RESEARCH ARTICLE

Jun PANG, Hean Tat KEH, Siqing PENG

Effects of advertising strategy on consumer-brand relationships: A brand love perspective

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Abstract   This research investigates the effects of advertising strategy, that is, rational advertising and emotional advertising, on brand love. Based on the consumer-brand relationship literature, brand love is defined as a reciprocal, dynamic, multiplex, and purposive relationship between satisfied consumers and their brands, and has three key components: brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment. Using a series of pretests and a main experiment, we examine how rational and emotional advertising affect brand love as well as its components for different products and services. Results show that for products, there is an interaction between advertising strategy and product type in influencing brand love. Specifically, rational advertising is more effective for utilitarian-value based products while emotional advertising is more effective for hedonic-value based products. For services, we find that emotional advertising is more effective for both utilitarian- and hedonic-value based services.

Jun PANG
Department of Marketing, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
E-mail: pangjun@gsm.pku.edu.cn

Hean Tat KEH (✉)
Department of Marketing, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
E-mail: htkeh@gsm.pku.edu.cn

Siqing PENG
Department of Marketing, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
E-mail: pengsq@gsm.pku.edu.cn

摘要　在回顾消费者—品牌关系相关文献的基础上，采用品牌喜爱度三角模型，探索理性广告策略和感性广告策略对品牌喜爱度及其情感要素（亲密）、动机要素（激情）和认知要素（承诺）的影响。研究发现，理性广告对基于功能价值的产品更有效，而感性广告对基于享乐价值的产品更有效。在服务领域，感性广告比理性广告更能促使消费者产生强烈的品牌喜爱度。

关键词　品牌喜爱度，品牌亲密，品牌激情，品牌承诺，理性广告，感性广告

1　Introduction

Investing in consumer-brand relationships has become the Holy Grail for many companies that seek to build lasting and profitable ties with customers. This is because a strong and favorable consumer-brand relationship can form marketing advantages such as barriers to entry, price premiums, lower marketing costs, increased market share, and positive word of mouth (Aaker, 1996; Bello and Holbrook, 1995; Dick and Basu, 1994; Holbrook, 1992; Park and Srinivasan, 1994; Winters, 1991).

In the literature, consumer-brand relationship is usually conceptualized as a long-term, committed, and affect-laden partnership. Examples of such constructs include brand commitment (e.g., Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002), brand trust (e.g., Hess, 1995; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), and brand loyalty (e.g., Aaker, 1996; Dick and Basu, 1994; Fournier and Yao, 1997). The limitations of these constructs, however, are that they ignore many other potentially valuable relationship forms that may characterize consumer-brand bonds (Fournier, 1998). More recently, some scholars advocate investigating consumers' "brand love" or "emotional attachment" to the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson, MacInnis and Park, 2005; Whang, Sahoury and Zhang, 2004). Specifically, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) argue that applying psychological theories of interpersonal love to study consumer-brand relationships enables us to have: (1) a more nuanced view of consumers' feelings towards brands, and (2) a better understanding and prediction of desirable consumer behavior. Along this line, Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) define brand love as a reciprocal, dynamic, multiplex, and purposive relationship between satisfied consumers and their brands, and develop a tri-dimensional brand love model to characterize the affective, conative, and cognitive features of consumer-brand relationships.

Despite its relevance and potential for a better understanding of consumer behavior, research on brand love is still in its infancy. Little is known about how brand love can be cultivated and influenced by marketing variables. To remedy this void in the literature, in this research we examine the effect of advertising

strategy on brand love. Advertising is a popular marketing tool that is used to influence consumer attitude and behavior (Belch and Belch, 2004). There are two widely recognized advertising strategies in both advertising research and practice: emotional strategy and rational strategy (Golden and Johnson, 1983; Laskey et al., 1995; Stafford and Day, 1995). Specifically, the emotional strategy is to stir consumers' feelings and emotions through fulfilling their self-esteem, subconscious, and ego-related impulses (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994), while the rational strategy is to inform consumers of one or more key benefits of a product that are perceived to be highly functional or important to them (Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Laskey et al., 1995).

In the literature, advertising effectiveness is usually measured by consumers' ad attitude and brand attitude (e.g., Batra, 1984; Batra and Ray, 1986; Gardner, 1985; Holbrook, 1978; Holbrook and Batra, 1987, Wang, 1999). Yet few studies have examined the effect of advertising on consumer-brand relationships. This issue is crucial, as consumer-brand relationships can be more influential than brand attitude in predicting consumer behaviors (Fournier, 1998). As such, this research aims to investigate how rational versus emotional advertising strategy influence brand love, and how these effects vary across different product categories.

In examining the effects of different advertising strategies on brand love, the present research integrates the advertising and the consumer-brand relationship literatures. Our findings would facilitate a better understanding of how advertising can influence the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of consumer-brand relationships, which has important implications for firms in planning their advertising strategy.

2 Literature review

2.1 Consumer-brand relationships

Previous research suggests that people would sometimes animate a brand by giving it quasi-human qualities and form relationships with it in a way similar to how they relate to human beings in the social context (Aaker, 1997; Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier, 1998). To illustrate, brand zealots of the VW Beetle have been known to give names to their cars, talk to them and stroke them with affection (Aggarwal, 2004). The motivation underlying this process is that consumers would view their possessions (i.e., the brand) as their extended self (Belk, 1988). To maintain congruency, they may assign the human qualities they own or desire for an ideal self to the brand.

People's animation mechanism and treatment of a brand as a "relationship

partner" enables the application of interpersonal theories to the consumer-brand context. For example, based on Sternberg's (1986) triangular love theory, Shimp and Madden (1988) make a case for how it can be adapted to characterize consumer-object relations (CORs). CORs refer to the relationship between consumers and consumption objects (product, brands, stores, etc.), which can range from antipathy, to slight fondness, leading up to love (analogous to person-person relations). They further propose a liking-yearning-commitment framework to describe the nature of interactions between consumers and objects. Specifically, "liking" refers to feelings such as closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. At the positive extreme of the liking continuum, the consumer treats the object as an old friend in his/her life, or a part of his/her personal identity, self image, and self esteem; while at the negative extreme, the consumer may explicitly dislike or even hate the object. "Yearning" means to have an earnest or strong desire for an object. Like liking, both positive and negative yearning may occur in various consumption contexts. For example, a Nike fan may be constantly longing for the latest model of its running shoes. In contrast, a consumer may tremble at the thought of going to a restaurant where she had previously encountered a terrible experience. Finally, "commitment" characterizes the cognitive dimension of consumer-object relations. It has two aspects: in the short term, commitment indicates the consumer's decision to love the object, and in the long term, it implies the dedication to maintain that relationship.

Even though interpersonal relationships are more bidirectional than consumer-object relationships, which are typically unidirectional as the object cannot love back or initiate the relationship, yet there are sufficient similarities to allow meaningful analogies, as firms have the capability to initiate an activity and respond to consumers' behavior. Therefore, analogous to Sternberg's (1986) love taxonomy, Shimp and Madden (1988) suggest eight kinds of consumer-object relations, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1　Eight types of consumer-object relations

Type	Components			
	Liking	Yearning	Commitment	
1. Nonliking	−	−	−	The consumer has no feelings whatsoever for a brand
2. Liking	+	−	−	The consumer feels some degree of affinity for a particular brand, but has no particular desire to neither own nor purchase the brand
3. Infatuation	−	+	−	The presence of a strong yearning for a particular brand in the absence of any strong liking or even desire to consume that item for any length of time

<div align="right">(To be continued)</div>

(*Continued*)

Type	Components			
	Liking	Yearning	Commitment	
4. Functionalism	–	–	+	A consumer decides to purchase a particular brand in the absence of any strong emotional attachment or yearning for it
5. Inhibited desire	+	+	–	The only reason consumers would not decide to want/own a particular brand when they like and yearn for it is because some particular constraint discourages the behavior
6. Utilitarianism	+	–	+	Consumers form attachments to and fondness for a particular brand and also are committed to using/consuming the brand, but do not have a passionate relationship with it
7. Succumbed desire	–	+	+	Situational pressures sometimes force consumers to succumb to the wishes and desires of external sources to want and buy a brand that they do not like
8. Loyalty	+	+	+	The consumer feels an intimate relation with a particular brand, has a strong yearning to purchase or repurchase the brand, and is committed, at least in the short term, to support that particular brand

Note: "+" means this component is present, "–" means this component is absent.
Source: Shimp and Madden (1988).

More recently, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) conceptualize brand love as "the passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for the brand." The limitation of this definition is that it focuses on the affective and conative aspects of brand love, and ignores the important role of cognition. We contend that brand love is more complicated than Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) conceptualization. In this research, we adopt Keh, Pang and Peng's (2007) tri-dimensional model of brand love, in which brand love is defined as a reciprocal, dynamic, multiplex, and purposive relationship between satisfied consumers and their brands. Moreover, brand love consists of three key components: brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment, which correspond to the affective, conative, and cognitive aspects of consumer-brand relationships, respectively.

2.1.1 Brand Intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment

Brand intimacy describes the closeness and harmonization in a favorable consumer-brand relationship. It is usually indicated by consumers' emotional willingness to keep in touch with the brand, to share feelings with the brand and

to support the brand when it is in difficulty. In addition, brand intimacy mirrors consumers' perceptions of the care, understanding and attention they receive from the brand. As such, it reflects the reciprocal emotional exchanges between consumers and their brands. For example, consumers may search for information on their favorite brands, while brands (firms) may develop their customer database to know customers' unique needs and maintain emotional connections with them by adopting tactics such as sending birthday cards. Brand passion implies the zeal and enthusiasm in brand love (Sternberg, 1986). It captures consumers' dithyrambic, and sometimes, blind fervor for the brand. Brand passion is driven by various motivations and arousal, including self-extension, uniqueness, and social identification.

There is considerable research on brand commitment in the literature (e.g., Fournier and Yao, 1997; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, 2002). Commitment refers to an enduring desire to continue the relationship and a willingness to make efforts toward that end (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It comprises the cognitive elements involved in consumers' decision-making about the existence of and potential long-term pledge to a loving consumer-brand relationship (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002; Gundlach, Achrol and Mentzer, 1995). The dual-temporal characteristic of commitment in COR also applies to brand love: in the short term, it implies a consumer's decision to establish a relationship with a particular brand; and in the long term, it reflects the attitudinal and behavioral disposition toward the continuance of such a relationship from both the consumer's and the brand's sides.

2.1.2   Interactions among brand intimacy, passion, and commitment

In the tri-dimensional brand love model, intimacy, passion and commitment can interact with one another. Specifically, brand intimacy is positively related to brand commitment because consumers are willing to develop and maintain an affective bond with the brand that makes consumers feel warm and enjoyable (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Fournier and Yao, 1997; Keh, Pang and Peng, 2007). At the same time, consumers with high brand commitment would have stronger affective attachment and support for the brand. Passion and commitment can also influence each other. To illustrate, a successful advertising campaign that resonates with a consumer's desires might lead to an on-the-spot purchase decision. Some magical and unforgettable memories brought about by the brand can induce commitment as well, such as wearing the gift a consumer received on a special occasion. The reverse is also true, committed consumers tend to exude extreme passion for the brand; they get excited at the mere sight of the logo, they cannot help purchasing the latest product of the brand, and they persist in the

belief that the brand is the best no matter how hard its competitors try. Finally, brand passion will interact with brand intimacy as well. On the one hand, brand intimacy can be viewed as the emotional outcome when the brand meets consumers' needs for passion. In other words, passionate arousal can attract consumers to experience the brand for the first time, which augurs the start of an intimate relationship between them. On the other hand, brand passion may well be stimulated by intimacy in that consumers will perceive resonance with the brand after they have experienced frequent close interactions with it, or have established a deep understanding about it.

2.2   Advertising strategy

The emotional/rational framework stems from Copeland's (1924) original proposition that individuals buy products for either rational or emotional reasons, and has been studied extensively in the marketing literature (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999). In advertising, the rational strategy is based on the traditional information processing models of decision making, in which the consumer is believed to make logical and rational decisions. Thus, the rational strategy attempts to attract customers' attentions and influence their information processing (Aaker and Myers, 1982; Aaker and Norris, 1982; Liu, 2006). Laskey et al. (1995) summarize three approaches that are frequently used in rational advertising: comparative, unique selling proposition (USP) and preemptive. Vaughn (1986) argues that rational advertising has the "learn-feel-do" hierarchy of effect. As such, its effectiveness lies in the persuasive power of its arguments or reasoning about product attributes (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999).

In contrast, the emotional strategy, grounded in the affective and experiential aspects of consumption (Burke and Edell, 1989; Edell and Burke, 1987; Holbrook and Batra, 1987), is deemed to be more effective in making the consumer feel good about the product by building a "personality" for the product or creating an image of the product users (Ogilvy, 1963). Laskey et al. (1995) note that user image, brand image, and use occasion are the main approaches used in emotional advertising. Unlike the rational strategy, the emotional strategy is assumed to influence consumers' attitudes following the hierarchy of "feel-learn-do." Therefore, its effectiveness is subject to consumers' feelings.

It is widely accepted that advertising can influence consumers' attitudinal and emotional responses to the product/brand. For example, Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty (1986) find that consumers' attitude towards a product is better after they view an interesting ad compared to a provocative ad. Burke and Edell (1989)

examine three dimensions of consumer feelings—happy, warm, and negative, and find that advertising that makes consumers feel happy and warm will be more positively evaluated by them.

However, previous research indicates mixed findings on the effectiveness of rational and emotional advertising strategies. For example, Aaker and Norris (1982) show that informational appeals result in higher effectiveness ratings than emotional appeals. Golden and Johnson (1983) reveal that, overall, thinking ads provide more information than emotional ads, and are subsequently better liked and result in higher purchase intentions. In the same vein, Coulson (1989) finds higher purchase intentions for rational commercials than for mood commercials, and Holbrook (1978) reports that the factual content of ads is more credible, leading to more positive beliefs. Yet, other scholars suggest that appeals generating an emotional response will induce more positive reactions (Goldberg and Gorn, 1987), and higher levels of recall (Choi and Thorson, 1983). In the service industry, there is evidence that informational or cognitive advertising is more frequently used by firms (Zinkhan, Johnson and Zinkhan, 1992), and is superior to emotional appeals (Stafford and Day, 1995). This is because rational and informative appeals may help reduce some of the uncertainty often associated with the purchase of services. In contrast, Unwin (1975) argues that emotional and experiential appeals can help alleviate the abstract nature of service offerings. Similarly, Cutler and Javalgi (1993) find that emotional advertising is more popular in the service industry. Abernethy and Butler (1992) also demonstrate that informational cues are used less often in advertising for services.

The inconsistent findings regarding the effectiveness of rational and emotional advertising strategies lead some researchers to explore the moderators underlying the effect of advertising strategy on consumer attitude. Subsequently, the principle of matching (or congruity) between advertising strategy and product type has been supported in several studies (Aaker, Batra and Myers, 1992; Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Sewall and Sarel, 1986; Shavitt, 1992). For example, Aaker and Norris (1982) conduct content analysis on TV commercials, and find that there are significant differences in the amount of information between different types of products. Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1984) advocate a contingency approach, implying that the type of appeal should match the type of product. Johar and Sirgy (1991) propose that value-expressive advertising appeals will be persuasive for value-expressive products, whereas utilitarian appeals will be persuasive for utilitarian products. In the service industry, despite the application of various service category frameworks to explore congruency, there is no significant interaction between advertising strategy and service type (Stafford and Day, 1995; Stafford, 1996).

3 Research hypotheses

Based on the literature review, we posit that the principle of congruity between advertising strategy and product type is applicable to the relationship between advertising strategy and brand love. We classify product type according to its value to the consumer. Previous research finds that consumer value consists of utilitarian value and hedonic value (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Crowley, Spangenberg and Hughes, 1992; Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1993). From the consumer's perspective, utilitarian value indicates a product's ability to perform functions in their everyday lives, and hedonic value refers to the pleasure potential of a product (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Based on the bi-dimensional structure of consumer value, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) suggest two product types: (1) utilitarian value-based product, with tangible or objective features to solve consumer problems, and (2) hedonic value-based product, with intangible or subjective features that are related to personal feelings and emotions.

The principle of congruity between advertising strategy and consumer value results from the practice of advertising. The FCB Strategy Planning Model (Vaughn, 1980, 1986), widely used by agencies and advertisers, suggests that the rational strategy is more appropriate for thinking products, whereas the feeling strategy would be more effective if products are related closely to emotions and feelings. Accordingly, we propose that the rational advertising strategy should match utilitarian value-based products as it is more effective in communicating utilitarian value, while the emotional advertising strategy should match hedonic value-based products as it is more effective in communicating hedonic value. In other words, advertisements should work more effectively if they are able to communicate the key consumer value for each type of product. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1 Product type moderates the effect of advertising strategy on consumer's brand love.

H1a For utilitarian value-based product, rational advertising is more effective to stimulate consumers' brand love (and its three components of brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment).

H1b For hedonic value-based product, emotional advertising is more effective to stimulate consumers' brand love (and its three components of brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment).

There is limited research on advertising strategy in service industries, and the present research represents an exploratory attempt in this regard. Two important

characteristics that distinguish services from goods are intangibility and inseparability [1] (Bateson, 1979; Berry, 1987; Zeithaml, 1981). Briefly, intangibility refers to the notion that services lack the palpable or tactile quality of goods, and inseparability implies that production and consumption of a service take place simultaneously, and customers are involved in the service production process (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1985). Due to these service characteristics, we propose that emotional advertising will be more effective than rational advertising in stimulating consumer's love for service brands. The reasoning is that the effectiveness of rational advertising is realized by communicating key features of the service to consumers and leading them to cognitive processing (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999). However, the key features of services are usually intangible and cannot be perceived by consumers directly. As a result, it is difficult to use rational advertising to induce consumers' objective evaluations of service quality. However, emotional advertising is based on consumer's feelings and experiences (Holbrook and Batra, 1987). This strategy is more likely to evoke consumers' empathy with the advertised service encounter, with which they typically have personal experiences. Based on this discussion, we hypothesize that:

H2   For service brands, emotional advertising is more effective to stimulate consumers' brand love (and its three components of brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment) than rational advertising.

4   Methods and results

4.1   Pilot study: Advertisement selection

Before conducting the formal experiment, we needed to select the suitable contexts and materials—the utilitarian value-based product/service, the hedonic value-based product/ service, and their corresponding advertisements. A pilot study was conducted to fulfill this purpose.

We used a convenient sample of 10 MBA students, who were interviewed to elicit their thoughts about typical utilitarian products, hedonic products, and familiar services. Based on a content analysis of the interview data, we chose notebook computer and automobile as the utilitarian and hedonic value-based products, respectively, and hotel and airline as the utilitarian and hedonic value-based services, respectively. Following that, we conducted an extensive

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[1] The other two characteristics are heterogeneity and perishability (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1985).

search of advertisements for the products and services. A total of 280 ads were selected, one ad for each product or service brand. They included 75 newspaper ads, 140 magazine ads, 35 TV commercials, 10 radio ads, 15 Internet ads, and 5 outdoor ads. The content analyses of the advertisements yielded three types of advertising strategies: (1) rational advertising, which attempts to communicate the key functions and benefits of the product/service to consumers; (2) emotional advertising, which intends to persuade consumers through positive feelings and enjoyable emotional experiences; and (3) mixed advertising combining rational and emotional appeals. These results confirmed the rational/emotional framework for advertising strategies.

   We also explored the key elements that, from the advertiser's view, should emerge in rational and emotional advertising. We used a focus group, which consisted of five marketing practitioners, to brainstorm on this. The focus group generated six key elements for rational advertising: (1) objective description, (2) rational analysis, (3) emphasizing quality, performance, convenience, and usability, (4) value for money, (5) having various functions, and (6) providing simple descriptions of the functions; as well as six key elements for emotional advertising: (1) subjective feelings, (2) emotional appeals, (3) emphasizing lifestyle, taste, and identity, (4) focusing on value, (5) emphasizing pleasant experience, and (6) showing beautiful pictures. Then, the five marketing practitioners were asked to view the 280 ads and rate them on both rational and emotional appeals using ten-point scales, according to the extent to which they contain the key elements of each strategy. To exclude the sequence effect of ad exposure, the ads were randomly displayed for each respondent. Based on the cut-off criteria that the rational (emotional) ads should score more than 7 points on rational (emotional) appeal and fewer than 5 points on emotional (rational) appeal, we finally selected 34 emotional and 26 rational magazine ads, consisting of 15 computer ads, 15 car ads, 15 hotel ads and 15 airline ads. Across the four product and service categories, we would be able to test the robustness of our findings.

   To ensure that the classification of rational and emotional advertising from the consumer's perspective is consistent with that from the five marketing experts, and to remove the potential effects of other advertising characteristics, we engaged 30 MBA students (19 males and 11 females) to assess each ad's emotional and rational dimensions, as well as their perceptions of how comprehensible and clear its content is. To control for the length of the questionnaire, each variable was measured on a 7-point scale with a single item. Specifically, the degree of comprehensibility was measured by "I think this ad is easy to understand," while the degree of communication clarity was measured by "I feel this ad communicates information clearly." In addition, the rational strategy was measured by "This ad appeals on rationality and emphasizes

performance of the offering," and the emotional strategy was measured by "This ad appeals on emotion and emphasizes hedonic experience of the offering." All ads were presented randomly to eliminate the order effect. In the end, eight ads were selected based on two criteria: (1) No significant difference in comprehensibility and communication clarity between ads; and (2) They have significant high score on one dimension (emotional or rational) and low score on the other (rational or emotional). As a result, each product/service has two ads representing different advertising strategies.

4.2   Experiment

A 2 (rational vs. emotional advertising) ×2 (automobile vs. notebook computer for product industry, and hotel vs. airline for service industry) mixed experimental design was used to test our hypotheses. We treated advertising strategy and product (service) category as within-subject variables and industry category (products vs. services) as the between-subject variable. Participants were assigned to the product or service group randomly. They were asked to view four ads: the participants in the product group viewed a rational ad of automobile, an emotional ad of automobile, a rational ad of notebook, and an emotional ad of notebook; and the participants in the service group viewed a rational ad of hotel, an emotional ad of hotel, a rational ad of airline, and an emotional ad of airline.

We invited 100 people (50 males and 50 females) to participate in our experiment. They consisted of 76 MBA students and 24 full-time working adults. The participants were equally and randomly assigned to the product ads and service ads groups. For the experiment, all the ads were scanned from magazines and printed in color on the questionnaires. We asked the participants to view the ads and rate them on the scales for comprehensibility, communication clarity, the rational/emotional appeals of the ad, as well as brand love. Brand love was measured with the Brand Love Scale developed by Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) (see Table 2). The other four variables were measured with the same scales used in the pilot study.

Table 2   The tri-dimensional scale of brand love ($N = 100$)

			Composite reliability: 0.839	
Factors	Items	Factor loading	Item-to-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha
Brand intimacy	1. I received considerable emotional support from this brand	0.840	0.608	0.783
	2. My relationship with the brand is intimate	0.766	0.614	
	3. There is something special about my relationship with this brand	0.624	0.531	

(*To be continued*)

Factors	Items	Factor loading	Item-to-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha
			Composite reliability: 0.839	
Brand passion	1. I would rather own this brand than any other brand	0.735	0.577	0.773
	2. I cannot imagine another brand of the same product making me as happy as this brand	0.636	0.636	
	3. I find myself thinking about this brand frequently during the day	0.713	.576	
	4. I have the impulse to buy it at the sight of the brand	0.700	.527	
Brand commitment	1. I will continue to buy this brand when I need the same product	0.834	0.712	0.842
	2. I am willing to recommend this brand to my friends	0.749	0.711	
	3. I feel that I can really trust this brand	0.695	0.657	
	4. This brand is my first choice when I buy the same products	0.870	0.740	

4.3   Results

4.3.1   Manipulation check

We first examined the difference between the two samples (76 MBA students and 24 full-time working adults) for all dependent variables. The results showed that there was no significant difference between these two subsamples (*p* values range: 0.65–0.78). Therefore, we combined the two subsamples for subsequent data analyses.

We first compared the eight ads in terms of comprehensibility and communication clarity as manipulation checks. ANOVA results showed no significant differences between them. For products, the comprehensibility means of notebook and automobile ads were 5.66 and 5.81, respectively; and the communication clarity means of notebook and automobile ads were 4.93 and 5.23, respectively. For services, the comprehensibility means of hotel and airline ads were 5.61 and 5.48, respectively; and the communication clarity means of hotel and airline ads were 5.13 and 5.19, respectively. These results suggested that all the selected ads were equally comprehensible and clear in communication. Therefore, the potential effects of comprehensibility and communication clarity in compromising the results were eliminated.

We conducted ANOVA to examine the difference between the degrees of

rational/emotional appeals of each ad. The results were largely consistent with our expectations, as shown in Table 3. Specifically, for notebooks (p <0.001), automobiles (p=0.003, and airlines (p=0.041), the respondents perceived significant higher rational appeal for the rational ads. For hotels, however, even though the rational appeal in rational ads was higher than emotional appeal, the difference was not significant (p=0.591). In addition, the participants perceived significant higher emotional appeal in emotional ads for automobiles (p <0.001), hotels (p<0.001) and airlines (p<0.001), except for notebooks, in which emotional appeal was perceived higher in emotional ads than rational appeals, but the difference was not significant (p =0.217). In sum, the manipulation check showed that the eight selected ads met the requirement of rational/emotional ads, and had no significant difference in comprehensibility and communication clarity.

Table 3 Descriptive results of the rational vs. emotional appeal ratings of different ads

	Notebook		Automobile		Hotel		Airline	
	Rational appeals	Emotional appeals	Rational appeals	Emotional appeals	Rational appeals	Emotional appeals	Rational appeals	Emotional appeals
Rational ads	5.44	4.04	5.44	4.32	4.88	4.14	5.24	4.5
Emotional ads	3.54	4.44	4.60	5.38	4.80	5.92	4.66	5.6

4.3.2 Validity of the measurement of brand love

Before hypotheses testing, we used structural equation modeling to verify the validity of the brand love scale. Results showed that all items loaded with high and significant loadings onto the expected factors only, which suggested convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) (see Table 2). To test the discriminant validity of the three components of brand love, we compared two competing models. Model 1 was the original measurement model in which all items loaded onto the corresponding components, which, in turn, were related to the latent variable, brand love. In Model 2, all items were linked to brand love directly. Results showed that the value of $\chi^2/d.f.$ of Model 2 was significantly worse than that of Model 1 (p<0.05). This implied that Model 1 was superior to Model 2 and indicated discriminant validity (Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann, 2003). More importantly, the fit indices of Model 1 also demonstrated that our data fit the tri-dimensional model of brand love well: for the product group: χ^2 = 314.861, CFI =0.981, NFI =0.972, RFI =0.962, IFI =0.981, TLI =0.974, FMIN = 1.05, RMSEA =0.084, and AIC = 416.861; for the service group: χ^2= 266.233, DF = 87, CFI =0.984, NFI =0.976, RFI =0.967, IFI =0.984, TLI =0.977, FMIN =0.928, RMSEA =0.085, and AIC = 362.233.

4.3.3 Testing Hypothesis 1

We used repeated measures ANOVA to test H1, H1a, and H1b. We found that the main effect of advertising strategy on brand love was not significant ($p =0.176$), but the interaction between product type and advertising strategy was significant ($p<0.001$). As shown in Table 4 and Fig. 1, for notebook, consumer's brand love using rational advertising was higher than that of using emotional advertising. For automobile, consumer's brand love using emotional advertising was higher than that of using rational advertising.

Table 4   Descriptive Results of Hypotheses Testing

		Brand intimacy		Brand passion		Brand commitment		Brand love	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean
Notebook	Rational ads	3.044	1.300	2.668	1.177	3.484	1.251	3.065	1.152
	Emottional ads	2.872	1.323	2.456	1.376	2.867	1.352	2.732	1.278
Automobile	Rational ads	4.692	0.938	2.980	1.366	2.907	1.387	3.526	1.092
	Emottional ads	4.988	0.824	3.844	1.204	3.696	1.314	4.176	0.988
Hotel	Rational ads	3.813	1.209	4.023	1.053	3.096	1.225	3.644	1.047
	Emottional ads	3.967	1.308	4.460	1.105	3.604	1.257	4.010	1.110
Airline	Rational ads	3.780	1.126	4.017	1.087	3.184	1.245	3.661	1.009
	Emottional ads	4.187	1.115	4.319	1.197	3.484	1.318	3.997	1.106

Following the same procedure, we conducted ANOVA at the component level (i.e. brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment), and similar interactive effects were found (for intimacy, $p=0.059$; for passion, $p<0.001$; for commitment, $p<0.001$). For notebook, consumer's intimacy, passion, and commitment to the brand with rational advertising were higher than those to the brand with emotional advertising. For automobile, consumer's intimacy, passion, and commitment to the brand with emotional advertising were higher than those to the brand with rational advertising. Therefore, H1a and H1b were supported (see Table 4 and Fig. 2 to Fig. 4).
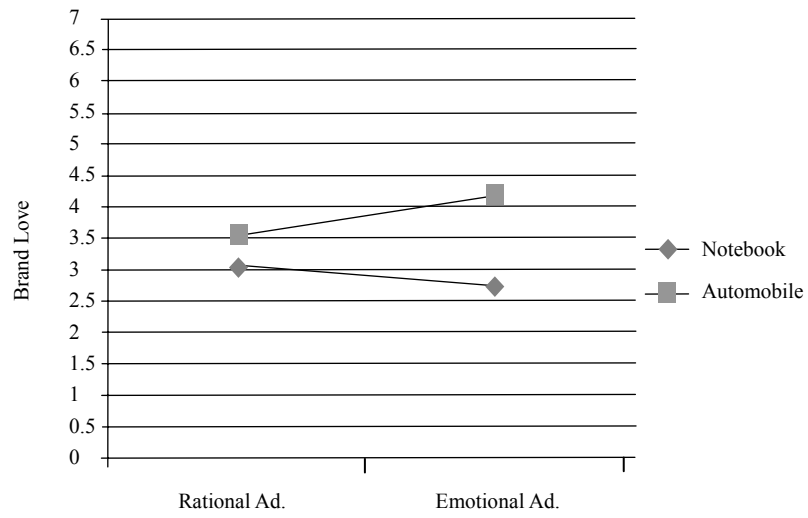
Fig. 1   Interactive effect of product type and ad strategy on brand love
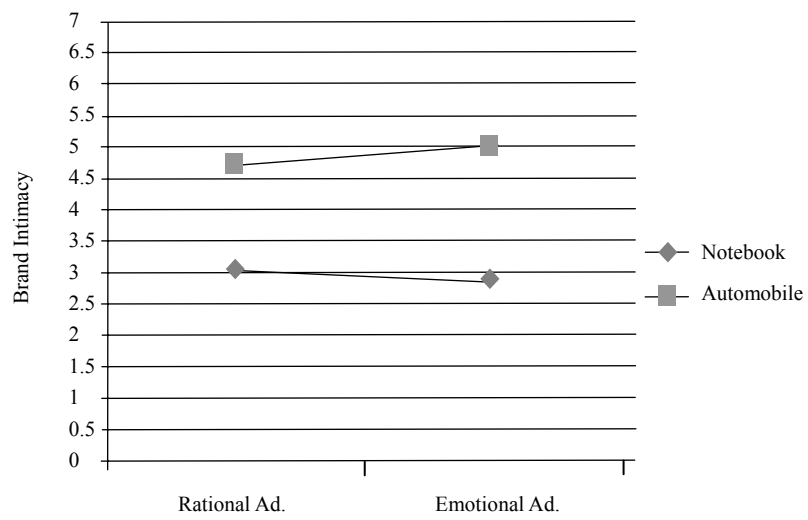

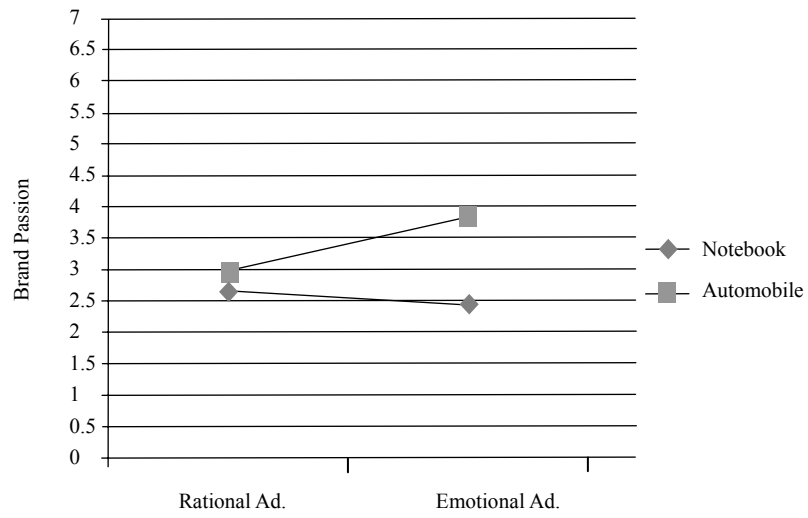**Fig. 2**   Interactive effect of product type and ad strategy on brand intimacy

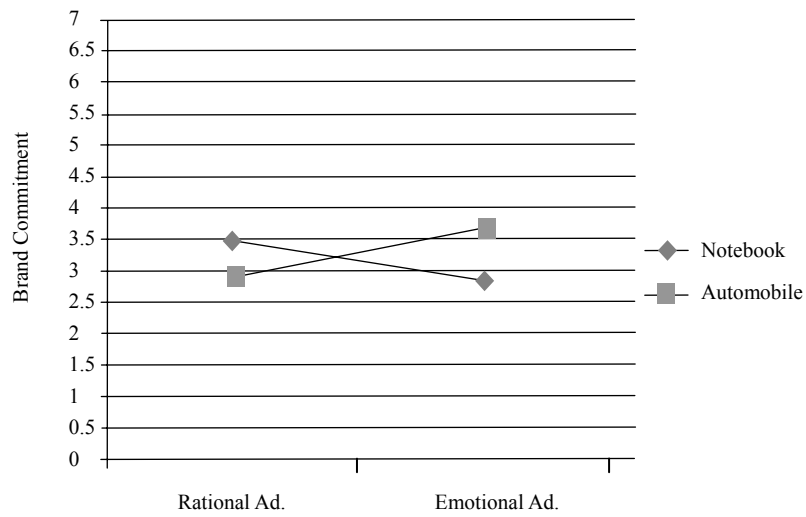**Fig. 3**   Interactive effect of product type and ad strategy on brand passion

Fig. 4   Interactive effect of product type and ad strategy on brand commitment

4.3.4   Testing of Hypothesis 2

ANOVA using repeated measures was also conducted to test H2. The main effects of advertising strategy on brand love and its three dimensions (i.e., brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment) were significant. As shown in Table 2, for

both hotels and airlines, consumers' love for the service brand using emotional advertising is higher than that for the brand using rational advertising (p=0.004). In addition, we found the same effect patterns for brand intimacy (p=0.033), brand passion (p=0.007), and brand commitment (p=0.004). Thus, H2 was supported. The interaction between advertising strategy and service type was not significant.

5 Discussion

5.1 Conclusion and implications

Based on the tri-dimensional model of brand love (Keh, Pang and Peng, 2007), in this research we examine the effect of rational versus emotional advertising strategy on brand love. We find that product type moderates the relationship between advertising strategy and brand love. Specifically, for utilitarian value-based product (notebook in this study), rational advertising is more effective in stimulating consumer's brand love, including brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment, while for hedonic value-based product (automobile in this study), emotional advertising is more effective. For service brands, advertising strategy has a significant main effect on consumer's brand love and its three components. Also, for service brands, the emotional advertising strategy is more effective than the rational advertising strategy.

These findings contribute to both advertising and branding literatures. Using consumer's brand love as a measure of advertising effectiveness, this research is the first attempt to investigate the effect of rational/emotional advertising strategy on consumer-brand relationships. In particular, we demonstrate the congruity between advertising strategy and consumer value-based product type in influencing consumers' brand love, and show that emotional advertising is more effective than rational advertising for service brands. These findings provide additional evidence for the notion of congruity in the advertising literature, and can help resolve the debate on the appropriate advertising strategy for service brands. For the branding literature, this research empirically examines how brand love, as well as its three components (i.e., brand intimacy, brand passion, and brand commitment), are influenced by advertising strategies. Therefore, it further validates the tri-dimensional framework of brand love, and facilitates a better understanding on the formation of brand love.

Beyond the theoretical contributions, our findings also have significant managerial implications for advertising practice. In the products sector, a firm should select suitable advertising strategy based on the core value that the product communicates to consumers. If the product is utilitarian value-based,

rational advertising may be more effective, while if the product is hedonic value-based, emotional advertising may work better. In the service sector, if a firm wants to build strong a relationship between its brand and its customers, emotional advertising may stimulate more intimacy, passion, and commitment than rational advertising.

5.2 Limitations and further research

We also acknowledge some limitations in this study. Firstly, the participants in our research are mainly MBA students in a business school. Although most of them considered notebook as a typical utilitarian product and automobile as a typical hedonic product, other consumer groups may classify these two products differently. In the pilot study, we found that a few participants mentioned that whether automobile belongs to hedonic product depends on its brand. Therefore, we chose mid-level notebook and high-level automobile to ensure that they represented utilitarian product and hedonic product, respectively. Future research can validate our findings by using other categories to represent utilitarian and hedonic products, Secondly, we used real brands and ads in our experiment, and the influence of participants' brand experience on brand love could not be fully controlled for, even though we attempted to use brands that were unfamiliar to many consumers such as Dragon Air, Marriott Hotel, NEC notebook, and Buick Royaum. Further research is needed to improve the sampling of brands and ads. Finally, in this research we chose only two types of experience service (i.e., hotel and airline) to test the hypotheses. The results show that there is no significant interaction between advertising strategy and service type. Whether this finding can be generalized to other kinds of service requires additional empirical testing on a wider set of services.

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