
<th>Correlations (squared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived fit</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. E-CBR</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention to purchase the brand extension</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td>0.619</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Brand attribute associations</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>0.619</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the factor that they are designed to represent (Malhotra, 1981). This study also tested the validity and reliability of the measurement items via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA – see Table 2). The analysis returned loadings for all first order latent variables above the suggested value of 0.6, with no cross-loading measures exceeding 0.6, thus confirming the convergent validity of the measurement items used. Items that yielded high modification covariance indices (above 20) were removed to reach acceptable model fit indices. Accordingly, CFI was more than 0.95, PCLOSE exceeded 0.05 and REMSA stood below 0.05, indicating an acceptable fit for CFA (Stewart, 1981).

The CFA results confirmed the internal consistency (see Table 3), since composite reliability scores (CR) for all items ranged from 0.85 to 0.95, exceeding the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Chin, 1998). Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) measures were greater than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating that the variance explained by the items was greater than the variance due to measurement error. With respect to convergent validity, AVE measures of each latent constructs surpassed the construct’s highest squared correlation score with any other latent constructs. This suggested strong discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011).

Given that the data originated from a single source, in order to test for the common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the study took a full collinearity assessment approach (Ned, 2015) and checked the model for the existence of collinearity, where any occurrence of a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) greater than 3.3 is an indication of possible common method bias. The results revealed that VIFs (at factor level) resulting from a full collinearity test were equal to or lower than 3.3 for brand attribute associations, emotional consumer-brand relationship and brand extension, proposing that these constructs are free from potential common method bias. For perceived fit, the VIF associated with Emotional Consumer-Brand Relationship and brand attribute associations exceeds 3.3 (5.46 and 5.45, respectively), which means that a moderately potential common method bias exists. This is a limitation that future research could attempt to overcome by selecting different indicators for measuring perceived fit as a latent variable.
The study then deployed covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesised relationships (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), using Amos SPSS (version 23.0). SEM is suitable for theory testing (Steenkamp et al., 2003) and is a versatile approach to account for measurement error in ‘cross-sectional models containing varying sets of constructs and indicators’ (p. 201). SEM also accommodates for less rigorous sample assumptions (Hair et al., 2011). The results returned an acceptable model fit. Specifically, the RMSEA index yielded approximately 0.06 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). The CFI and GFI indices showed satisfactory measures (CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.82), and the Chi-Square value stood at 778.93, indicating an overall strong statistical significance for the model (p < 0.001).

In relation to the results of hypotheses testing, the empirical analysis returned the following outcomes. Path analysis standardised coefficients and T-statistics illustrated that E-CBR (β = 0.186, CR = 2.106, P-value = 0.035) has a significant positive impact on the intention to a luxury brand’s extension, confirming H1. For the analysis of the mediation role of E-CBR in the relationship between brand attribute associations and purchase intention, bootstrapping (2000 resamples) was run using bias-corrected confidence intervals of 90. The results confirmed the mediation role of E-CBR (bootstrap estimate = 0.110, p-value = 0.001), leading to the acceptance of H2. Finally, in line with H3a, perceived fit was found to significantly moderate the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension (estimate measure = 0.105, p = value 0.061). However, H3b was rejected (estimate measure = -0.018, p = value 0.641).

5. Discussion, limitations and future research directions

5.1. Summary of the key findings

This study focused on determining whether through bolstering the interplay between brand attribute associations and E-CBRs, brand managers can attain desired outcomes such as encouraging the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. Using covariance-based SEM, the study confirmed that E-CBR has a significant positive impact on the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension, and mediates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase the extension. This confirmed existence of a synergy between consumers’ attribute associations about a luxury brand and the emotional bond between the consumer and that brand. This synergy underpins the intention to buy the brands’ extensions and corroborates the importance of leveraging consumer’s established thoughts and knowledge about the brand to encourage development of emotional bonds with that brand (Esch et al., 2006; Fournier, 1998; Thomson et al., 2005). Furthermore, in relation to perceived fit, this study confirmed that it moderates the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension, but not the relationship between E-CBR and the intention to purchase the extension. Combined, these findings lead to the following implications.

5.2. Theoretical implications

From a theoretical perspective, this paper advances knowledge by deepening the understanding of the relationship between E-CBR and the intention to purchase luxury brands’ extensions. Namely, the confirmed synergy between brand attribute associations and E-CBR extends the literature by attesting the summarised effects of brand attributes such as brand image, prestigious values and uniqueness as well as relational factors such as brand love and brand self-identification on the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. This shows that consumers leverage salient cognitive schemas and memories linked to luxury brands as well as their emotional bond with the brand to inform purchase decisions of new extended products linked to a parent luxury brand. Accordingly, the framework that this study has introduced and tested sheds light on the ‘heart vs. mind’ distinction, inherent to the research on consumer-brand relationships. As this study suggests, ‘heart’ refers to the emotional and affective dimensions of the relationship brands and its consumer, while ‘mind’ refers to the cognitive aspects. When it comes to shaping the intent to purchase a luxury brand’s extension, both aspects seem to operate both as separate as well as interdependent drivers of purchase behaviour.

Moreover, in an attempt to widen the theoretical understanding of the relationship between emotional customer brand relationship and intention to purchase luxury brands’ extension, this study also introduced a new second-order concept that parsimoniously represents the emotional bonds between consumers and luxury brands. This concept incorporated the relational dimensions of brand attachment, brand love, brand passion, and brand self-identification. In addition, by assessing the influence of E-CBR on intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension, the study adds to the existing literature (e.g., Haghtvedt and Patrick, 2009; Kim et al., 2014) that were limited in the conceptualisation of brand relationships or in appraising such relationships when testing their likely effects on brand extensions. Importantly, this study also adds to the limited existing knowledge that has explored cognitive and emotional connections between Iranian consumers and their favourite luxury brands (Miremadi et al., 2011). In particular, the findings of this study are in line with Alvandi et al. (2013) and Salehzadeh and Poul (2017), which revealed that positive attitude towards the brand, personal value and psychological motivation towards luxury consumption are positively associated with Iranian consumers’ interest towards luxury brands.

More generally, the present research has enhanced the understanding of the theoretical link between brand attribute associations and E-CBRs, adding to existing literature (e.g., Loureiro and Kaufmann, 2012; So et al., 2013; Vlachos and Vrechopoulos, 2012) by combining several important cognitive and emotional elements into one single framework. The study also corroborates the growing consensus that the development of consumer emotions towards brands originates from the cognitive associations that consumers hold in their mind (e.g., see Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Vlachos and Vrechopoulos, 2012; Japutra et al., 2018). In fact, from a much broader theoretical perspective, this study extends knowledge about the importance of creating and establishing intangible brand attribute associations to convert perceptions into consumer-brand relationships (Keller, 2012).

In addition to the above, by confirming the moderating role of perceived fit in the relationship between brand attribute associations and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension, this research adds to knowledge that assume perceived fit as a factor that facilitates transferral of attitudes and perceptions from the parent brand to the extension (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Park et al., 1991; Ahluwalia, 2008). Namely, this study’s findings have special theoretical implications for categories where a brand’s unique and hedonic attributes comprise the core benefits of consumption, as per the instance of luxury brands (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). That is, perceived fit could prolong the existing brand attribute associations retained in consumers’ mind into the brand extension (Haghtvedt and Patrick, 2009). However, this research did not confirm the moderating role of perceived fit in the relationship between E-CBR and the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. Arguably, this could indicate that the categorisation of the extension (as a result of high degrees of perceived fit - Farquhar, 1989; Herr et al., 1996) does not strengthen the influence of E-CBRs on purchase intention. Hence, the emotional bonds.
consumers develop with brands can enhance their intentions to purchase brand’s extensions irrespective of the degree of perceived fit.

5.3. Managerial implications

The study offers a number of important managerial implications. First, it confirmed the pivotal role of brand attribute associations and their effect on the development of E-CBRs. Accordingly, it can be concluded that luxury brand managers should focus on showcasing the hedonic and emotional characteristics of the brand to bolster emotional bonds with the consumer. When coupled with positive brand image, strong symbolic attributes, unique and prestigious qualities, these bonds can strengthen the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. A clear connection between the extension and the parent brand in the promotional activities can bolster positive emotions towards a brand. In particular, consumers have to be reminded about the parent brand’s prestigious and unique factors in order to trigger intention to purchase the brand extension. For example, Tiffany & Co. leverages the iconic blue box to help people create strong connections with their loved ones when extending their products from jewellery high-quality silver accessories into watches, handbags and briefcases.

Furthermore, this study returned empirical evidence of a synergy between E-CBR and brand attribute associations, which impacts the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. Therefore, it can be inferred that luxury brand managers should deploy strategies to strengthen the link between cognitive and emotional factors that consumers associate with the brand. In particular, they need to strike a balance between rationality and emotionality in order to build and leverage unique relationships with consumers. For instance, luxury brand managers should highlight in advertising campaigns their brand’s ‘exceptional’ qualities and, at the same time, provide rational arguments that can help consumers decide whether to purchase a luxury brand’s extension.

In addition, the study showed that the effect of E-CBR on the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension is independent from the degree of perceived fit. This means that brand managers can leverage the emotional bond with their consumers to overcome the potential obstacles associated with dissimilar or ‘unfit’ brand extensions (Park and Kim, 2001). This is often seen in the case of luxury fashion brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton or Hermès, which have extended their product range into children’s ranges (e.g., clothes, baby diaper bags or baby gifts), building on their customers’ strong emotional connections with the parent brands and their interest in spending money on items for their kids as a reflection of themselves (Hoffmann and Coste-Manière, 2011). This means that, in order to take further advantage of the booming Iranian luxury market, managers of luxury brands should keep in mind the likely benefit of extending the brands into categories other than traditional or more expected products (e.g., watches and jewellery, clothes, perfumes etc.) in order to establish and sustain emotional bonds with Iranian consumers (see also Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2014). In fact, more generally, this study offers managers of global luxury brands insights from an emerging yet under-explored market: Iran (Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2011). With an educated middle-income population of almost 80 million, luxury brands are seizing up the opportunities of setting up retail outlets in Iran (Jafari and Süderm, 2012; Teimourpour and Hanzaee, 2014). The findings that the present study offers are relevant to managers of luxury brands wanting to do so. In particular, the outcomes of this study dispel conventional assumptions that a growing middle-Eastern market such as Iran would require differentiated or specialised strategies. Instead, it is revealed that such markets and such emotional relationships already exist and simply need to be enhanced and capitalised on. Finally, based on the findings of this study, managers of global luxury brands are recommended to pay close attention to the consumers’ perception of balance between a luxury brand’s cognitive and emotional attributes. This is due to the unique Iranian culture where rational individual and social perceptions of a luxury brand are equally as important as the individual emotional bonds consumers create with their favourite brands. In particular, Iranian luxury consumers look for unique products with premium prices (to reflect premium image in social settings) which also have excellent functional values, such as build-quality and durability (Salehzadeh and Khazaei Pool, 2017). Therefore, luxury brand managers are suggested to reflect a balance between cognitive and emotional attributes when promoting their brand extensions in Iran.

5.4. Limitations and future research directions

As with any empirical studies, the present research revealed some limitations, which can be turned into avenues for further research. First, the conceptual model was restricted to one key variable: the intention to purchase a luxury brand’s extension. Future research should consider other relevant outcomes such as positive WOM and brand loyalty (towards the parent brand and towards the extension). In addition, the study only included perceived fit as the moderating factor. Future studies could consider also other concepts such as extension direction (upscale extensions vs. downscale extensions) (Pontes et al., 2017), brand commitment (Wang et al., 2017) and product innovation (Lee and O’Connor, 2003). In terms of the sample, the majority of the respondents were young consumers of luxury brands from Iran. Although in this regard this research highlights some important trends for a growing market, further replications may need to compare findings for older generations and in different cultural contexts. Also, while the stores selected for data collection were targeted based on their perceived high status as a retailer of luxury products, future research could control for the possible effect of store location (see Kumagai and Nagasawa, 2017). Additionally, with respect to the choice of brand extensions, this study used mock-up extensions. Future replications may use real brand extensions and take into consideration other important aspects concerning brand extensions, such as brand extensions’ evaluation. Finally, given the unique characteristics of luxury brands, the research model should be compared in a low-involvement context for comparison (e.g., consumer packaged goods) to verify if the same theoretical links still occur and influence the intention to purchase brand extensions.

References


Isen, A.M., Daubman, K.A., 1984. The influence of affect on categorization in the
Jafari, A., Sierdema, A., 2012. An analysis of material consumption culture in the
iews: An empirical study of the construct validity of self-report measures of
Journal of Business Research 63 (11), 1468–1474.


Patrinos, T., Teimourpour, B., Hanzaee, K.H., 2013. The impact of brand loyalty on
influence of branding on customer satisfaction. Int. J. Market. Res. 52 (10),


Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand

Prinzing, T., 2015. The role of brand extension in the formation of brand


