SOCIAL MEDIA LOVERS IN COLOMBIA:
The Role of Online Brand Communities in Developing Brand Love

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ABSTRACT

Considering the increasing popularity of Social Media Marketing, strategists have begun to explore the ability of Brand Communities to enhance consumers’ emotional bonds and develop, in turn, higher levels of brand loyalty, trust, brand reputation and positive word-of-mouth. For this reason, the arising of Brand Love as a managerial construct seems to be deeply involved with the online consumer behaviour patterns within Brand Communities. In order to uncover the relationship between both phenomena, a quantitative empirical research was conducted on the basis of an online survey with 251 respondents. The result of bivariate correlation analysis showed that social media based brand communities can directly influence the creation of positive emotional connection with the brand, as a constitutive component of Brand Love prototype. Furthermore, related analyses were run to determine the moderating effect of the level of participation within the brand community in the model’s overall performance. Finally, implications for marketing strategy and recommendation for further research are presented to conclude the investigation.
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INTRODUCTION

The increasing spread of digital environments has set an inflection point for marketing managers and corporate strategists (McWilliam, 2000). It is due to a fundamental change in the information economy: consumers, that were mainly passive in the past transactional system, have turned into active content seekers that dynamically interact in virtual universes where the systematic lack of massively agreed rules is frequently the prevailing scenario.

The novel and anarchic social model invites to redefine marketing statements and lead a paradigm shift. Nevertheless, defenders and detractors fight in academic and empiric battlefields plenty of confusion, misunderstandings and subjective arguments. In fact, the virtual [but still human] interaction has even affected the way Maslow’s pyramid is understood since it has brought new utilitarian and hedonic needs into the traditional schema. Such needs [and “wants], as can be expected, are translated into behaviours beyond the old-fashioned concept of purchase power. Therefore, brands should evolve simultaneously and tailor such consumer behaviour in order to survive the new wave of customers’ criticisms.

As an example, brand communities have come up without any corporate participation or triggering. Nutella and Coca-Cola struggled to retain the control over their online brand communities on Facebook when consumers just created them and managed them according with their own perceptions and opinions (Anker, et al., 2013). This shows the power that people reclaim to perceive and modify their liked brands through their own set of values, in other words, through the identification they feel towards the brand, the product and story behind them.

For sure, the implications of such discovery were as shocking as the emergence of social media platforms itself. For this reason, since then and currently, marketers put so much effort on clarifying the issue and comprehending the positive impact it could have, if it is correctly administered. That is why the exploration of e-consumer behaviour has followed social and psychological paths, where phenomena such as “trust”, “loyalty” and “love” nominate the reciprocal and dynamic ways in which people interact with brands in a determined marketplace.

Particularly, the occurrence of Brand Love results to be quite interesting mainly due to its consequences regarding attitudes and behavioural attitudes towards the brand. It is not only re-purchase likelihood, it is also recommendation intensions, reputation, passion, identification and a whole new range of emotional attachments, reserved only to human-human interaction in past times. Moreover, the consumer-brand relationship seems to be improved when other consumers support and enable it. Undoubtedly, a fact like this cannot go unnoticed and, for that reason, this research wants to figure out whether social media based brand communities would positively
influence the occurrence of Brand Love; and, if so, [1] What is the relationship between community’s engagement and consumer identification in virtual brand communities? [2] Is there any influence of community engagement on the creation of positive emotional connections, as a constitutive component of Brand Love? [3] Can the level of interaction within the brand community affect the different variables involved in this system?

Therefore, the primary aim of this research is identifying the influence of Online Brand Communities in the arising of Positive Emotional Connections as a constitutive element of Brand Love. Additionally, the specific objectives considered will be: [1] examine the relationship between identification with brand community and community engagement and, [2] evaluate the influence of consumers’ online participation towards the creation of positive emotional connections within social media based brand communities.

To do so, the research structure will designed to follow a logic order. Firstly, critical marketing literature related to Brand Communities and Brand Love will be reviewed and commented. This section will include concepts, definitions and theoretical interactions that have been discovered and empirically explored during the last few decades. Then, the information presented will be condensed in manageable hypotheses, which will seek for creating a research model that allows the lector to understand the conjectured in terms of relationships and causal effects. Secondly, this model will be developed into practical research methods and procedures where measurement instrument will be presented and validated. Afterwards, the third section will emplace the statistical analysis derived from the data collected and the correspondent discussion. Finally, findings will turn into conclusions, where each output will be displayed in terms of marketing practices and managerial implications. Likewise, the final chapter will finish with a description of actual limitations the investigation had and recommendations for further research according to the results.

1.1 BACKGROUND

On its own way, Colombia has performed a mind-set shift during the last decade. After the economy opening process in 1991, the development of certain sectors has overcome the pragmatic understanding of their traditional limits. Commercial expansion, marketing orientation, digital development and consumer’s satisfaction are usually listed among corporate priorities in both national and multinational companies. Yet, all this strategies, if they can be called in this way, have the consumer as a centre of any potential enhancement, development or even change. Thus, it is worth to understand that Colombian consumers behave according to their own conduct patterns, which not always can be generalized using international literature.
The objective of this research arose from this specific premise. The potential implications of conducting a social research regarding Brand Communities in Colombia is novel itself and represent an astonishing opportunity for marketing managers who want to operate business in the growing Colombian market. Therefore, it is valid to introduce this background analysis in order to complement the previous and subsequent sections.

1.1.1 Social Media in Colombia

Colombia has closely followed the global trend of Social Media in both consumers’ daily life and companies’ corporate marketing strategies. Moreover, the country has led the figures and statistics in South America by experiencing an exponential growth in usage ratio and number of registered users (MinTic, n.d.). Governmental agencies reported a shocking increment of more than 90% in the number of domestic broadband internet connection in 2011 (MinTic, 2011), which directly favours the national goal of 8.8 million internet connections [fixed and mobile] in 2014. However, it is necessary to recognize that these figures, even surprising, are significantly lower than other countries in the region, namely Chile and Brazil (Portafolio, 2013). For this reason, Colombian government is enabling, supporting and incentivising the use of internet among citizens of all ages (MinTic, 2011).

Such interest in improving telecommunication infrastructure and cultivating the digital culture within the Colombian society seems to be appealing for corporate and marketing strategists in the field of on-line promotion. Nonetheless, their initiatives and approaches frequently suffer a systematic lack of success. Apparently, it is a much more complicated issue, which is able to come against the company if managers do not perform a suitable strategy based on communicational channels, integration and opinion legitimations (Vásquez, 2013).

A Colombian marketing research, conducted few years ago, explored the online performance of 93 companies operating in seven different economic sectors to determine the potential and actual contribution of Social Media Marketing toward corporate strategy and interaction with consumers (Interactivos Marketing Digital, 2010). The researchers found that 56% of all companies have less than 50 followers in Twitter and only 28% seek for developing communities around their products or services (Interactivos Marketing Digital, 2010). Moreover, Facebook statistics are not more encouraging: 47% of those companies created and, subsequently, abandoned their Facebook profile, and only 37% posted daily updates (Interactivos Marketing Digital, 2010). As a final conclusion, the authors suggested that companies were misunderstanding the digital dynamics of Social Media and mixed them up with traditional massive communication channels in a context of no social or dialogical interaction.
Curiously, only the multinationals Samsung and Sony got relatively high scores. Furthermore, according to SocialBakers.com (2013), Coca-Cola [1.6 million], Converse [1.4 million], Red Bull [1.3 million], Juan Valdés Café [1.2 million] and Blackberry [1.2 million] report the highest number of Colombian followers in Social Media and its consequent level of traffic [Facebook fan pages and profiles] (SocialBakers.com, 2013). All those facts create a critical panorama for native Colombian corporations, which seem to be struggling to gain prominence in this marketplace.

Nowadays, Colombia has more than 18 million registered users (Orduz, 2013) in Facebook. Nevertheless, only eight of the 23 banks operating in the country have any sort of presence in Facebook. According to experts, the shyly virtual incursion of the banking sector in Colombia has started to enable interesting achievements to its initiators. Thus, most of them have seen substantial cost reductions (García, 2013), specially related with sales, customer service, reputation and brand positioning.

Despite the facts and figures, there are not academic researchers conducted in this respect to support managerial initiatives and, accordingly, encourage the expansion of social media marketing at academic and strategic level. Thus, the next sections will run on a path of theoretical information and statistic empirical analysis focused on Colombian online Brand Communities and their ability to build Brand Love through consumer interaction, social construction and value creation.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Communities, Social Media and Brand Love have been described in a desegregated way in the marketing literature. For this reason, across the subsequent sections, the concept of Brand Community will be displayed from the most general point of view until its specific application in Social Media. Firstly, a summarized historic tracking will be made to capture the essence of Brand Community since its origin in Marketing Literature. Parallel, characteristics and social implication will be explored and portrayed. Afterward, the literature review will focus on social media based brand communities and their influence in consumer behaviour, loyalty and purchase intentions. There, special attention will be paid to antecedents and consequences of consumers’ interaction within the virtual brand community. Finally, the concept of Brand Love will be introduced in concordance with the research objective. In this last section, the structural model of brand love, its components and the concept of “positive emotional connections” will be remarked.

Moreover, an additional section will be added to present the constructed Research Model to summarize the hypothetical relations presented across the literature review. The figure beside summarize the structure to facilitate the comprehension and cohesion among sections.

2.1 Brand Community

In order to effectively understand the concept of brand community it is necessary to track its evolution along the past century and its rapid adoption during the last decade. From the philosophical interpretation of community in terms of social criticism (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001), communalities and human collectives seem to explain social and even commercial phenomena in the field of consumer awareness and consumption behaviour. Therefore, it is not really surprising to find different, and sometimes aggressively confronted, positions towards brand community. To explore the mentioned evolution, the following table summarizes key
concepts about brand communities. The information presented was extracted from top ranked articles and authors regarding marketing and social science literature. An extended version of this table can be consulted in Exhibit 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Concept of Brand Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974 - Book</td>
<td>Daniel Boorstin</td>
<td>The book describes consumption communities as a kind of “invisible new communities [...] created and preserved by how and what men consumed” (Boorstin, 1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 - Journal of Consumer Research</td>
<td>John W. Schouten and James H. McAlexander</td>
<td>The article introduced the concept of Subculture of Consumption to better explain the way consumers organize their lives and identities. Subculture of Consumption is thus an antecedent of Brand Community (Schouten &amp; McAlexander, 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 – Journal of Consumer Research</td>
<td>Albert M. Muniz and Thomas C. O’Guinn</td>
<td>“Specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muniz &amp; O’Guinn, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – Journal of Marketing</td>
<td>Hope Jensen Schau, Albert M. Muñiz Jr., &amp; Eric J. Arnould</td>
<td>Brand Communities are environments where value creation is encouraged through social bonds (Schau, et al., 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bonds and shared beliefs exist in Consumption Communities (Boorstin, 1974) and subcultures of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) to basically describe the manner customers organize their personal and communal identities, creating social cohesion around consumption activities (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Both constructs are thus antecedents of Brand Communities within consumer behaviour literature and show the early interest of marketing, and social sciences in general, to explain the social consumption behaviour in terms of describing patterns.

Afterwards, Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) officially introduce the paradigmatic shift and the construct of brand community (BC) as it is known nowadays. In their exploratory and empiric study, the authors rightly describe the mixture of non-geographic bonds and interactions around any ascribed brand, usually those that joy of strong brand image (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Yet, this interpretation put the brand up in the very centre of the BC model, standing commercial proposes as the only apparent reason to create and maintain a BC. Consequently, the marketing
insights derived from such outstanding argument prescribed larger budgets to sponsor and develop social interactions within valuable and socially rich consumption environments.

However, subsequent studies led to add new and more transcendent arguments around social interactions within BC. In fact, McAlexander, Shouten and Koenig (2002) presented an extended version of Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) conclusions about relationship construction at a singular experiential level. They proclaimed the leading role of consumer relations to effectively create value in consumption environments (McAlexander, et al., 2002). The preponderant role of relationships among consumers and other physical, commercial and/or human entities became the centre of BC model and the encouraging base for current studies.

2.1.1 Characteristics of Brand Communities

Even though the concept of BC has been constantly adapted to match deep consumer insights regarding value generation, current studies remain close to the categorization made by Muniz and O’Guinn in 2001. Their work postulated that, from a sociological and epistemological perspective, any BC exhibits three common markers: consciousness of kind, shared rituals and tradition, and sense of moral responsibility (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). For clearer understanding, Figure 2-1 summarizes the definition of each marker according to the mentioned research.

![Figure 2-1. Markers of Brand Communities](source: Own Design. Based on “Brand Community”, (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001))

Additionally, the authors stated a clear position when differentiating the philosophical understanding of society and the perceptual interpretation of community. In their thought line, communities are merely and explicitly commercially-based groups, which show certain stability
and are more likely to be formed around strong image brands (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Simplifying their idea, brand communities constitutes a form of human association within a consumption framework (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Complementary, other authors contribute to enrich the concept by including relevant characteristics in the field of consumer behaviour. For instance, since the community is made up of its members and the relationships built among them, all BCs share a common characteristic: “the creation and negotiation of value” (McAlexander, et al., 2002). Thus, in this the context, Shau, et al., (2009) discussed four thematic categories [namely social networking, impression management, community engagement, and brand use] working closely as gears in the collective value generation process (Schau, et al., 2009).

2.1.2 Integration in the Brand Community and the Consumer-Centric Model

As was mentioned in previous sections, McAlexander et al. (2002) suggested an integrative approach to understand BC in which customers are at the centre, and relationships between customers and brand, product, firm and other pairs represent the core modelling elements; all of them integrated in a particular context, for instance social media platforms (Laroche, et al., 2013). According to this research, BC are consumer-centric and “its existence inheres in customer experience rather than in the brand around which that experience revolves” (McAlexander, et al., 2002), a counterpoint statement to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) article.

Accordingly, the consumer-centric model is presented in the following diagram which also exemplifies prior models to see their conceptual evolution.

![Diagram](source:image_url)

Figure 2-2. Key Relationships of Brand Community
Since McAlexander’s model prioritize the “interaction” among those different entities as a value creator construct, the concept of Integration in the Brand Community (IBC) necessarily arose to theoretically explain such interaction, namely in terms of self-awareness and identification (McAlexander, et al., 2002). Concluding their research, the authors concluded on this phenomenon: “community-integrated customers serve as brand missionaries, carrying the marketing message into other communities” (McAlexander, et al., 2002). Moreover, the article additionally performed evaluations to prove a synergic relation that, finally, enables the cumulative effect of each kind of interaction to build a construct analogue to customer loyalty (McAlexander, et al., 2002). Likewise, consumer loyalty is also a direct consequence of brand love (Batra, et al., 2012), a construct that will be presented later on.

2.1.3 The Social Influence of Brand Communities

It is possible to observe the social impact and influence of BC as collaboration nucleus and content-rich environment when the set of features and patterns of consumer interaction (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001) are analysed. This interaction is the engine of value creation in social contexts (Walker Naylor, et al., 2012).

Beyond the statistical significance of that theoretical argument, the main managerial implication of social influence of BC refers to Brand Loyalty and its practical evaluation as a measurable construct. Such fact has been widely labelled in the academic literature (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001) (McAlexander, et al., 2002) (McAlexander, et al., 2003) (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) (Algesheimer, et al., 2005) (Schau, et al., 2009) (Laroche, et al., 2013). Furthermore, consumer behaviour researches have exposed the mediating effect of “brand trust” in the process of turning already improved relationships into brand loyalty (Laroche, et al., 2013). As can be expected, such direct and strongly positive relationship has been explored often enough, and through dissimilar theoretical frameworks; most of them are constructed over BC markers, and recognize the preponderant role of any sort of interaction within the BC according to the model of McAlexander, et al. (2002). Thus, value creation, which is the final outcome of recent studies, is still based on the social connotation of BC from a humanistic perspective; one where communality integration leads to stronger extents of commitment, engagement and loyalty (Schau, et al., 2009).

Accordingly, Algesheimer et al. (2005) presented a structural theoretical model that starts by considering the strength of the consumer’s relationships with the BC (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). Such emotion, described as a “belonging feeling towards the BC”, is called Brand Community Identification (BCI) (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). In this sense, BCI might be conceptually compared with the research conclusion of McAlexander and his co-workers about “Integration in the Brand Community”.

9
The next figure summarizes the concept of both constructs according with their own creators.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2-3. The concept of integration in the Brand Community and Brand Community identification according to their creators**


In their path to the latent construct of Brand Loyalty within BC, the authors discovered an important phenomenon which is able to condense a consumer’s perceived relevance of his/her community, based on intrinsic needs, values and interest (Zaichkowsky, 1985). After generating integration and interaction, BCI socially stimulate (Bhattacharya, et al., 1995) the broadly researched “Consumer Engagement” in the BC (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). Since here, Algesheimer’s (2005) model is fairly predictable and broadly discussed (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) (Oliver, 1999). Exhibit 2 presents the complete model proposed.

Accordingly, the author describes Brand Community Engagement [BCE] as the positive influence of identifying with the brand community, and represents “the consumer’s intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). It means that recommendations, participation in events and other manifestation of behavioural engagement with the BC are consequences of the BCI. Such precise causal relationship is especially thought-provoking in the context of this study and will be explored later on.

On the other hand, what is particularly interesting about this extraordinary piece of work is the statistical evidence to prove the relation between BCI, Brand Community Engagement and
Brand Loyalty in terms of behavioural self-reported intentions that ultimately leads to their corresponding actual behaviours (Algesheimer, et al., 2005).

Similarly, the social influence of BCI leads to desirable states in consumer behaviour and give a chance to companies around the word to enhance their brand loyalty and assure customer satisfaction. Thus, broadly defined in the academic literature, one the most interesting and challenging managerial implication of BCI and BCE [applied in BC] is the construction of Brand Loyalty with its natural consequences in consumer behaviour (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Algesheimer, et al., 2005; Cova & Pace, 2006; Schau, et al., 2009; Laroche, et al., 2013; Brodie , et al., 2013). Moreover, several researches conducted in this respect have proved the mediating role of brand trust in the process of turning improved relations into actual brand loyalty (Laroche, et al., 2013), hence the special attention that some companies are paying in improving their consumer communities or even enabling the creation of new ones.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that this trendy phenomenon does not go alone on global marketplace. Parallel, researchers [namely (Batra, et al., 2012)] have discovered the positive connection between Brand Love and Brand Loyalty, Brand Trust, Brand Image and even Word-of-mouth. The next section will explore the special case of Brand Communities formed and developed in virtual environments.

### 2.2 Brand Communities in social media

Regarding the non-spatial characteristic of BC, Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) found enough statistical evidence to prove the existence of Bran Community Markers both in face-to-face and computer mediated environments (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). This discovery allowed the subsequent introduction of the concept of Online Brand Community [OBC], which is the real focus of this research work.

OBC “[…] refers to a wide range of community forums, including electronic bulletin boards, social networking sites, and shared-interest websites” (Miller, et al., 2009). Considering the relevance of new technologies in social construction and linkages establishment (Andersen, 2005), the effect of BCI on OBC and the proven mediating role of BCE [as were shown by McAlexander et al (2002)], have been extensively studied (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) (Schau, et al., 2009). For instance, the fact that BCs can enhance customer relationship within the consumer-centric model elaborated by McAlexander et al (2002) was verified in social networking sites, namely Twitter and Facebook (Laroche, et al., 2013), where spatial proximity is absent and exposure is often passive (Walker Naylor, et al., 2012). Therefore, it is possible to
assume that Algesheimer’s (2005) construct also apply in social media environments and, specifically, within OBC (Jang, et al., 2008).

Complementary studies to understand the main characteristics of this sort of consumer communalities can be found in marketing literature during the last decade (Gruner, et al., 2013). For instance, by differentiating “consumer-initiated” and “company-initiated” online brand communities, Heehyoung et al. (2008) proposed that the hosting type of any OBC has a positive moderating effect on community commitment and brand loyalty (Heehyoung, et al., 2008). Such response could be predicted when considering that OBCs effectively encourage dialogues among members, foster relationships and active participation by facilitating shared customer experiences, multi-way interaction, and consumer-brand relationships (McWilliam, 2000). Thus, OBCs can improve brand trust and, therefore, brand loyalty and positive virtual word-of-mouth (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010), which are also the evidenced consequences of Brand Love (Batra, et al., 2012).

2.2.1 Participation in Online Brand Communities

As can be expected, the social influence of OBCs only can be applicable if intentional social actions are present on consumer behaviour. The conceptualization of such virtual interaction is a sort of archetype in current literature and has been characterized in terms of the benefits that participants seek (Dholakia, et al., 2004) as a function of an individual value generation crusade for and by oneself.

Moreover, “intentions to participate in a brand community are functions of both individual determinants [positive anticipated emotions and desires], and community influences [social identity]” (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). Hence, engaged consumers display higher levels of loyalty, empowerment, emotional bonds, trust, connection and commitment (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) (Brodie, et al., 2013).

Both individual determinants and community influences are function of intrinsic needs that are satisfied through higher or lower extents of internet usage and participation in the virtual community (Dholakia, et al., 2004). Those needs form a set of values that customer are usually willing to seek for. Thus, it is possible to differentiate at least five different categories among them:

- **Purposive Value**: This is derived from the concept of instrumental value and informational value (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). It represents the value obtained from accomplishing a pre-agreed instrumental task (Dholakia, et al., 2004).

- **Self-discovery Value**: Refers to understand some characteristics of one-self through social interaction (McKenna & Bargh, 1999).
• **Maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity**: Social benefits obtained from contacting and interacting with others within the virtual community (Dholakia, et al., 2004).

• **Social enhancement Value**: Value derived from being accepted and/or approved by other members of the virtual community, which contribute to enhance the one’s social status (Baumeister, 1998)

• **Entertainment Value**: Fun and relaxation obtained from playing or even from the mere participation and interaction within the virtual community (McKenna & Bargh, 1999).

Understanding internet as a global digital platform for interaction and communication, consumers increasingly interact with other to share their knowledge, experience and opinions (De Valk, et al., 2009) without boundaries and, usually, unrestrictedly. High involvement levels are expected from such interaction, and researches have seen how those mentioned levels are translated into social influences and characteristics previously seen in traditional communities (Shang, et al., 2006)

### 2.3 Brand Love & Brand Communities

The rational understanding of consumption used to be based on cognitive approaches regarding the brand management paradigm; however, the study of brand communities has allowed researchers and marketing practitioners to elaborate around consumer-brand relationships regarding the emotional-branding paradigm (Thompson, et al., 2006). As a principle of emotional branding, the importance of “love” seems to be exceptional in customers’ long-term relationship with the brand (Fournier, 1998). Therefore, the concept of Brand Love [BL] arose to set a new standard in relation to satisfied consumers and their passionate emotional attachment to particular brands (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Even though the contemporary marketing reasoning has been dominated by the relationship metaphor, astonishingly there is no enough empirical research conducted around this phenomenon (Fournier, 1998). Thus, the concept of BL has been explored without fundamental results during the last decade. Nonetheless, Batra et al. (2012) undertook an academic crusade to finally define the construct through a theoretical prototype. As an outcome, their work was able to determine and present a structural equation, which is statistically significant to validly explain the phenomenon of BL from consumer’s emotional perspective. To reach such goal, they divided the whole concept of BL into several constitutive components that accordingly can reveal the hidden features of the concept and levels of love towards a brand (Batra, et al., 2012).
2.3.1 Prototype of Brand Love

By executing a methodological comparison of psychological and physiological similarities regarding BL and the emotion of “traditional interpersonal love”, Batra, et al. (2012), build a model to represent “love” as an emotion rather than a relationship. The outcome of their research considers a higher-order model constituted by seven core elements or components: self–brand integration, passion-driven behaviours, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence [strength], and anticipated separation distress (Batra, et al., 2012). The complete model is presented in Exhibit 3.

In order to narrow the aim of this research, only one of the mentioned components will be considered in the statistical analysis. This constitutive component is Positive Emotional Connections [PEC] with the brand, which represents a wider concept than merely positive feeling because it includes a sense of emotional attachment and an instinctive feeling of appropriateness towards the beloved brand (Batra, et al., 2012). This component also reveals the highest correlation factor during the statistical validation of the prototype (Batra, et al., 2012). In turn, PEC has three additional second-order elements: intuitive fit, emotional attachment and positive affect. The following diagram summarizes the constituent items that define such second-order elements according to Batra et al. (2012):

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Figure 2-4. Positive Emotional Connections: Composition and Structure
2.3.2 Implications of Brand Love

As a consistent finding of researches conducted in this respect, BL has proved to have a positive influence in relevant marketing variables, namely Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty and word-of-mouth (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) (Batra, et al., 2012). Moreover, this effect is potentially higher in the case of satisfied customers of mainly-hedonic product categories (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The academic inferences of that singularity are extraordinary, but the most representative impact can be seen around managerial implications related to BC. For this reason, Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) tested two actionable antecedents for BL: Brand Identification and Sense of Community [practically treated as BCI]. As might be expected, their results showed a positive influence in both cases, which subsequently has a positive influence on brand loyalty (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010).

2.4 Hypostatized Theoretical Model

All the theories and concepts presented so far have the objective of creating a path to describe, theoretically, how the interaction within a BC could positively influence the construction of consumers’ love towards the product/brand, which the community is built around. For this reason, specific conceptual constructs were extracted to formulate such explicative structure.

Probably, the most enigmatic concept in the field of online consumer behaviour is the motivation that people have to become an active member of an OBC. Such “belonging feeling” measures the strength of consumer’s relationship with the BC (Algesheimer, et al., 2005) and, accordingly, becomes the starting point to understand consumer’s behavioural intentions towards brand loyalty. As was showed previously, this emotional bond have been academically researched and shaped in different ways. For this reason, it is necessary to aim for finding enough evidence among marketing literature to prove the relation between “Brand Community Identification [BCI]” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005) and its chronological predecessor “Integration in the Brand Community” [IBC] (McAlexander, et al., 2002) and, thus, unify the concept to be used in the research instrument. As a result, this theoretical similarity allows the first hypothesis to arise.

\[ H_1: \text{“Identification with the Brand Community”, as a marketing construct, has a theoretical relation with “Brand Community Identification”} \]

Once the concept is cleared and unified, this research will focus on the pivotal effect of BC characteristics on OBC values, principles and internal dynamics. In this respect, and according the theory presented, it is possible to assume that the enhancing effect of being member of a BC [in other words, BCI] on the extent of emotional engagement with the community (Algesheimer, et al., 2005) is replicable in online environments. This positive relation is
extremely important to create, improve and strengthen Brand Loyalty (Andersen, 2005) and, then emotional bonds towards the brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis is built on the base of this matter.

\[ H_2: \text{Stronger brand community identification leads to greater community engagement in the framework of Online Brand Communities.} \]

Likewise, the manifestations of social consequences of BCI and BCE are mainly related to brand trust, behavioural purchase intentions (Algesheimer, et al., 2005), brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). On the other hand, all of them are proven results of Brand Love in a psychosocial context, a fact that presupposes a covered link between both marketing theories. Therefore, this relationship gives the bases for one more hypothesis, which aim to understand such particular behaviour in BC. In other words, this work will explore the association between BCE and BL in, at least, one of its constitutive components; in this case PEC. It will be, of course, in concordance with the pivotal effect of BC in OBC.

\[ H_3: \text{Community Engagement has a positive effect on consumers’ Positive Emotional Connection with a particular brand in the framework of Online Brand Communities.} \]

Nonetheless, it is not worthless to consider the influence that different levels of participation within the OBC might have regarding the grouped performance of those previously hypothesized relationships. Regarding the limitless possibilities that Internet offers for global communication and the social component of online consumer behaviour, it is expected that the variable “level of participation” can moderate the construction of Brand Love within OBC. Hence, the next hypothesis arises.

\[ H_4: \text{Higher levels of interaction within the Online Brand Community will induct better results in the seeking of Positive Emotional Connections.} \]

After stating several conceptual and hypothetical relationships among the main theoretical variables, it is possible to summarize them all in a concise way that allows subsequent analysis. Therefore, according to what was done by Laroche and his colleagues (2012 and 2013) in their recent studies, this investigation tailored the models proposed by McAlexander et al. (2002), Algesheimer et al. (2005) and Batra et al. (2012) to evaluate different interactions within BC and, as a consequence, their suggested encouraging influence on PEC with the beloved brand. Nevertheless, the context used in this case was completely different in order to meet the suggestions for further research made for diverse authors (Laroche, et al., 2012) (Laroche, et al., 2013) (Batra, et al., 2012) regarding “cultural differences” and their possible implication. Thus, the hypothesized model is as follows.
Thus, the following section will explore the methodology used to test the described hypotheses and the subsequent discussion based on their results.
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects and Procedure

Communalities built around brands are been explored due to their potential to enhance points of attachment, which, in turn, are likely to be transformed into mechanisms for BCI and BCE (McAlexander, et al., 2002). Thus, interaction in social media platforms takes this connection to a new stage where conceptual relationships must be proven in absence of geographic boundaries or even pre-established rules. Nonetheless, such virtual communities seem to have the potential to positive influence the same emotions and attitudes towards the brand than its physical counterparts. Consequently, their potential to influence feelings related to Brand Love is interesting to be analysed and understood. Thus, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the relationship between OBC and the arising of PEC, as an elemental component of Brand Love. To do so, Colombian consumers and OBCs were used as geographic context.

Since it tries to replicate prior analysis as a function of their proposed theories and theses, this research can be categorized as merely deductive. For this reason, its main task aim to collect primary data from the target audience in order to evaluate the possible relations between (1) the social influence of brand communities and (2) brand love. As a theoretical framework, the broad concept of Online Brand Communities and its inherent characteristics were used to develop a quantitative design through online surveys.

3.1.1 The Questionnaire

First of all, the introduction of the survey presented a brief description of the research work, ethical considerations and privacy policies. This assured the legal contribution of each participant according to the Ethical Approval granted by the University of Glasgow for this specific study. Subsequently, the research instrument was equipped with several filter questions to ensure responses validity and reliability. An extract from the original document can be appreciated in Exhibit 4.

To facilitate the distribution and more effectively approach the target audience, the online survey was designed and spread using GoogleDocs [part of Google Suite], which also provided a real time tracking system of responses with the descriptive statistics and charts associated. Apart from e-mail lists, the survey was also posted in social media platforms, and, furthermore, one Facebook event was created to enhance the response rate. Finally, more than 850 invitation were sent and 304 responses were collected (approx. 35,76%). Nonetheless, after applying the mentioned filter questions, only 251 were valid (29,53%) and the other 53 had to be discarded.
Participants were free to set the brand or product they wanted according with their lifestyles and personal preferences. Even if some examples were presented to facilitate the understanding of the questionnaire, no biases were created because no specific brand, product neither category was mentioned explicitly. This treatment is supported on previous works regarding Brand Community and Brand Love (Batra, et al., 2012) (Laroche, et al., 2013).

3.1.2 The Sample
Although there were no demographic specification among the target audience, respondents should (1) have an account in social media platforms (Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn) and use it at least once a week, and (2) “follow” or “like” one brand on this platforms (Laroche, et al., 2013), which will be used as object of study in the form of “beloved brand” and “brand community”. Therefore, both requirements were introduced as filter questions in the survey (Q01 and Q02).

As was mentioned, the total sample used in this research is 251 (53% female and 47% male), whose age can be stated between 18 and 54 years old. They were mainly from Medellín (83%) but also from cities such as Bogotá, Barranquilla, Manizales, Pereira, Cartagena and Cali in much smaller proportions. Additionally, their internet usage vary between “more than once a day” (68%) until “at least once a week” (9%). The next diagram summarizes some aspects of the population regarding gender and sample size.
3.2 Scales Construction

According to the proposed model, each construct was built over variables extracted from previous theories [as were described in section 2.4] and adapted to meet the context, language and research objectives.

3.2.1 BCI & BCE

**Brand Community Identification** [BCI] and **Brand Community Engagement** [BCE] were measured through sets of five and four items on five-point Likert scales respectively, anchored by 1=“strongly disagree” and 5=“strongly agree” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). As participants were asked to answer in the context of social media, BCI was measured in terms of emotional connection with the previously selected brand community and other pairs within the same virtual environment. Likewise, the measurement of BCE followed the same principles to assess the extent of emotional bonding with the brand community in terms of commitment and self-realization. Variables included and partial results are presented in the tables below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCI01</td>
<td>I am very attached to the community.</td>
<td>2.976</td>
<td>1.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI02</td>
<td>Other brand community members and I share the same objectives.</td>
<td>3.291</td>
<td>1.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI03</td>
<td>The friendships I have with other brand community members mean a lot to me</td>
<td>1.865</td>
<td>1.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI04</td>
<td>If brand community members planned something, I’d think of it as something “we” would do rather than something “they” would do</td>
<td>2.171</td>
<td>1.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI05</td>
<td>I see myself as a part of the brand community.</td>
<td>2.845</td>
<td>1.373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-II. Brand Community Identification – Scale Composition
Source: Own Design
3.2.2 PEC

Positive Emotional Connections [PEC], the evaluated component of Brand Love Prototype, followed the approach suggested by Bratra et al. (2012) on a five-point Likert scale from “very much” to “not at all”. This section didn’t consider the specific context of social media but the daily interaction of consumer with their beloved brands. Accordingly, the latent construct was divided into three components: Intuitive Fit [PECif], with eight constituent items; Emotional Attachment [PECea], with three; and Positive Affect [PECpa], with six (Batra, et al., 2012). Elements involved and partial results are presented in the following table.

![Table 3-IV. Positive Emotional Connections – Scale Composition](source: Own Design)

3.2.3 Participation in the Brand Community

Every respondent was asked to categorize his/her extent of participation within the Brand Community by indicating “how often do they use their social media accounts to perform certain activities” such as read, write or share multimedia files. The least level of the measurement scale was 1=“never”, and the highest was 5=“at least one a day”.

![Table 3-III. Brand Community Engagement – Scale Composition](source: Own Design)
Afterwards, the extent of participation was more deeply assessed according to the value obtained from performing diverse activities within the Brand Community. Thus, the participants were asked to identify “how often do they use their brand communities to satisfy some specific needs”. This approach followed the research path drawn by Flanagin and Metzer (2001), Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) and Dholakia, et al. (2004). Therefore, the thirteen items considered were distributed in five value categories: Purposive value, with seven constituent items; Self- discovery value, Maintaining Interpersonal Interconnectivity and Social Enhancement Value, with one each; and Entertainment Value, with three. All of them were evaluated similarly by a five-point Likert scale from “never” to “very often”. The next table presents the variables used and partial results obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE01</td>
<td>To read</td>
<td>4.175</td>
<td>1.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE02</td>
<td>To write</td>
<td>2.367</td>
<td>1.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE03</td>
<td>To share images and videos</td>
<td>2.542</td>
<td>1.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE04</td>
<td>To meet and interact with other people</td>
<td>2.339</td>
<td>1.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC01</td>
<td>To get information</td>
<td>3.837</td>
<td>1.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC02</td>
<td>To learn how to do things</td>
<td>2.876</td>
<td>1.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC03</td>
<td>To provide others with information</td>
<td>2.916</td>
<td>1.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC04</td>
<td>To generate ideas</td>
<td>2.721</td>
<td>1.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC05</td>
<td>To get someone to do something for me</td>
<td>1.892</td>
<td>1.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC06</td>
<td>To solve problems</td>
<td>2.259</td>
<td>1.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC07</td>
<td>To make decisions</td>
<td>2.378</td>
<td>1.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC08</td>
<td>To learn about myself and others</td>
<td>2.219</td>
<td>1.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC09</td>
<td>To stay in touch</td>
<td>2.578</td>
<td>1.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC10</td>
<td>To impress or feel important</td>
<td>1.693</td>
<td>1.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC11</td>
<td>To be entertained or pass the time away when bored</td>
<td>3.315</td>
<td>1.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC12</td>
<td>To relax</td>
<td>3.092</td>
<td>1.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBC13</td>
<td>To play</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>1.361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-V. Participation in Online Brand Community – Scales Composition

Source: Own Design

3.3 Scales Validation

After building the research instrument, all scales used must be validated to assure the reliability of the obtained results. Three dimensions were considered and measured to do so: Reliability, Internal Consistency and Validity. In the following sections, each analysis will be presented.

3.3.1 Exploratory Analysis

An exploratory analysis was conducted to observe the content validity, reliability and dimensionality of the constructs used (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). This section only considers the full sample data, whose results are similar and applicable to the multi-sample analysis.

Content Validity. Scales development process was based on a broad literature revison. Such concept was widely studied, researched an analysed to select the most suitable instruments.
according to the context given. Regarding the cultural differences, adaptations were made without altering the original mean of any variable or construct. The validation of each scale was proven by their inventors and they can be extensively appreciated in previous researches [all of them are listed in the Bibliography]. Thus, content validity can be confirmed.

**Reliability.** Cronbach’s Alpha [α] was used as an indicator for constructs’ reliability, considering a minimum possible value of 0.7 as a decision rule (Nunnally, 1978). In each case, good or even excellent results were obtained according to the usual parameters (Cronbach, 1951). Table 3-VI summarizes the SPSS results in this respect. Despite all outcomes were acceptable, an improvement option was detected by eliminating the item PEC09, part of Emotional Attachment [PECea]. For this reason, such item was no considered and α was calculated again. The new improved construct, which omit the item, was coded as PECea_Imp and was used in all the subsequent analysis.

**Dimensionality.** Finally, an Exploratory Factor Analysis [EFA] was conducted to detect the load of each element within its factor, according with its theoretical bases. To do so, only eigenvalues higher than one [1] were considered and VARIMAX rotation method was set up. As a decision rule, factor loads higher than 0.5 were required as well as significant explained variance for each factor (Casaló, et al., 2013). Afterwards, only one factor was extracted from each proposed construct with significant loads and explained variances, which therefore confirmed the scale unidimensionality in each case. The complete results can be seen in Exhibit 5.

### 3.3.2 Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

Two measures were applied to assess the internal consistency of the five considered constructs: Composite Reliability [ρc] and Average Variance Extracted [ρVCE(ξ)] (Dholakia, et al., 2004). Firstly, Composite Reliability works similarly than Cronbach’ alpha to predict the internal consistency of any construct. An estimation higher than 0.65 (Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2006) or, at least, 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) was expected. This indicator was used mainly to avoid any possible underestimation associated with α regarding reliability measurement. On the other hand, the AVE indicator was used to estimate the portion of variance derived from construct’s measure, in relation to random measure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Such estimation was expected to be above 0.5 (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002) in order to support internal consistency and, therefore, convergent validity. Again, the load factor of each element in the EFA was required to be higher than 0.5 at 0.01 significance level (Casaló, et al., 2013). As can be seen in the table below, satisfactory result were obtained, which enables to conclude about the internal consistency and convergent validity of the those five constructs.
3.3.3 Discriminant Validity

To analyse discriminant validity, the correlation among constructs should be shorter than the root of the average variance extracted of each one of them (Real, et al., 2006). The following table presents such values to easier appreciation. Element presented on the diagonal (in bold) are the square root of the AVE indicator, it means, the variance shared between the constructs and their correspondent constitutive variables (Casaló, et al., 2013). Other figures in the matrix represent no-parametric correlation between constructs. Thus, it is possible to positively conclude about the discriminant validity on each construct due to diagonal elements are significantly larger in comparison with off-diagonal elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Construct</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha (α)</th>
<th>Composite Reliability (ρ)</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ((ρVE))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCI</td>
<td>0.847</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>0.6207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>0.7541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEif</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>0.954</td>
<td>0.7238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEca_Imp</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td>0.9409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEpa</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.6672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-VI. Construct Reliability, Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity
Source: Own Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Construct</th>
<th>BCI</th>
<th>BCE</th>
<th>PCEif</th>
<th>PCEca_Imp</th>
<th>PCEpa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCI</td>
<td>0.7878</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>0.686**</td>
<td>0.8684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEif</td>
<td>0.306**</td>
<td>0.270**</td>
<td>0.8508</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEca_Imp</td>
<td>0.485**</td>
<td>0.424**</td>
<td>0.643**</td>
<td>0.9700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEpa</td>
<td>0.440**</td>
<td>0.388**</td>
<td>0.577**</td>
<td>0.728**</td>
<td>0.8168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**All of the correlations are significant at the p < .01 level (Spearman’s Rho)

Table 3-VII. Construct Correlations Matrix.
Source: Own Design
4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the previous sections, the theoretical framework, concepts and measurements were presented. Afterwards, scales were improved and validated from different perspectives in order to give a higher level of reliability to the search for statistical findings. Hence, following the order proposed in the research model, this section will focus firstly on understanding the conceptual relationship between “Integration in the Brand Community” (McAlexander, et al., 2002) and “Brand Community Identification” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). Later, relation among latent constructs will be proved using correlation analysis. Those bi-varied correlations aim to support the hypothetical path of causal relations presented in the literature review. Finally, the moderating effect of the Level of Participation in the OBC will be explored through a multi-sample model, contrasting and comparing the results obtained by two different levels of interaction.

4.1 Literature Analysis: Integration or Identification

As was mentioned in the literature review, two concepts were build and used by two different authors to describe the “belonging” feeling of consumers towards their BC: “Integration in the Brand Community” (McAlexander, et al., 2002) and “Brand Community Identification” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005). Comparing both articles, it is possible to see that both constructs were structurally built over cognitive and affective components. Moreover, materializing the social interaction of Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), they fundamentally exhibit and evaluate the relationship between the member and the BC in terms of Consciousness of Kind, Rituals and Traditions and Sense of Moral Responsibility. Therefore, they capture the defined BC characteristics to explain the self-awareness and self-identification of any person as a member. The next table summarize the conceptual validity that supports H1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness of Kind</td>
<td>Content-rich environments allows the creation of a strong view of one-self as part of BC by integrating the interaction with the brand, the product, the firm and even with other members.</td>
<td>BCI identification with the brand community involves categorization processes [cognitive component] that allow people to be aware of their membership. It means, BCI accentuate “the similarities with other community members and dissimilarities with non-members” (Algesheimer, et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, $H_1$ can be verified, and both constructs will be indistinctly treated in subsequent sections. Nevertheless, for convenience and measurement proposes, only *Brand Community Identification* [BCI] will be taken into consideration for statistical analysis and conclusions. Therefore, a new version of the research model is presented below in Figure 4-1.

*Figure 4-1. Simplified Research Model. Source: Own Design*
4.2 Statistical Analysis

To prove and determine the relationships between the different concepts, a correlation analysis was performed. Firstly, parametric assumptions were tested to identify the specific characteristics of the sample through an exploratory analysis using the statistics software IBM SPSS 20. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of each construct, while a Levene test was performed to evaluate homoscedasticity [homogeneity of variances] among the construct that were going to be involved in the subsequent tests. Since most of the data reported did not match the shape of Normal Distribution [K-S test results are presented in Table 4-II], such analysis where place on the field of non-parametric statistics, where descriptors, correlations and contrasts do not assume a particular distribution to be executed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Asympt. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCI</td>
<td>2.6295</td>
<td>1.00555</td>
<td>1.283</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>2.8347</td>
<td>1.09410</td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC_if</td>
<td>4.0817</td>
<td>.84405</td>
<td>2.191</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC_ea</td>
<td>3.1461</td>
<td>1.37336</td>
<td>1.589</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC_pa</td>
<td>2.5657</td>
<td>.95184</td>
<td>.886</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-II. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test
Source: Own Design

Secondly, the analysis was performed in IBM SPSS 21 using a bi-variable correlation coefficient designed for non-parametric samples, namely Spearman´s Rho [ρ]. To complement these results, Kendall’s Tau test was executed concurrently. The complete report can be seen in Exhibit 6. In both cases, every correlation tested resulted positive and statistically significant at a confidence level of 5% [α = 0.05]. The following figure shows the correlation coefficients [all significant] using Spearman´s Rho, which are analogous to the ones obtained using Kendall’s Tau.
From these results, it is possible to conclude about the relations among variables hypothesized in previous sections. Therefore, “Brand Community Identification”, which represents the relationship created between a consumer and certain brand community, showed to have a positive and strong correlation $[\rho = 0.686; \alpha = 0.05]$ with “Brand Community Engagement”, which in turns represents the sense of commitment with such community. In fact, this relationship has a conceptual logic that, through the results obtained, can be replicated in the context of Social Media based Brand Communities. Brand Community Identification places a “belonging feeling” towards the brand community and it is psychologically, behaviourally and socially translated into Engagement within that specific brand community. In sum, H$_2$ was proven and its implication will be considered later on.

Likewise, Brand Community Engagement has a positive, direct and strong correlation $[\rho = 0.400; \alpha = 0.05]$ with the existence of “Positive Emotional Connections”, as a trigger of Brand Love. However, in order to present stronger support for this relationship, rho coefficients were calculated between BCE and each one of the second-order elements, as were described by Bratra et al. (2012). Again, the correlations resulted positive and statistically significant in each case, fact that enables and encourages concluding about H$_3$, which means that the two basic phenomena occurring within a Brand Community can [and will] positively influence the development of Brand Love, in at least one of its components. The following figure presents the mentioned results.
4.3 Multi-Sample Model

According with the research question, this study is interested on determining the effect that different levels of participation within the OBC might have when measuring the research model and its latent constructs. Therefore, the total sample was divided into two different and individual sub-samples. The division was made in concordance with the value received from the OBC when using the Social Networking platform in which it is embedded. To do so, some observations around the sample’s mean were deleted [±1/2 standard deviations]. Accordingly, remaining elements were separated into two categories: “High” [71 elements] and “Low” [79 elements] extent of participation within the OBC.

Afterwards, contrast tests were applied to each latent construct in a High participation level towards their Low level counterpart. The objective of such analysis was to certify the independence of each sub-sample regarding the descriptive statistics of the measures considered in the research instrument. Likewise, the selected tests only considered non-parametric assumptions. For this reason, Mann-Whitney test was used, assuring a considerable level of robustness in the statistical contrast with independent samples, no normally distributed data and different sample sizes. The results can be seen in the following table.
Thus, it is possible to say that there is enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis in each case [p-value < α=0.05]. It means, that both sub-samples are different, and it suggests that the Level of Participation within the OBC has a moderator effect in the construction of Brand Love within Social Media based Brand Communities. For this reason, the correlation model was performed again with the objective of observing possible different behaviours among these confirmedly different and independent samples. The simplified results are present in the following diagrams.

As can be seen, correlation coefficients were all significant using Spearman’s Rho test with a confidence level of 5%. Moreover, it is possible to see a systematic increment in the strength of rho coefficients when the level of participation is higher. Considering the results obtained from the Mann-Whitney test, it is possible to conclude about H₄ and the moderating effect that the Level of participation in the OBC has. This effect seems to be not particularly high, but its managerial implications might be surprising and will be discussed later on.
5 CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the general objective of this research was reached as a consequence of the positive statistic results that were showed in previous sections. Accordingly, it is possible to conclude that the enrolment and participation in online brand communities, embedded in social media platforms, have a linear relationship and, in fact, a direct influence in the development of positive emotional connections, which will enhance the feeling of Brand Love. This conclusion was expected when the literature review was constructed, and then confirmed by using correlation analysis. This statement is valid even if the type of product/brand was considered indistinctly. It means that the effect of brand communities could be explored in any economic sector or product category in the geographic context provided.

Additionally, the formulated specific research question also found positive answers after running the statistical analysis. Firstly, it was possible to observe a strong and positive correlation between Brand Community Identification and Brand Community Engagement, which proves the influence that the first has on the second. People who feel more identified with the brand community, its principles, activities and values, are also willing to compromise themselves in more attached and emotional ways. This feeling of “membership” is highly related to brand trust, brand reputation, intension of recommendation and purchase frequency.

Secondly, it was possible to see that Brand Community Engagement certainly triggered the emotional connections needed to develop brand love. Analysing separately the second-order elements of Positive Emotional Connections, and the construct as a whole, the correlation analysis showed interesting positive coefficients in each case. Despite these correlations were not excessively high, the effect of community engagement was positive and significant to enhance positive emotional connections with the brand. It means that engaged consumers are more willing to look for complementary stimuli and create personal bonds, notorious in brand narratives. This discovery is not surprising after the arguments presented in the literature review, yet it is outstanding due to it was not empirically explored before in academic marketing research.

Thirdly, the moderator effect of Level of Participation in the Brand Community was explored combining statistic contrasts and correlation analysis. Thus, it was possible to conclude that this effect does exist and manifest itself in the geographic context provided. In fact, it means that higher level of participation might improve the likelihood of developing Brand Love in Online Brand Communities. Accordingly, this result could be rationally expected because the higher the interaction within the OBC, the higher the possibilities to find points of identification with
the community, bonds to become an engaged community member and emotional connections towards the brand and the value gained from it.

Finally, the next sections will present the discussion around this conclusion in the shape of potential managerial implications, limitation to hold the research work and suggestions for further research. To do so, Colombia is presented as the context and framework to analyse and apply the offered comments.

5.1 Managerial Implications

The marketing perspective of current companies has been challenged by new trend related to social media. In a developing country such as Colombia, new technologies and new attitudes towards brands have shaken the battle field. That is why companies need to restructure and reinforce their marketing plans to focus their resources on the right path (Fournier & Lee, 2009). Undoubtedly, a research like this provides interesting insights to remake marketing strategies and improve corporate results. To do so, the empirical study aimed to prove internationally recognized theories in an applicable geographic context, which was not considered before. Thus, some administrative implications are presented below according to the results.

Developing Brand Communality. Normally ethereal, the concept of Brand Community seemed to be materialized in the form of personal feelings of identification with the brand, within the community. This identification leads to create higher levels of social commitment and emotional engagement towards the community and its principles. Nonetheless, such relation presents a contentious issue. In fact, developing engagement is the right path to trigger brand love, but this emotional attachment is a characteristic of loyal consumers rather than poorly-aware new clients. In other words, brand communities embedded in social media perform a tricky character in developing brand trust, loyalty and love in already engaged consumers.

That fact seems to be problematic due to most Colombian companies see Social Media exposure as a fairly effective and affordable mean to reach new clients. It means that a strategic concept shift should be promoted to focus marketing communication towards the specific audience in each case. Likewise, international companies that want to operate in Colombia must be aware of such consideration and include loyalty reinforcement programs in their social media marketing strategies.

Enhancing Brand Love. Results have proved that the unsubstantial and highly intricate concept of Brand Love can be effectively triggered by enhancing its components in integrative strategic approaches. Considering PEC as the highest rated component of brand love, this study definitely gives a clue for marketing strategist and community manager about interaction,
bonding and, certainly, valuable content. Therefore, a new aim for marketing communication in OBC can be observed here: company and founders’ history, story-telling brands, words with “soul” and advertisements with “hearth” that convey the motivation and passion intrinsic in the company DNA (Batra, et al., 2012). Which used to be mere managerial concepts need to be humanized in order to create positive emotional connection with the consumers.

Content-rich environment, such as ONB, tends to increase people proclivity to identify themselves with the product they are dealing with, the peers they are interacting with and the value they are seeking for. This social manifesto is basically a deep understanding of human nature through its reflection on the surroundings, which is, in other words, a conceptualization of me in terms of my relationship with my environment. It means that people will create positive emotional connections with the brand as far as they can recognize themselves in the company DNA (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). This is congruent with what was suggested previously and reinforces the idea that marketing managers should bring interactive dialogues forward in order to develop such complex set of emotions.

Accordingly, this is clearly a call to action among the Colombian business environment to take advantage of local regionalisms and adapt the marketing discourse to fulfil cultural expectations. Everyone at its own level and on its own way, bigger and smaller corporations should propend to anticipate consumers’ identification process and present an easy and transparent idea of their dearest ideals, values and motivation. In some way, it could be understood as humanizing the brand by telling a story that can enhance brand love. Additionally, it would be interesting to consider international marketing trends on this respect, namely, brand story-telling which induces the creation of vivid stories around the brand to facilitate consumer interaction, identification and emotional attachment.

Motivating Participation. Once more, participation revealed to be an important factor to consider when building a brand community. Its moderator effect expresses naturally the paradigm shift postulated by Anker et al. (2013) about consumer generated content. For this reason, creativity results to be the secret weapon to succeed in online business environments. Marketing managers face the challenge of coming up with new and innovative ways of motivating people to participate interact and contribute to the community formation; otherwise, any attempt to build an OBC will be totally vain.

In the practice, participation is crucial. Colombian companies and international prospects must understand that higher level of interaction facilitate the perception of value and benefits from the OBC, and hopefully, from the brand. For this reason, marketing strategist should enhance dynamic communications with the consumers and offer exactly what people is looking for.
In sum, this research showed a wide spectrum of possibilities for marketing strategist and developers in any industrial or commercial sector. However, there is a clear invitation that inheres in the results obtained: Consumer-oriented companies must be in constant evolution, researching, asking, proving and observing new patterns in online consumer behaviour. Colombia is likely to continue its digital development and the only way to take advantage of this, is through understanding subtle changes in consumers’ attitude towards products, brands and virtual conversations about them. Thus, online marketing research becomes a powerful tool to expand the current corporate horizons and build solid OBC where members turn into brand lovers and social media conveyers of brand messages.

5.2 Limitations and Further Research

The study of human behaviour is not an easy task. The complexity of human brain can be seen in erratic decision-making processes and emotional conducts that occur without any rational explanation. This characteristic inherently affects the scope and aim of any social research, and consequently, marketing research. For this reason, marketing literature propose sophisticated process to find consumer insights through qualitative exploratory research before running quantitate confirmatory models. This procedure shows a tactical advantage due to reduction in cultural biases. Nonetheless, this work copy the insights found in previous [and internationally recognized] works, which can or cannot be applied in a context as dissimilar as Colombia is. Even though the correspondent translations and adaptation were made, variables used could not capture certain specific factors related to Colombian culture and idiosyncrasy. Accordingly, the generalizability and even reliability of the described findings might be judge in this respect. For this reason, care and caution are recommended when interpreting the research outputs.

On the other hand, the statistical analysis represented a mayor limitation to generalizability. Due to technical complications related to software availability and proper usage, it was not possible to run structural equations models [SEM] as it was suggested. For this reason, the bi-varied correlation analysis in SPSS proved to be a close approximation to SEM in SPSS AMOS. Even though, the researcher paid special attention to significance levels, suitable non-parametric test and robust parameters, every output might be judge in concordance to the fact that they are not comparable with previous researches. Be-varied correlations isolate two variables and effectively compute the extent of linear relation among them. To do so, they omit other variables in the system, which means that they do not include variability due to interactions among more than these two variables at once. Thus, especial attention should be paid when interpreting the results in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding.
In addition to this, this research suffered the lack of budget to increase the sample size and the time restrictions to conduct exploratory qualitative analysis in advance. Both complications are considered limitations that could possibly influence the final results in certain indirect extent.

All this limitation shows the path for further research. Firstly, preliminary research should be conducted to assure the adaptation of each construct to Colombian consumers and their socio-cultural reality. This methodology is supported and suggested for most of the articles that were followed in this work [See Bibliography]. Secondly, deeper and more advanced statistical analysis should be done to assure generalizability and numeric reliability. Thus, structural equation modelling is most likely to be used in order to get the most accurate information about the interaction among variables in a dynamic system. Finally, sample size should be improved in order to enhance the confidence in multi-sample analysis. Probably, this procedure will require external founds to offer some kind of tangible benefits to the participants.

Additionally, other aspects might be considered in the likely case of conducting further research. This work evaluated a global approach to understand BC in a very local and specific country, namely Colombia. Nonetheless, the cultural differences considered by Laroche et al. (2012) have been not completely considered. Taking into account that more than 80% of respondents were from Medellín [Antioquia], it would be interesting to expand such proportion and include higher participation from Bogotá [Capital District] or Cali [Valle del Cauca]. This will give deeper insights about Colombian consumers’ behaviour and the associated managerial implications. Moreover, the moderator role of Social Networking platforms [e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn], community type (Lee, et al., 2011) and community size might be introduced and evaluated to explore different approaches and get deeper understanding regarding consumption behaviour patterns. Furthermore, as was argued in the methodology, no specific product/brand categories were considered in this research. Even though it found support in previous researches, it would be interesting to narrow the study into one specific segment, which will potentially affect the incidence of Brand Love.

Simultaneously, other important constituents of Brand Love prototype should be evaluated regarding their correlation indicators. For instance, a secondary study should appreciate Enduring Passion and Self-Brand Integration as complementary latent constructs to expand the concept and implications of Brand Love. Even better, a larger research could test all of them at once to see a clear panorama of Brand Love, as a higher order latent construct, within online brand communities. As a consequence, the theoretical reliability of the whole model will see improved and the interpretation will have stronger arguments to support decision-making process in business environments.
On the other hand, it could be interesting to approach the possible negative influence that participation, identification or engagement could have in order to develop brand love within the brand community. As has been explored in numerous case studies, consumers are becoming more and more independent in the way they communicate their ideas and interact with pair regarding the product/brand. Sometimes, these interactions do not encourage or support the pre-established brand narratives, even worse, they can go against it. For this reason, marketing managers must be prepared to deal with such events and give them the real importance that they have.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Main Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974 - Book</td>
<td>Daniel Boorstin</td>
<td>“After the industrial revolution, the understanding of community dramatically changed in the United States. As a consequence, the simple bonds based on geographical connections where replaced by solid bonds based on affiliation and brand use” (Boorstin, 1974).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 - Journal of Consumer Research</td>
<td>John W. Schouten and James H. McAlexander</td>
<td>Consumers experience a social structure, dominant values, and symbolic behaviours within the specific consumption-oriented subculture which they are part of. “Consumption activities, product categories, or even brands may serve as the basis for interaction and social cohesion” (Schouten &amp; McAlexander, 1995).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2001 – Journal of Consumer Research | Albert M. Muniz and Thomas C. O’Guinn | “These brand communities exhibit three traditional markers of community: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Additional, the authors stated:  
  - BC are explicitly commercial social and centred around a brand,  
  - BC are not homogeneous segments based on lifestyles  
  - BC are not merely reference groups  
Since the community is made up of its members and the relationships built among them, all brand communities share a common characteristic: The creation and negotiation of value. The authors develop a Consumer-Centric Model to explain the interrelation between the consumer and the brand, the consumer and the firm, the consumer and the product and among consumers. |
| 2002 – Journal of Marketing | James H. McAlexander, John W. Schouten, and Harold F. Koenig | “There are 12 common practices across brand communities, organized by four thematic aggregates (brand use, community engagement, Social networking, impression management), through which consumers realize value beyond that which the firm creates or anticipates” (Schau, et al., 2009). |
| 2009 – Journal of Marketing | Hope Jensen Schau, Albert M. Muñiz Jr., & Eric J. Arnould |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
Exhibit 2

Hypothesized Model.

Exhibit 3

Higher-Order Brand Love Factor Model.
Brand Love within Brand Communities

Online Survey: Transcription

The following survey supports research into the consumer behavior within brand communities and its implication for developing Brand Love. With this survey is the Plan Language Statement explaining the University’s approach to research, which will find in the link “http://jorgeandresvelez785.blogspot.com”.

Please ensure that you read this carefully to understand the research project. If having read it you are happy to participate then please complete the questionnaire that follows. The return of this survey will be taken as your consent to your involvement in the process.

All information completed in this questionnaire will remain completed anonymous, confidential and managed under the University’s standards of ethical practices.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Thank you.

Any question or requirement can be directed to:

Jorge Andrés Vélez Muñoz
MSc International Strategic Marketing Student
Mobile: (44)07455395757
Skype: jorgeandresvelez7
Mail: 2053602v@student.gla.ac.uk

Social Networking (Filter Questions)

1. How often do you update or use your Facebook, Twitter or other social media account?
   - At least once a day
   - At least once a week
   - Every month
   - Less often than every month
   - Don’t use it / never heard of it

2. Do you follow or like any brand or product on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn?
   - No, I don’t
   - Yes, I do

Brand Community

In order to answer the following question, please keep in mind one brand or product you follow "like" in any social network. Answer all the questions below according with your personal choice.

3. Please identify the selected brand or product you follow or “like” on social network.

4. Which Social Media Platform do you use to follow that brand or product?
   - Facebook
   - Twitter
   - LinkedIn
   - Other, please specify:

5. How often do you do following activities in the brand community you have selected?

* Skip logic functions were used to finish the online survey in case respondents tick this answer.
6. How often do you use your online group (as identified above) for satisfying the following needs?

Select your answers considering that the lowest level (1) means “low use” and the highest (5) means “low use”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>At least once a day</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Don’t use it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share multimedia content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet and/or interact with other fans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Brand Community Identification

According to the selected product/brand and your extent of interaction within the brand community, do you agree with the following statements?

Select your answers considering that the lowest level (1) means “strongly disagree” and the highest (10) means “strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very attached to the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other brand community members and I share the same objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The friendships I have with other brand community members mean a lot to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If brand community members planned something, I’d think of it as something “we” would do rather than something “they” would do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see myself as a part of the brand community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Brand Community Engagement

According to the selected product/brand and your extent of interaction within the brand community, do you agree with the following statements?

Select your answers considering that the lowest level (1) means “strongly disagree” and the highest (10) means “strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I benefit from following the brand community’s rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to participate in the brand community’s activities because I feel better afterwards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to participate in the brand community’s activities because I am able to support other members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to participate in the brand community’s activities because I am able to reach personal goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Positive Emotional Connections

**(Brand Love)**

According to the selected product/brand and your extent of interaction within the brand community, how does this product or brand match the following statements?

Select your answers considering that the lowest level (1) means “not at all” and the highest (10) means “very much”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very attached to the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other brand community members and I share the same objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The friendships I have with other brand community members mean a lot to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If brand community members planned something, I’d think of it as something “we” would do rather than something “they” would do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see myself as a part of the brand community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feel psychological comfortable using it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
Meets needs perfectly
Natural fit
What I’ve been looking for
Fits tastes perfectly
Felt right when first encountered it
Now feels right
Strength of feeling of liking
Feels like old friend
Emotionally connected
Feel a bond
Connect
Relaxed
Fun
Exciting
Calming and helps relax
Pleasurable

Demographic Data

1. What is your gender?

Male
Female

2. What is your age?

18 – 24
25 – 34
35 – 44
45 – 54
55 or older

3. Where do you live (city of residence in Colombia)?

Armenia
Barranquilla
Bogotá
Cali
Cartagena
Manizales
Medellín (Área Metropolitana)
Pereira
Other, please specify:

Thank you for completing this survey and supporting the research work of the University of Glasgow. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

Please press the button “submit” to save and send your answers.
## Exhibit 5

### Dimensionality Analysis [Exploratory Factor Analysis]

This exhibit presents the summarized results for the Exploratory Factor Analysis conducted for each scale used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Factor Loads</th>
<th>Total Variance Explained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Community Identification [BCI]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI01</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI02</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI03</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI04</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI05</td>
<td>0.847</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Community Engagement [BCE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE01</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE02</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE03</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE04</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Emotional Connections: Intuitive Fit [PECif]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC01</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC02</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC03</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC04</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC05</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC06</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC07</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC08</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Emotional Connections: Emotional Attachment [PECea_Imp]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC10</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC11</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC12</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC13</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC14</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC15</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC16</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC17</td>
<td>0.880</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exhibit 6

Non-Parametric correlations.

**. The correlation is significant at a level of 0.01 (2-tailed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>BCE</th>
<th>BCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.686**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spearman’s Rho</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.686**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. The correlation is significant at a level of 0.01 (2-tailed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>BCE</th>
<th>PECif</th>
<th>PECea_Imp</th>
<th>PECpa</th>
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<td>.424**</td>
<td>.388**</td>
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**. The correlation is significant at a level of 0.01 (2-tailed).
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