



MASTER'S DISSERTATION

“CONSUMERS’ EMOTIONS IN THE DIGITAL WORLD: BRAND LOVE, FOMO, AND THEIR CONNECTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT”

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the emotions consumers go through in relation to brands is a never-ending study, and many concepts have been created to describe these emotions, two of them are brand love, a highly positive passionate emotional connection between consumers and brands, and fear of missing out (FOMO), a fear of not participating in desirable experiences that affects consumers. With the rise of social media, it's safe to say brands have to find innovative ways to connect and establish healthy relationships with consumers in the digital world, and brands like Spotify are excelling at tampering with positive and negative consumer emotions. This study's focus and main objective is exploring the manifestations of Brand love and FOMO in the digital context, and discovering if they are connected through content shared on social media. The present exploratory research takes a qualitative approach, and benefited from testimony of 14 participants, of diverse backgrounds, to comprehend the concerned topics. The results showcased a previously unexplored connection between brand love and FOMO and describes how it is established through content sharing, while commenting on topics such as brand love and FOMO, and surrounding topics like overall social media behavior, advertisement, and joy of missing out. This knowledge serves companies by instructing them on how important sharable content can be in the future of digital advertisement.

Keywords: Consumer behavior; Brand love; Fear of missing out; Sharable content; Social media.

RESUMO

O entendimento das emoções às quais os consumidores são sujeitos nas suas relações com marcas é um estudo infindável, e muitos conceitos já foram criados para descreverem tais emoções, dois desses conceitos são o amor à marca, que é uma conexão emocional e passional muito positiva entre consumidores e marcas, e o medo de ficar de fora (FOMO), que é o medo de não estar participando em experiências desejáveis, que afeta consumidores. Com o crescimento das redes sociais, é seguro dizer que as marcas têm de arranjar maneiras inovadoras de se conectarem e estabelecer relacionamentos saudáveis com os consumidores no meio digital, e marcas como o Spotify estão a suceder em influenciar sentimentos positivos e negativos dos consumidores. O foco e principal objetivo deste estudo é explorar as manifestações de amor à marca e manifestações do medo de ficar de fora no contexto digital, e descobrir se estão conectadas através da partilha de conteúdo nas redes sociais. O presente estudo exploratório toma uma abordagem qualitativa, e beneficia do testemunho de 14 participantes com diferentes backgrounds, para compreender os assuntos de interesse. Os resultados mostram que existe uma conexão anteriormente não explorada entre amor à marca e medo de ficar de fora e descreve como ela é estabelecida através da partilha de conteúdo, enquanto comenta tópicos como amor à marca e medo de ficar de fora, e outros tópicos adjacentes como comportamento geral nas redes sociais, anúncios e felicidade em ficar de fora. Este conhecimento é útil para instruir empresas em

quão importante o conteúdo partilhável pode ser no futuro da publicidade digital.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do consumidor; Amor à marca; Medo de ficar de fora; conteúdo partilhável; redes sociais.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FOMO – Fear of missing out.

INTRODUCTION

The year was 2013, and the workers of Spotify, the world's leading music streaming service provider, had the idea to share the high volume of data they possessed concerning users listening behaviours in a personalized microsite, after receiving a positive feedback in site visits and social shares, and to be exact: 5 million people were interested to see "Year in Review", the name of the campaign which showed top songs and genres, and 1 million were interested in sharing it online. According to the CEO Alex Bodman, they realized it was an efficient way to make their users who were passionate and loyal to the brand to advertise it and talk about it. In 2020 Spotify Wrapped was born, the Year in Review web page evolved to aesthetically appealing share cards, and resulted in the astonishing numbers of 60 million acknowledged shares from 90 million users, the campaign represent not only a way for users to talk about the brand, but also about themselves and their music taste (Potter, 2021, Shalvoy, 2021). Spotify Wrapped is updated every year with new features and aesthetics, and not only keeps current users engaged and happy, as it also attracts new users, since in 2020 the company experienced a growth of 27% in app downloads after the campaign (McCreesh, n.d). This success creates opportunity to wonder: from one side there are current users that can build stronger relationships and fall deeper in love with the brand, and from another there are consumers being attracted to the brand, maybe because they feared missing

out on what their friends were experiencing, could all this be achieved through content shared?

As we know, love has a central role in humanity's existence, it is a psychological process applicable to people, ideas, activities, and objects, which makes it relevant to different social sciences, including marketing (Ahuvia et al., 2009, Albert & Merunka, 2013). The feeling of love a consumer feels towards a brand is called Brand love and it's defined as a meaningful level of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer demonstrates to a specific brand and can be linked to many desirable post-consumption behaviors, such as brand loyalty and positive word of mouth (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Another concept which is no stranger to the marketing field is fear, more specifically fear of missing out, which has been classified in many studies as a dark side of social media use. FOMO can depend on many variables, and has consequences on individuals' social media use and satisfaction, individuals' well-being, and even on individual's performance (Begun & Rana, 2023).

The present study is an exploratory research with the main objective of exploring the manifestations of Brand love and FOMO in the digital context, and discovering if they are connected through content shared on social media.

The study is concretized through the fulfilment of the following specific research objectives:

1. To understand manifestations of brand love, by exploring what connects users to brand in general, focusing on users' connection to digital brands, and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.
2. To understand manifestations of FOMO, and friend's influence and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.
3. To unveil a connection between FOMO and brand love, and the connecting role of content shared on social media.

There are many studies concerning the topics of brand love and FOMO in marketing context, and many studies relating them individually to content shared on social media, yet to fulfil the main objective of this research, it becomes necessary to re-explore these concepts to build a foundation. Exploring these topics again also creates opportunity to theoretically add to the current knowledge. Because of the previous related information, and the research motivation being found in the Spotify Wrapped campaign, which currently has a gap in the understanding of its' effects and response, this study uses the brand as empirical context to understand the topics concerned by the objectives.

This dissertation's structure is composed by five chapters. The Literature Review chapter presents an overview of the existing literature on the main topics covered in this dissertation (brand love and FOMO). The second chapter, Methodology, describes the methodological approach taken to perform the

study. In third place is the Findings chapter, where the results of the research will be presented, alongside the theories that emerged from it. This dissertation ends with the Discussion chapter comparing the findings to the existing literature. To end this dissertation, the Conclusions chapter presents the answers to the research objectives, and the contributions brought by the study to the field, this chapter also points out the limitations found during the research process and identifies future research paths.

1.LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided according to this dissertation's two core topics: Brand love and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), The following sections should provide an overview of the existing literature concerning the main points of these concepts, which are crucial to comprehending the present study.

1.1.BRAND LOVE

This section focuses on the concept of brand love, mainly on theoretically defining its meaning and core elements, identifying its antecedents, and outcomes, and lastly the contextualization of the development of brand love in the digital scenario.

Shimp and Madden (1988) were the firsts to introduce the conceptualization of love in consumption, they identify eight possible relationships: non liking, liking, infatuation, functionalism, inhibited desire, utilitarianism, succumbed desire, and loyalty.

Brand love is defined as the level of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer demonstrates in relation to a specific brand (Ahuvia, 2006), it possesses a strong affective focus, and it's connected to how capable a brand is of awakening strong emotions able to originate reactions from the

consumers. Batra et al. (2012), defined this concept as a relationship brands and consumers develop through different elements which can be cognitive, emotional, or behavioral. Keh et al. (2007) defined brand love as a consumer-brand relationship modeled by intimacy, passion, and commitment. Other more recent authors have been consistent with their antecedents and defined brand love as a relationship achieved through satisfaction, self-brand connection and personal experiences, when talking about this concept, there is an association to the concept of emotional branding, which is the capacity a brand possesses of establishing an emotional relationship with its' consumer, allowing the brand to occupy a clear position in his mind (Rahman, 2021). These love emotions influence consumers perception, often causing them to make emotionally based purchase decisions (Rosenbaum-Ellioy, 2011, Nguyen & Feng, 2021). Brand love has a nature intrinsically dynamic on the construction of affection for a brand and it's developed in branding with a strategic perspective (Eiriz & Guimarães, 2016).

1.1.1.Elements of brand love

Brand love is a multidimensional concept. (Batra et al., 2012, Albert et al., 2013). Albert et al. (2008) identified six primary dimensions of brand love: idealization, intimacy, pleasure, dream, memories, and uniqueness while other authors have described the elementary composition of brand love as formed by antecedents, components, and outcomes (attitude) (Batra et al., 2012).

According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) brand love is composed by passion, level of attachment, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotional connection to the brand, and love declarations for the brand. It involves affection, and studies indicate that consumers' love should be greater for brands that play a significant role in shaping their identity. To be a brand lover means that a consumer has a long-term fulfilled emotional attachment towards it (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), and that he has an intention to become loyal to the brand (Peng & Li, 2019).

The following model by Batra et al., (2012), illustrated in figure 1 is a higher-order conceptualized prototype presenting components and behaviors which can lead to a consumer developing a stronger emotional bond of brand love, but also what elements are associated to an actual brand lover, and elements that are consequences of loving a brand. The study also makes possible to assess different brand love elements and components separately, in order to evaluate their different weights on different consumer-brand love relationships. According to the authors of the model, it's expected that "The more of these prototype features a relationship or an emotion has, and the more central those attributers are to the prototype, the more likely a consumer is to consider it some type of love." (Batra et al., 2012, pp. 2).

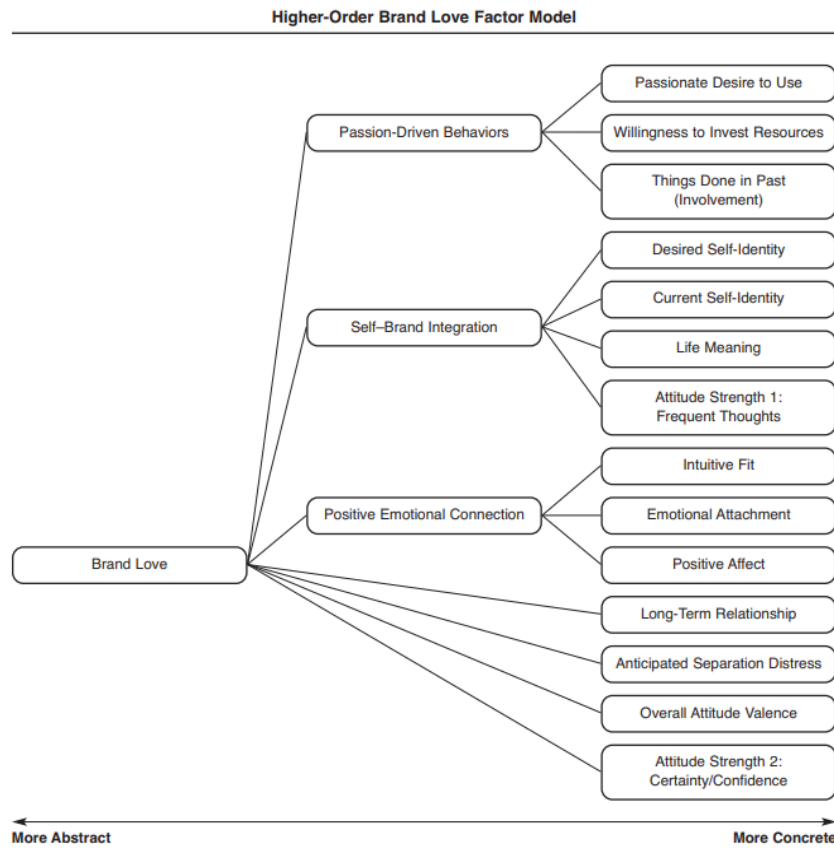


Figure 1 - Higher-Order Brand Love Factor Model

Source: Batra et al., (2012)

Brand love can be defined by the following components:

- **Passion-Driven Behaviors:**

The loved brand provokes in the consumer a willingness to invest high levels of resources like time, energy, and money. The consumer is disposed to put effort in using the brand's, improving their usage of the brand, and finding the brand. There are feelings of natural fit, that have been expressed as "love at first sight". Other behaviors the consumer might present are

craving and longing to use the brand, getting involved and interacting with the brand, and feeling desire towards the brand. (Batra et al., 2012).

- **Self-brand integration:**

The loved brand connects to the consumer actual self-identity, and/or desired self-identity. A self-expressive brand is the consumer's perception of the degree to which that specific brand enhances his social self and/or reflects his inner self (Holt 1988). Because consumers see talking about brands as part of their process of constructing their identity, it's believed that consumers tend to engage more in positive word-of-mouth when it concerns self-expressive brands. By using this brand, the consumer allows others to be able to get an idea of his identity. Also, the brand allows the consumer to be able to feel as he wishes to feel and portray himself as the person he wants to be or look. For this integration to be possible there is a certain degree of match between his identity and the brand's identity. Being a consumer of the brand makes the consumer feel special, important, intrinsically rewarded, and makes his life feel meaningful and purposeful (Batra et al., 2012). When brands fail to provide extrinsic rewards, consumers have reported to not perceive the relationship as love, but as means to an end.

- **Positive emotional connection:**

The brand represents the "perfect fit" and more "natural" for the consumer's needs, the consumer feels comfortable with using the brand, he

likes the brand, feels emotionally bonded and connected to it, and the brand makes him excited. (Batra et al., 2012)

- **Long-Term Relationship:**

The consumer is committed to the brand and intends to perpetuate its use for a long time. The consumer tends to develop an “old-friend -like” bond with the brand. (Batra et al., 2012). There is shared history with the brand, and the brand might be placed as an important element of the consumer’s personal identity narrative.

- **Anticipated separation distress:**

The consumer has negative emotions towards quitting the brand, these feelings might be fear, anxiety, worry, or apprehension, and they signalize an emotional bond breakage (Batra et al., 2012). Bonded consumers characterize the brand as irreplaceable and unique. The consumer suffers from deprivation of the brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013).

- **Overall Attitude Valence:**

The brand’s products are satisfying to the consumer, the perceived quality equivalates to the ideal quality, and the consumer’s expectations are met. The consumer likes the brand (Batra et al., 2012).

- **Attitude strength 2: Certainty/Confidence:**

This relates to the consumer's high tendency to think, mention, anticipating use and interactions with the brand. The brand is a recurring thought in his mind, and he possesses strong feelings and affection for it (Batra et al., 2012). The brand is the consumer's first choice (Suartina et al., 2022).

1.1.2. Antecedents and outcomes of brand love

ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND LOVE

Brands must first be liked in order to become loved (Batra et al., 2012). Satisfactory and favorable experiences with a brand, with time, lead to pleasure, and that will possibly originate brand love (Roy et al., 2013, Eiriz & Guimarães, 2016), this emotional connection is often associated to a consumer's relationship of long duration with a brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), and apart from that, many sensorial, affectional, intellectual, and behavioral aspects, might lead to the creation of emotional bonds between the consumers and the brands. Peng & Li (2019), point out a previously existing brand trust as a positive influence on brand love, so if a consumer considers a brand as trustworthy and reliable the development of a love feeling is easier (Albert & Merunka, 2013). High quality perception is an important antecedent element of brand love and it's the perception of a brand as possessing of attractive qualities (Batra et al., 2012). Another antecedent of brand love is brand

identification (Albert & Merunka, 2013, Batra et al., 2012, Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006), where there is a match between the consumer's personality and values with the ones possessed by the brand (Batra et al., 2012). It is also important to note that consumers' love often depend on their identification level with other brand consumers (Albert et al., 2013), and that consumers' personal characteristics like personality and attachment styles also intervene in the construction of the love relationship between them and the brand. Previous studies (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) also argue that products' categories have a part in influencing brand love since there are reason to believe love is greater for brands involved in more hedonic product categories, compared to utilitarian products, and they will more likely originate stronger emotional responses. Overall there are indications that consumers love a brand more when the brand is viewed as trustworthy, well performing, well designed, functional, practical, and holder of similar qualities as themselves. Concluding consumers are always aware of the benefits they get from the brand they are in love with. (Batra et al., 2012).

BRAND LOVE OUTCOMES

Brand lovers are predisposed to carry out many desirable post-consumption behaviors. When the brand meets the consumer's expectations, and he feels satisfied with his choice (Batra et al., 2012). Brand love is a meaningful mode of consumer satisfaction that is linked to desirable post-consumption behaviors. One of these behaviours is attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Peng & Li, 2019),

a consumer who loves the brand has a plan to commit with it (Paanamén et al., 2022, Tijjang et al., 2023). This loyalty is because consumers are more inclined to staying with a brand or business when they have trust and a positive emotional connection with it, or when they have some pride in using it (Tijjang et al., 2023), this loyalty leads participants to have long-term financial investment. This meets another brand love outcome which is the willingness to spend resources in the brand, the brand lover feels strongly for it and intends to keep buying (Batra et al., 2012, Nguyen & Feng 2021) exclusively from the brand, while ignoring other offers (Nguyen & Feng, 2021), the consumer also becomes less sensitive to the brand raising prices. Brand love not only generates resistance to negative brand information (Batra et al., 2012), as it incentivizes consumers to do public displays of affection, and to keep talking and advocating for the brand (Batra et al., 2012), this positive talk is also extended to online environments (Suartina et al., 2022). Brand lovers have and enhanced adaptability and positive awareness in relation to the brand (Peng & Li, 2019), which can lead to a satisfying relationship, overall brand love is an enhancer of multiple behaviours, including customer engagement and commitment. Brand loves' strategic objective is to allow the brand to create strong and meaningful emotional bonds with a consumer, thus making itself (the brand) part of the consumer's personal life stories and an important element in his social relationships (Gobé, 2001). The brand meets the consumer's expectations, and he feels satisfied with his choice. The consumers are constantly thinking and advocating for the brand, which is a consequence of

the brand being top of mind. The consumer feels strongly about the brand and intends to keep buying it. (Batra et al., 2012).

The consumer talks positively about the brand, and this is extended to online environments (Suartina et al., 2022).

When consumers are passionate about a brand they can become brand followers and advocates. Consumers are more inclined to staying with a brand or business, following, and advocating for them, when they have trust and a positive emotional connection with it. (Tijang et al., 2023). Brand love has a positive influence in creating other desired brand behaviors, positive attitude, and positive public displays of affection. Brand lovers have an enhanced adaptability and positive awareness in relation to the brand (Peng & Li, 2019), which can lead to a satisfying relationship. When consumers love brands, they are less sensitive to price increases and have a long-term financial investment as these relationships can lead them to repeat purchase (Nguyen & Feng, 2021, Batra et al., 2012) and exclusively buying from the brand, ignoring other offers (Nguyen & Feng, 2021). Brand love also generates resistance to negative brand information and repurchase intention (Batra et al., 2012). Overall brand love is an enhancer of multiple behaviors, including customer engagement and commitment. In summary, the outcomes of brand love can be: positive word-of-mouth, willingness to pay premium, repurchase intention, brand advocacy, resistance to negative brand information, affective commitment, and loyalty. Brand loves' strategic objective is to allow the brand to create strong and

meaningful emotional bonds with a consumer, thus making itself (the brand) part of the consumer's personal life stories and an important element in his social relationships (Gobé, 2001).

1.1.3.Digital brand love

The experience with a brand can be affected by the micro system - family, friends, other close individuals - and by the macro system – society, culture, values, patriotic identity (Arkonsuo & Leppiman, 2015). According to a study conducted by Paanamen et al. (2022), on digital brand love, customers create similar relationships with all kinds of brands, digital or physical. However, when compared to physical brands, digital brands are considered more easily integrable into recurring events in everyday life, they are important parts of the consumer's routine, entertainment, communication, content creation and information seeking.

Brand love is differently affected in the digital context. Factors like social media promotion, and intensive distribution have proven to significantly affect brand love in a positive manner. Social media promotion is said to increase brand love for a product (Suartina et al., 2022). The concretization of different promotion strategies can improve consumers' brand love, and improve consumers' loyalty (Peng & Li, 2019). An easier access to brand information online can increase brand awareness, helping in the creation of connections

between brands and consumers, which tends to originate higher purchase levels. (Ansari et al., 2019). brand love enhances Intensive distribution and social media promotion ability to generate positive e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth), and increases loyalty, by acting as a mediator, at least for some consumers (Suartina et al., 2022).

1.2.FEAR OF MISSING OUT

Due to the development of the internet, and rapid rising of new technologies, alongside mobile phones, there is a widespread growth in social media usage. Individuals can now be in contact with eachothers' experiences, and sometimes these are experiences they are deprived off, or are not available for them to engage. This consequentially leads to the appearing of negative emotions, the main one is fear of missing out, frequently abbreviated to FOMO (Sargin, 2022).

FOMO is a relatively new but popular concept, with its first know use in 2004, defined by Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2023) as: "Fear of not being included in something (such as an interesting or enjoyable activity) that others are experiencing", this same definition is similarly put by other authors who say it's an intense anxiety or worry of individuals, characterized by a constant desire to stay connected with what others are doing, along with the feeling that others will experience things they would like to experience in environments they are not present (Przybylski et al., 2013, Sargin, 2022), it can

also be characterized by the fear of leaving or not belonging in a group or community, as much as a desire to belong to a group (Lai et al., 2016). This concept is becoming very relevant due to its influence on consumers' behavior, and has been explored by different researchers, since FOMO is usually related to social media and marketing (Tokay et al., 2018).

Individuals that have FOMO tend to be convinced that they are missing opportunities, or won't be a part of a social group, in case they abstain from consuming specific products and brands consumed by the members of the group. This makes them more susceptible to buy products and brands recommended by their group of friends (Gupta & Shrivastava, 2022). Because of this, when exposed to social media content, targeted consumers that experience FOMO tend to develop a positive attitude towards a certain product or service, and marketers might see an increase of purchase intention. FOMO also makes individuals more willing to buy limited edition products and scarce products (Sargin, 2022).

According to Hodkinson (2016), the FOMO appeal response mechanism can be modeled by "personal variables, situational variables, socio-cultural variables, cognitive and affective responses to consumer and cognitive and affective responses post-decision". The study highlights the following cognitive elements:

- Opportunity cost:

Because of the uncertainty of the decision, consumers fear regret, and the more time taken to decide, the more fear and hope are associated to the decision. The consumer's goal is to optimize their benefit by evaluating the advantages of their preferred option and the disadvantages of not selecting the other options.

- Regret and anticipated regret:

The consumer fears regret and discomfort, this also makes participants more inclined to overthink their decisions by reflecting on past regret.

- Scarcity:

FOMO's effectiveness is enhanced when an opportunity is perceived as unique. This is why many commercial and non-commercial FOMO appeals involve "call to actions".

In a study conducted by Hodkinson (2016), with subjects belonging to the younger demographics, it was found that 100 percent of participants affirmed being aware of coming in contact with commercial and non-commercial appeals, that had "missing out" as their specific motivation, these tactics were also identified by them in non-commercial appeals that came from friends and family, like invitations and such. Subjects agreed that the majority of the FOMO appeals they had been in contact with were of non-commercial nature, and those were also the more effective and impactful ones, when it came to the

degree of influence felt. In sum, a “real person” was generally considered as more credible than sales staff. Participants also claimed to view music festivals and other social events as non-commercial appeals, while direct promotion of products were seen as commercial appeals. It was also mentioned by subjects that what aggravated the negative feeling, of “missing out”, was observing other people talking about the thing in question, which gave them a feel they were actually missing out on participating in a social experience. Other characteristics associated to FOMO were social competitiveness and opportunity cost.

FOMO is also present after the decision is made, and it can manifest as consumers reflecting on their choices for a long term, and all the possible scenarios. The post-decision process can bring positive emotions such as happiness and joy, or negative emotions such as regret or guilt (Hodkinson, 2016). Consumer’s overall responses can variate by their trait-like personal variables, present at pre and post decision phases.

FOMO in consumers is often associated higher to levels of social media engagement, but also to lower levels of general mood and lower levels of life satisfaction, and research indicates that consumers with higher FOMO levels, tend to experience more ambivalent feelings while navigating social networks (Przybylski et al., 2013), it’s also constantly viewed as consumer manipulation. This causes FOMO to be negatively viewed concept, but especially in the digital context (Hodkinson, 2016).

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents and justifies in detail the methodological approach taken to accomplish this study.

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This dissertation has as its main general objective exploring the manifestations of brand love and FOMO in the digital context, and discovering if they are connected through content shared on social media. This objective is fragmented into the following specific objectives:

1. To understand manifestations of brand love, by exploring what connects users to brand in general, highlighting users' connection to digital brands, and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.
2. To understand manifestations of FOMO, and friends influence in social media and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.
3. To unveil a connection between FOMO and brand love, and the connecting role of content shared on social media.

Figure 2 illustrates the connections under consideration in this exploratory research.

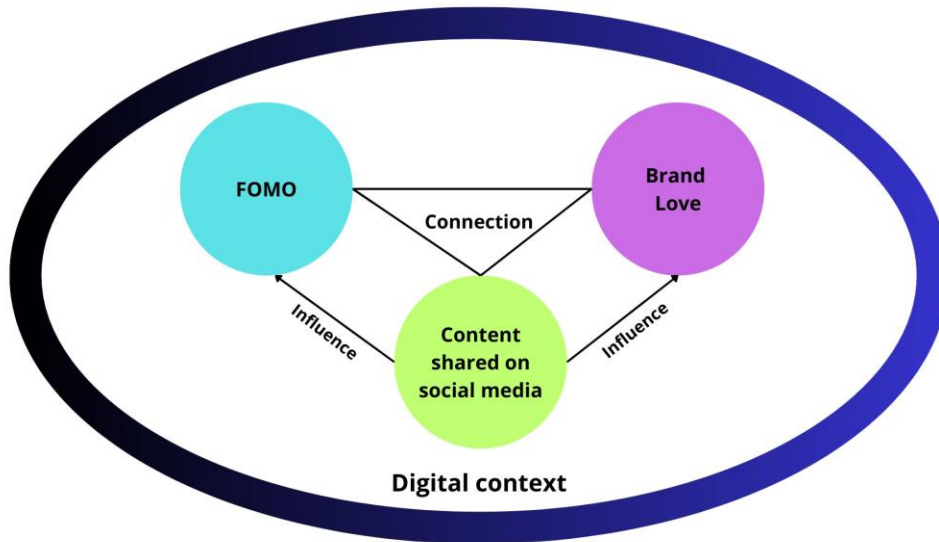


Figure 2 - Illustrative representation of the connections under analysis

Source: Author

To understand such influences and connections, it becomes necessary to gather and analyze consumers' perceptions, feelings, preferences, and behaviors towards brands, and how they might have been directly or indirectly influenced by exposition to content shared on social media pertaining brands, products, and services. In this case, a qualitative research methodology is regarded as more adequate because this inductive modality was chosen allows the researcher to interpret and describe what meanings the consumers connect to what he experiences, and it's an approach applied in contexts where the objects of study are people, cases, and social phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013) in natural settings (Creswell, 1994).

2.2. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

This paper relies on a qualitative foundation, to acquire the data necessary to evaluate the aimed points.

Due to the research's nature, the researcher opted to base this study on primary data collected through semi-structured interviews, which showed as the most appropriate technique to gather relevant information in this case, because even though the researcher had specific topics to address, it was important to leave room to participants to feel open to express their opinions and emotions, but also their self-analysis on how they are affected and influenced by product and brand related content they come across in the digital channel, this modality fits right because it allows the researcher to make conversation with interviewees through flexible questions and different insights while asking the same questions, and being able to make follow up questions to get more in depth if necessary (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

To conduct the interviews needed for this study, the researcher chose to use the empirical context of the Spotify brand, because of it being a highly popularized digital brand that provides users with sharable content through their personalized campaigns. Spotify, born in 2006, is the biggest music streaming service in the market with a revenue of 11.7 billion euros in the year 2022. In the platform users can encounter a wide range of musical content, audiobooks, and podcasts, and the brand is set as the top-of-mind choice for

many consumers. Spotify had 182 million paid subscribers in the beginning of 2022, which is its main source of revenue (Götting, 2023). The platform has added many features throughout the years, with the objective of connecting listeners with their family, friends, and artists, and grow these relationships, by allowing them to share music and enjoy moments together (Naomi, 2021). Spotify has an innovative, and highly personalized campaign called Spotify Wrapped, the campaign provided users a report with their yearly streaming statistics, inspiring them to reflect on their listening habits, with a built in sharing component, allowing them to share it in multiple social media channels such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, etc. The platform offers aesthetically appealing content for users to share on social media, this causes a high volume of user-generated content, including memes, thus creating brand awareness in and outside the platform. Apart from the campaign, Spotify also lets users keep up with their friends' listening activity, make collaborative playlists, and create group sessions (LeBlanc, 2023, Bloch, 2022). In sum, because Spotify is a widely known and used brand, it's inspiration for this study, and provides the sharable content element studied in this research, it became the ideal candidate to be used as an example when conducting the interviews.

The researcher conducted the interviews in three different modalities, and according to the participants' availability. Half of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the other half were video calls using Microsoft teams, Facetime, and Instagram video call feature. The average duration of the

interviews was 35 minutes. The interview script was formed by 3 sequential groups, and group II had two different sets of question which depended on the participant's usage of the Spotify brand. In table 1 can be observed what were the analysis dimensions that guided the design of the interviews' questions and in table 2 it is shown how they were connected to each question developed.

Table 1 - Research objectives and analysis' dimensions

Specific Research Objectives	Analysis' Dimensions	Key Authors
1. To understand manifestations of brand love, by exploring what connects users to brand in general, focusing on users' connection to digital brands, and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.	1.1. Identify brand love elements overall.	Holt, 1988; Caroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka. 2013; Pen & Li, 2019; Siurtina et al., 2012; Nguyen & Feng, 2021
	1.2. Identify brand love elements for digital brands.	Peng & Li, 2019; Paanamem et al., 2022; Suartina et al., 2022;
	1.3. Understand how brand love is	Holt, 1988; Caroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra

	influenced by consumers exposure to shared content.	et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka. 2013; Pen & Li, 2019; Suartina et al., 2012; guyen & Feng, 2021, Tijang et al., 2023
2. To understand manifestations of FOMO, and friend’s influence and comprehend the role played by content shared on social media.	2.1 Understand how FOMO is affected by consumers exposure to shared content.	Przybylski et al., 2013; Lai et al., 2016; Hodkinson, 2016; Gupta & Shrivastava, 2022; Sargin, 2022
	2.2. Understand the consumer ‘s behavior when he seeks to feel belonging to a social circle.	Lai et al., 2016; Gupta & Shrivastava, 2022

<p>3. To unveil a connection between FOMO and brand love, and the connecting role of content shared on social media.</p>	<p>3.1. Discover if there is a connection between the two phenomena (brand love and FOMO), and what role is played by content shared on social media</p>	<p>Gobé, 2001; Arkonsuo & Leppiman, 2015; Ansari et al., 2019; Paanamén et al., 2022</p>
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Table 2 - Interview questions and correspondent analysis dimensions

Analysis Dimension	Research Objectives	Question
2.1 2.2 3.1	2 & 3	1. How susceptible are you, to acquire a product or service when you see an ad on social media that you know comes from a brand, and how susceptible are you to acquire a product or service, when you see a friend recommendation, or a friend’s post about it on social media?
2.1 2.2 3.1	2 & 3	2. How do you feel when most of your acquaintances are sharing posts on social media about a product or service you don’t own or use?
2.1 2.2 3.1	2 & 3	(In case the participant didn’t mention anxiety or exclusion in their previous answer) 3. How would you place anxiety or exclusion with the feelings you get when most your acquaintances are posting about the products or services you don’t have? In case you feel them.
Group II (For participants who are Spotify users)		
1.1 1.2 1.3 3.1	1 & 3	1. What contact have you had with the brand Spotify, and what is your opinion about it?

1.1 1.2 1.3 2.2 3.1	1, 2 & 3	2. What makes you choose Spotify among other options with similar products?
1.1 1.3 3.1	1 & 3	3. What would you say connects you to the Spotify brand?
1.1 1.2	1	4. What would it take for you to stop using Spotify?
1.1 2.2 1.3 2.1 3.1	1, 2 & 3	5. What type of interaction have you had with the Spotify campaign “Spotify Wrapped” on social media, in terms of seeing your report, sharing it, and seeing other peoples’ reports?
1.1 1.2 2.2 1.3 2.1 3.3	1, 2 & 3	6. How did the “Spotify Wrapped” campaign, influence your opinion of the Spotify brand?
1.1 1.2 1.3 2.2 2.1 3.3	1, 2 & 3	7. What makes you choose to share or not to share your report on social media?
1.1 1.2	1, 2 & 3	8. How disposed are you to defend Spotify in a discussion, and how disposed are you to recommend it to others?
1.1 1.2 1.3 3.1	1 & 3	9. What are your feelings for Spotify and is love included?
		Group II (For participants who are not Spotify users)
2.1 2.2 3.1	2 & 3	1. What contact have you had with the brand Spotify, and what is your opinion of the brand?
2.1	2 & 3	2. What type of interaction have you had with the Spotify

2.2 3.1		campaign “Spotify Wrapped”, in terms of seeing other people’s reports?
1.2 1.3 2.1 2.2 3.1	1, 2 & 3	3. How did the “Spotify Wrapped” campaign, influence your opinion of the Spotify brand?
2.1 2.2 3.1	2 & 3	4. How do you feel when you see your acquaintances sharing their “Spotify Wrapped” report on social media, while you don’t have one to share?
		Group III
1.1 3.1	1 & 3	1. Let’s talk about your favorite brand. Describe your relationship with it, you can describe it as you want, it can be in terms of how long you’ve been using the brand, what you like about the brand, how loyal you are to the brand, or whatever you feel like mentioning.
1.1 3.1	1 & 3	(In case the participant didn’t choose Spotify as their favorite brand) 2. How do you compare you overall feelings for your favorite brand with love? Would you say you love the brand?

2.3.PARTICIPANTS’ CHARACTERIZATION

To partake in the study, participants were only required to know, even if on a superficial level, the Spotify brand, this due to the researcher’s choice to use the brand as a reference point for the questionnaire. Apart from knowing Spotify participants were not filtered out based on any characteristics.

The participants were selected by convenience, and were categorized as: users and non-users, were to be considered a user the participant had to have

an active Spotify account and affirmed it as their first choice for music and podcast streaming with no specific frequency. The group of 14 participants is composed by the researcher’s friends and acquaintances as presented in table 3.

Table 3 - Participant's Characterization and codification

Age	Nationality	Gender	Occupation	Data Coding	Category
19	Cape-Verdean	Masculine	Student	P1	Non-user
22	Portuguese	Masculine	Support Engineer	P2	User
27	Brazilian	Female	Copyrightier	P3	User
23	Portuguese	Masculine	Programmer	P4	User
23	French	Masculine	Student	P5	Non-user
26	Portuguese	Masculine	Student	P6	User
24	Cape-Verdean	Female	Pharmacist	P7	User
33	Portuguese	Female	Esthetician	P8	Non-user
26	Portuguese	Masculine	Consultant	P9	User
21	Cape-Verdean	Masculine	Student	P10	User
27	Angolan	Female	Singer	P11	User
28	Cape-Verdean	Masculine	Data analyst	P12	Non-user
34	Brazilian	Masculine	Database Administrator	P13	User
27	Portuguese	Female	Makeup artist	P14	Non-user

The participants’ sample was formed by 14 individuals of 5 different nationalities, being 4 of them Cape-Verdean individuals, 6 Portuguese individuals, 2 Brazilian individuals, 1 French individual and 1 Angolan individual.

2.4.DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

After conducting the interviews, followed the analysis of the collected data. The procedure to analyze the data chosen for this study was Content Analysis. According to Bardin (2011), content analysis is a qualitative analysis method, that provides the researcher with techniques to aid communication analysis, with the objective to obtain indicators which allow the inference of knowledge related to the conditions these messages were produced/received. This is done through systematic and objective methods performed to describe the content of those messages. Bardin's process for content analysis consists in three fundamental phases: pre-analysis; material exploration; and treatment, inference and interpretation of results. In this situation the researcher focuses on understanding the meaning of the message as a recipient whilst searching for double meanings, that might be hidden behind the main discourse (Câmara, 2013). This method is suited for this dissertation were the researcher aims to identify themes and patterns presents in the participants discourses that can indicate the presence of different brand love elements, and FOMO.

This first organizational phase, the researcher task consists in organizing, schematizing, and systematizing the procedures, although these procedures were defined they still hold some flexibility. This is the phase of first contact and formal organization of documents and the phase for formulating hypothesis, defining objectives, and elaborating indicators that will serve as aid in the interpretation of materials and later in the discussion of results. In the second phase the information was allocated according to defined code units and classification methods, the information acquired had to be connected to the

researcher's objectives, which were divided in specific analysis dimensions as portrayed in table 2 (previously shown).

In the treatment, inference and interpretation of results phase, the researcher analyzed the results, taking into account all the possible hidden messages or indirect meanings, and organized the found information.

3.FINDINGS

3.1.OBJECTIVE 1: TO UNDERSTAND MANIFESTATIONS OF BRAND LOVE, BY EXPLORING WHAT CONNECTS USERS TO BRAND IN GENERAL, FOCUSING ON USERS' CONNECTION TO DIGITAL BRANDS, AND COMPREHEND THE ROLE PLAYED BY CONTENT SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The participants portrayed signs of attachment, habit-forming, positive emotional involvement, and even emotional dependency. P10 and P11 who were declared Spotify lovers, and P1 who was a Nike lover displayed all this signs, along with a merge of personal identity with the brand's (self-brand integration), willingness to advocate for it, positive association, adversity towards competitors and separation anxiety:

P1: "My favourite brand is Nike, I can't explain but I always identified with the brand, I think their models and aesthetics relates a lot with my personal style. I always identified with people that represent the brand, for example my football idol Cristiano Ronaldo always represented them, and I think that influenced me to like the brand more."

P10: "100%, I'm Spotify and Spotify is me (when asked if he would advocate for the brand), if they have something against Spotify, they have something against me. 100% about recommending it to, anyone listening to music should use it, everything else is garbage. I think apple music is not eye catching at all, I

find it ugly, I don't know, the app aesthetics is something, like, zero difference from what they had in the past, no updates, their app layout is ugly, I don't like it, it doesn't catch my attention, so I think the visual and the algorithm of Spotify are all better... I love Spotify, I told you, if I don't pay for Spotify I get desperate, it happened once, I made an account on Tidal and I couldn't listen to music there, because it had to be on Spotify. Then I paid and it never happened again. I can't live without Spotify, it has to be part of my life."

P11: "Spotify is overall my favorite brand, I even use it to meditate, right now, there is no brand I appreciate as much, if I wake up tomorrow and they tell me Spotify is over, I would be very very sad, all my playlists are there, I have a strong connection to music, it's not like if they told me Instagram was down, I would be sad, but not as sad as if it was Spotify... It's like a warm feeling, I feel literally hugged by Spotify, it's like an escape, for example if I'm going to have an anxiety attack, I turn Spotify on, if I'm cleaning I turn it on, whatever I'm doing Spotify is my company."

Many participants who used Spotify mentioned how important it was in their routine, the most highlighted aspects were its' integration in their day-to-day lives and it's practicality. Like Spotify lovers P10 and P11:

P10: "I associate my whole life to Spotify, because my life is based on Spotify, I use Spotify the whole day... It's like they satisfy my wishes."

P11: "Yes, I love Spotify. It's like a warm feeling, I feel literally hugged by Spotify, it's like an escape, for example if I'm going to have an anxiety attack I turn Spotify on, if I'm cleaning I turn it on, whatever I'm doing Spotify is my company."

Participants were unwilling to cease use of Spotify to use other brands, because they found it difficult to eliminate the habit, to learn how to navigate a new platform, or felt attached to its resources. These were the cases of P6 and P7:

P6: "I imagine that if the thing I identify with the most got completely ruined, if the recommendation thing became complete garbage... I would be like, why would I stay here? But even with that, there's a chance I stay because I don't like changes... I don't like change in general."

P7: "I think it's a luxury because paying for music every month, when we have platforms like YouTube for free, is a luxury. But I don't intend to let go of it because it brings me personal comfort... I don't see myself changing, not even if the price increases. Only if I lost my job. I think it's due to commodity, because I already know how to navigate the app, and I don't have enough patience to learn how to use another app."

According to the feedback received from the participants regarding Spotify, it was clear that participants were directing their compliments to the platform

itself rather than the brand. The relationships described by participants were first established with the product and then associated to the brand in a less significant way. It's safe to say that even when declaring love, the participants were directing it to the platform and not the brand like it was the case for the Spotify lovers P10 and P11:

P10: " I think I don't have an opinion of Spotify as a brand, but I have one for it as a product. I think Spotify is a very well made app, its' algorithm is able to use the music I listen to, to recommend more music, it makes you many cool playlists, it makes things way more easier to us music listeners"

P11: "I see Spotify as just the product, not as an enterprise (when asked if she loved the product or the brand). I value it because of the utility the product has to me. It's not really the essence of the brand, I don't even know who founded the brand. It's all about the product and the functionality the product has to my life or has in my life."

When asked about their love for Spotify, most participants had a hard time recognizing their feelings for it as love, because of it being an app, for example P6, said:

P6: "I don't know if I would say I love an app. It's an app."

P6 also later stated:

P6: "I can't say I love a brand, it's like Spotify, I'm crazy about them, but loving a brand doesn't seem right, same thing with Twitch. I can't say I love the experience of using it, it's just convenient, at least for Spotify, but in relation to Nike I really like using their products."

P6 and P7 also were very direct when talking about being indifferent to the brand:

P6: "As a brand I don't think they have nothing that makes them stick out, but their product does."

P7: "I don't associate the platform with the brand honestly, they are just the company that created the product."

This dissociation between brand and product also was noted between brand and campaign:

P13: "It didn't. I didn't really relate it to the brand, I just care about seeing what my friends listen to. (When asked if the campaign Spotify Wrapped changed his view of the brand)."

A noticeable point was that 4 participants mentioned apple throughout the interviews as a brand well established, loved and robust. Apple lovers like

participants P12 and P14, hinted that this might be because the brands has multiple good quality products.

P12: "I love Apple, it was love at first sight, I would marry Apple. It's my favorite brand, it started when I was a kid and I got an iPod, and they headphones were amazing, magnificent, a standout in the market, and every time they stopped working, I went ahead and bought them again, I just can't use anything else. Apple has the capacity to integrate all their products in an ecosystem, it creates a bigger connection with the brand. I think it's like Spotify does by incorporating multiple tools in one platform. Apple offers the best products in the market, and that is what makes me connected to them. They also have the best operative system and design. It's the experience itself."

P14: "My favorite brand is Apple, I love all their things, I like iOS, because it's fast, I have an iPhone and an iPad and I synchronize them. I think it's because of the practicality and the camera quality. I think in terms of cost-benefit it's not worth it, but even though it's expensive I prefer it. I wouldn't buy cheaper, even if I got broke, I rather save money and wait more to buy Apple instead of another, even if I was presented with a better phone from Samsung. I identify with the brand aesthetics, and I love their quality."

This difference in the way the brands Apple and Spotify are differently perceived was pointed out by P5, who isn't a user of neither:

P5: "I don't really think a lot about it, for me it's just an enterprise that gives people access to music, but if you ask me about Apple, I could tell you they are a great brand that tries to be the best, but Spotify for me as a brand is just the image of a platform that is good."

Like P2 who negated loving his favourite brand but affirmed to love Spotify, hinted having a different emotional association with different product categories with the following statement:

P2: "About love, it's a solid yes! I use Spotify during every trip, the algorithm already knows my taste, plus I can also stalk my friends and see what they are listening to... I can tell you it's great, it's a big part of my routine."

The participant was later asked if he loved his favorite brand and replied:

P2: "I don't love Tiffosi, it's just my favorite clothing brand."

When the interviewer asked as explanation for loving Spotify but not loving his favorite brand P2 answered:

P2: "I don't compare music and clothes, Spotify is a bigger part of my life and day to day"

The brand was strongly associated to reliability and positively seen, even by participants who weren't users of the brand but had an image of it. Spotify was also associated it with companionship, and some even saw it as a friend:

P3: "It's like a friend. I don't love Spotify, but I don't hate Spotify either, but it's not neutral either, it's more positive than negative, it's kind of a friendship."

P1: "Yes, I love Spotify. It's like a warm feeling, I feel literally hugged by Spotify, it's like an escape, for example if I'm going to have an anxiety attack I turn Spotify on, if I'm cleaning I turn it on, whatever I'm doing Spotify is my company."

P13: "I do love it (when asked if he loved Spotify), it's something I'm always connected to, and I don't see myself going out without it."

P8 who was not a user of Spotify expressed disliking the brand, and not feeling included in the "Spotify generation", but also indicated associating the brand with routine and choosing brands to use according to their products' usefulness to her, she declared:

P8: "I don't belong to the Spotify generation, I prefer to pay for Netflix which is more useful to me. It's also important to note that I don't listen to music that much, I use the radio when I'm driving, and I can't listen to music at work, so it doesn't fit my lifestyle, maybe if I used public transportation or went to the gym, but I don't."

Participants P6 and P11 were very openly willing to recommend and defend Spotify:

P6: "Oh me? I fight with a sword and a shield, a spear, whatever, to defend Spotify against people, some people say Apple is cheaper, I tell them to get out of here. About recommending, my mom spent some time with me and she saw I used Spotify, and I showed her it was more practical than YouTube."

P11: "I recommend it a lot, every time someone asks me about my playlist, I tell them I use Spotify and I point out that it's a very practical platform."

When questioned about their love for their favourite brand, just like in the previous Spotify examples, participants identified with aspects of the brand, were willing to repurchase, had an emotional connection with it and felt the brand was part of their lives/routines. P8 for example had a very close relationship with her favourite brand, associating it with very important moments and memories:

P8: "I'm very loyal to Pandora, I'm currently wearing 3 things from their brand I've lost count of how much money I've spent on them. I started using because of the brand's symbolism. What I like the most are the bracelets and the charms, and every charm has a symbolism, for everything, and you are able to have symbols for every date or occasion... I think it's too expensive, but I like the meaning you get from buying the charm. I think it's a brand that allows you to create moments, and memories. I have a charm... I remember the memory

connected to it. I have an angel for my deceased grandmother. It brings me memories, and the charms are beautiful, I don't buy them just to buy, but I like the image of the brand. I identify with the charms. I would only stop buying if my financial situation changed. I buy some for myself and my husband gives me some. It's memories you can easily carry with you."

In regards to Spotify, P11 talked about her view on how important the Spotify music sharing features are in connecting people, and how it created a positive association with the platform and the brand for her:

P11: "I like to share good things with people, because I know I have a good music taste, and people are always paying attention and complementing me when I share songs I'm listening, it's like some people are always waiting to see my reports... I found out today you can make listening sessions, like we are listening to music, and it's so cool. I think it's just such a good platform in terms of human connection, because music has that magic, and Spotify kind of creates it through their platform. During quarantine I felt hugged, because when I was bored during it, I used Spotify to share playlists with people. I think it has this special thing that creates a connection between people, it's a community."

P6 had a similar opinion about the brand creating union, but directed to the Spotify Wrapped campaign specifically:

P6: “I think it’s very cool when people share their things, I think it unites people that listen to similar music but different artists, and it ends up showing you different songs and styles.”

From the feedback of the participants, the campaign seemed to have been largely popularized and positively received by all of the users:

P4: “I usually do it when it’s new year’s, I’ve seen it for a couple of years, we would open it, friends would say “Hey, let me see what happened in yours.”. I’m amazed at times... people always put it on social networks too.”

P5’s testimony shows that this type of content still can be useful to brands outside of the digital context, and also appeal to less frequent social media users:

P5: “I did see it online, some friends shared, and I was sharing my Deezer report too, but I don’t really use much of any social media, so I haven’t seen a lot of things particularly on social media. But me and my friends showed each other our reports in person.”

P6 and P7 addressed how the campaigns existence influenced their perception of Spotify as a brand:

P6: "It influenced it because it showed they care about their community..., they did it for the community, for users to use, share, comment, like "Do you listen to Mac too?", and the other person is like "Yeah, I do, do you?", so yeah, it's something that kind of improved my opinion about them."

P7: "I think it gave me a positive opinion of Spotify, because it means they care about their clients, because they do it for everyone, it makes me feel like the brand cares about me and my opinion."

Participants like P4 were very positively affected by Spotify's overall communication and content campaigns, he expressed how and why that improved his consideration for the brand:

P4: "Those ads, man. Have you ever been with your friends, and they start to talk like Spotify in ads? I can't remember any of them now to tell you, but it was something like "Aren't you listening to premium?"... Because it's kind of their brand image, I think it's because they put it everything together, they took it kind of in a playful tone. I'm really into humor. I also like the thing they do at the end of the year, it's very different, they do your playlist, what you heard, I love it! I think it's what differentiates Spotify from the rest, I never used the others but I think they don't have... If they started to make it very expensive, or take music or stop doing things with their branded images, in fact I would not stop using, but it wouldn't be the same thing."

P9 reflected on his evaluation of Spotify and his own choices changing because of the campaign:

P9: “My opinion didn’t really change, it just a campaign that showed me how popular Spotify is. I don’t particularly care, but I might use it as a way to evaluate if I’m using the right app, I suppose you can say that through the popularity of this campaign I can determine how good of a brand Spotify is.”

P2, P3 and P4 and other participants felt a positive influence in their opinion because of the campaign existing:

P2: “It definitely influenced my opinion, and it raised the value I gave to the app... Overall, I started to consider Spotify cooler.”

P3: “I think in my mind it made the brand more interesting, younger, edgy as I said before, I also think it has a good design.... I think it improved my relationship with the brand, because when for example, I’ve never seen one live, but when I see Spotify physical ads for example on the internet, similar to Wrapped I find it interesting which in my mind, raised the brand a bit, but not necessarily the relationship I have with the brand, I don’t follow it on Instagram or anything like that.”

P4: I think that's what makes the difference in relation to other brands, it makes Spotify unique or something like that. It made me see Spotify as more than a music platform, but a brand that is ahead, plus you get to share with friends. I'm trying to remember a word to describe, but it made me see it as more than a platform."

P11 admitted the campaign changed her platform usage habits:

P11: "I never thought of it in the context of the brand. I think it influences me, because I consume music thinking about what my report is going to look like in the end of the year, I want it to look like me, so I'm careful in listening more to the music I actually like."

3.2.OBJECTIVE 2: TO UNDERSTAND MANIFESTATIONS OF FOMO, AND FRIEND'S INFLUENCE AND COMPREHEND THE ROLE PLAYED BY CONTENT SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The majority of participants put friend recommendations on top of ads, in terms of giving them a positive image of a product or service and getting them interested to later search about it, they felt more attracted and curious about something when the content came from a friend. P1 justifies this difference with that comes from a perceived notion that friends usually share common likes:

“When it’s a friend, I think we probably have a lot of common likes just because we are friends, so it’s more likely for me to get interested in the product, and it’s likely that I’m going to search about it.”

Other interviewees, who perceived themselves as less susceptible to make purchase decisions based on content they were presented with (regardless of the source being friends, influencers or brands), still placed more influence power on their friends than ads. As P3 and P8 respectively put it:

P3: “I don’t think I’m very susceptible, if a friend posts, maybe I’ll be more interested in the brand or the product itself”

P8: “It’s a reference point to get me interested maybe. About ads I don’t care at all, at least when people post they are more credible”

In terms of conversion to purchase there were different views, most participants said they were influenced to find interest on a displayed product then to actually realizing a purchase, while other participants were sure to be influenced to buy and others were very reluctant. As P7 said:

P7: “When I see an influencer or a friend recommending something I trust more, and I feel like I also need it because if they have it must be amazing... I saw everyone had satin bonnets. and I went to the store and got one because I

didn't want to be the only person that without one, even though it's not my thing, I bought only because I felt influenced."

Participants felt that friends' posts of a product allowed them to get to know more about the subject and consequentially make better informed purchase decisions, or at least get the impression of doing so. As P5, P10, P11, and P12 present it:

P5: "If it's a friend or someone that I know, I can ask that friend about it, it might influence me a bit more"

P10: "As a friend is better, because he already has experience, so he is more reliable than a brand ad that is made for everyone to see, and it just happened that I did"

P11: "I prefer to do it like that, that way I'm sure that what I'm going to acquire is good."

P12: "When it's a person posting about something they bought if I'm interested, I might ask what was his or her buying process and the product itself, that's also valid when I'm just buying from the same website, I'm more inclined to buy."

A lot of credibility was given to other individuals when these were close to them or from the same circle as them. Like P11 said:

P11: “I rely more on people’s credibility, I would easily acquire a product if someone already has it, or if I’m going to buy stuff on an online store and if someone from my circle has already done it”

Participants P6, P8, P14, seemed to prefer influencers, content creators and online experts to friends’ recommendations and ads. Participants’ responses hint that this is founded in their perception idea of the influencers and content creators’ expertise and credibility. P6 recalls:

P6: “Friends, ..., I wouldn’t say make me more susceptible, unless I know they have some expertise in that, but influencers..., like for example I bought a headset, I searched for a tec guy that made a review about it, and because of his recommendation I made the decision to buy it”

P8 had a more specific source of influence and hinted that the way the content concerning a product is presented affects interest and the decision of making a purchase. As P8 expressed:

P8: “I’m very easily influenced by TikTok, especially for house stuff. I don’t know if it’s the music, or because it’s something moving, but TikTok definitely has a different way of showing things, it’s the way the content is created and

presented, I think it allows me to create expectations about how to use a product”

P14 was less focused into expertise like other participants and more focused on credibility. The participant identified as very influenceable to buy, yet this credibility given to friends or influencers disappeared when they acknowledge this content received some kind of financial endorsement. As P14 puts it:

P14: “It doesn’t take a lot for me to buy, especially if I see someone talking about it, but friends influence me more, I don’t trust brand reviews I prefer trusting people reviews, if it’s a credible influencer I don’t even think twice. But if I see it’s just an influencer doing an ad for a brand for money, I don’t trust it.”

In the context of Spotify Wrapped campaign, a participant identified feeling anxiety regarding his friends’ posts of it:

P9: “I usually get anxious to see mine after I see my friends sharing theirs, because usually I only know the statistics are published because I see people sharing.”

Participants had mixed feelings, some denied ever feeling anxiety, others said it depend on a pre-interest on a displayed product, and others affirmed

feeling anxious to own or try the thing. P3 , P7 and P14 identified themselves as victims of this anxiety, while P2 was positively affected:

P3: "If it's something I want or look for, yes, then I feel more anxious to buy it."

P7: "Maybe sometimes I feel anxious to buy a product and excluded because everyone has it and I don't. But it's very rare."

P14: "For example, with cosmetics, a lot of people have them, and I don't, so it can generate some anxiety... It's anxiety in the sense of wanting to try the thing."

P2: "What can happen, is for me to get inspired by that person."

P11 who is an artist presented a different point of view, the one of a content creator, she also felt anxious when coming in contact with content yet for a different reason, the participant's anxiety was cause by her incapability of producing similar content to other artists because of her lack of resources, she expressed:

P11: "Because I'm an artist, sometimes I want to deliver a certain type of content, and I question myself how people do such captivating content, and what tools they use for it, and then I get anxious about not knowing how to

start and what to get to achieve my goals. But it makes me anxious and demotivated that other people are creating content I'm not able to."

In the Spotify portion of the interview many participants mentioned they started using and are still using the brand, because they observed it was their friends' music platform of choice. Some examples are P3, P4 and P9:

P3: "Most people I know use Spotify and no other music streaming service so I would never think of using another."

P4: "I think I started to use it because it's the best known, then I got used to it, also it was the first one I tried, and from there I kept using it."

P9: "The reason I use it instead of others is because when music streaming services were introduced, all my friends recommended Spotify to me, it was the first I tried."

P7 actually felt social pressure to get the app due to it's popularity, she expressed:

P7: "I started because the majority of people I know used Spotify, it was recommended to me, people talked good things about it, so that made me choose Spotify... Another point is that people always sent me music from

Spotify and I sent songs from YouTube, that made me feel excluded, I didn't want people to think I couldn't afford Spotify. It was a little bit of social pressure, no one pressured me, but I felt pressured to get Spotify to feel integrated in the group."

Exclusion was recurrent topic amongst participants recalled feeling excluded or dislocated in situations where people surrounding them, independently of their proximity owned something they didn't. Like P1, P4, and P6 expressed:

P1: "If the majority of my friends had a PlayStation game, I would also want to get it so I wouldn't be excluded from the group, there are some things I buy like that. This year I bought FIFA just so that I could play PRO Clubs with my friends that had it, but I don't think I would've otherwise."

P4: "You kind of feel like you're a fish out of water, I remember when I started my university degree, everyone talked about iPhones, and I didn't have one, so I felt dislocated sometimes. I don't think that it was actually pressured to buy one, but I did feel dislocated when they talked about the features."

P6: "I can feel a little left out because they all have it and they didn't talk to me ... I would feel some peer pressure and want to buy it too"

Two participants, P3 and P9 recognized the feeling not as exclusion but as FOMO:

P3: “Maybe I would feel a little bit excluded or feel a little bit of FOMO, fear of missing out, because everyone is using something and I’m not.”

P9: “I would just want to have it too, not specifically anxiety, maybe fear of missing out.”

In sum, the majority of participants felt some type of negative emotions when presented with a high volume of content of a product they didn’t own, especially if it was something inside their interest range.

P11: “I usually go with the flow, first I would try to get to know the thing, but from the moment everyone is doing it, it depends, because I’m kind of a sheep in some aspects, I’ll try to understand what benefit it’s going to give me, and I think that if everyone is using it, it’s a high probability I’ll use it too. Only way for me not to get interested, is if it’s a lot outside of my personality, and it has nothing to do with me.”

Analyzing the feedback from participants regarding Spotify Wrapped campaign, every Spotify user claimed to like seeing the report, some even highlighted the aspect of being able to see their friends share theirs too. They felt happy, anxious, and became more engaged with their friends’ activity on social media because of it:

P10: “I always see mine, I get very excited in the end of the year just to see my statistics of music I listened to, hours, more listened artists, even though I already know some... I like it, I like to see it, and to judge others based on that, so I’m very tuned on social media to see who posted.”

P11 felt very excited about sharing the campaign:

P11: “I choose to share, because it’s interesting, and if someone sees my stories, and really pay attention to my Wrapped, we can have interactions, that way I get new music, because people with similar taste are able to show me more good music, also to show off my great music taste... I get really proud of some people too.”

P7 also felt uncomfortable sharing her Spotify Wrapped report when she didn’t think it adequate to her social media circle’s aesthetical patterns:

P7: “When I see people sharing, I go look at mine too, and if I think what I got in my artists and minutes is aesthetically good, I’ll probably share, if not, I don’t.”

Participant P10 talked about observing a sort of jealousy from Spotify non-users when he shared his report.

P10: “From what I’ve seen, a lot of apple music users get jealous because we have Spotify Wrapped and they don’t. And Spotify wrapped is well made and it catches you attention, because of the information, the visual too, it’s well made and it’s beautiful.”

On the opposite side, non-users such as P1 and P14 and reported feeling negative emotions when seeing users sharing their reports. P14 even mentioned her wish to use the brand more to be able to participate:

P1: “When I saw everyone sharing, I was kind of sad, not only because I didn’t have anything to post, but because I wanted to see my most listened music.”

P14: “I get jealous, last time I saw I thought to myself “I have to go back to Spotify to have one”, but then I never went back. I like Spotify a lot but I love apple music, because it’s already on my iPhone, so it’s more practical.”

3.3.OBJECTIVE 3: TO UNVEIL A CONNECTION BETWEEN FOMO AND BRAND LOVE, AND THE CONNECTING ROLE OF CONTENT SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

This section repeats some of the previous statements and ideas found in the two previous sections, in order to contextualize the development of the answers to this objective. In this section the participants' statements come first, and after them comes the theory developed.

P1: "When it's a friend, I think we probably have a lot of common likes just because we are friends, so it's more likely for me to get interested in the product, and it's likely that I'm going to search about it."

P6: "I bought an headset, I searched for a tec guy that made a review about it, and because of his recommendation I made the decision to buy it."

P7: "When I see an influencer or a friend recommending something I trust more, and I feel like I also need it because if they have it must be amazing."

P14: "It doesn't take a lot for me to buy, especially if I see someone talking about it, but friends influence me more, I prefer trusting people reviews, if it's a credible influencer I don't even think twice."

If when a friend (englobes influencers, acquaintances, and everyone from the social circle) posts content about a brand or product, the viewer feels like there is a high probability for them to try and end up liking the brand too, because of the belief of friends having similar taste and being trustworthy, when a brand lover advocates for their brand through sharing content, talking

highly about it or declaring love for it, there is also indication to believe the content viewer will assume he would probably love the brand or product too, or to think they need it even more, since this would make them feel like they are missing out on something. So by incentivizing brand lovers to create and share content about the brand, brands have better chances to attract consumers from that brand lovers' circle who are more susceptible to feeling FOMO. This not only brings new consumers, but also brings benefits back to the relationship between the brand and the brand lover because it's known and has been indicated in the previous findings' sections that consumers love brands more when they are able to express themselves through them, and when they are able to improve social connections through them.

Many participants commented having a more positive perception of Spotify because of the possibility of creating these connections.

P8: "I'm very easily influenced by TikTok, especially for house stuff. I don't know if it's the music, or because it's something moving, but TikTok definitely has a different way of showing things, it's the way the content is created and presented, I think it allows me to create expectations about how to use a product."

The more in love with a brand a consumer is, the higher the probability for him to share content about it, and the way content is presented influences both

brand love and FOMO as previously demonstrated, content about product usage demonstrations might create higher FOMO because they allow the consumer to create expectations, which can cause them to be more trusting but also more excited and anxious to own the product too.

P1: “If the majority of my friends had a PlayStation game, I would also want to get it so I wouldn’t be excluded from the group, there are somethings I buy like that. This year I bought FIFA just so that I could play PRO Clubs with my friends that had it, but I don’t think I would’ve otherwise.”

P6: “You kind of feel like you’re a fish out of water, I remember when I started my university degree, everyone talked about iPhones, and I didn’t have one, so I felt dislocated sometimes. I don’t think that it was actual pressured to buy one, but I did feel dislocated when they talked about the features.”

P7: “I saw everyone had satin bonnets. and I went to the store and got one because I didn’t want to be the only person that without one, even though it’s not my thing, I bought only because I felt influenced. But people have to be talking really well about thing or event they are posting.”

P11: “I usually go with the flow, first I would try to get to know the thing, but from the moment everyone is doing it, it depends, because I’m kind of a sheep in some aspects, I’ll try to understand what benefit it’s going to give me, and I think that if everyone is using it, it’s a high probability I’ll use it too. Only way

for me not to get interested, is if it's a lot outside of my personality, and it has nothing to do with me.”

P14: “A little jealous, if it's something that makes sense to me, like an event, like a concert, I might be sad because I can't go, but if it's something that everyone has it depends a lot on the thing.”

Sometimes to feel included participants acquire products they don't need, or they wouldn't acquire otherwise, they feel a need for it because their circle have it, and because participants admire brands more when it helps them connect to others, thus feeling more included in circles where they felt dislocated, if this feeling disappears because they acquired the thing and are now part of the circle, they would have one more reason to fall in love with the brand.

P11: “It makes me anxious and demotivated that other people are creating content I'm not able to.”

If a consumer feels FOMO because he's falling short to achieve and objective and a brand solves that problem, there is a high probability for him to develop brand love because his needs are being met.

P1: I saw it online, I think it's cool, captivating, interesting, and I would like apple music to have that feature.

FOMO can make consumer re-evaluate their love for their favourite brand.

Spotify wrapped is an example of a campaign created by a brand centred around content sharing.

P4: "I usually do it when it's new year's, I've seen it for a couple of years, we would open it, friends would say "Hey, let me see what happened in yours.". I'm amazed at times, like the percentage of obscure songs I've had. People always put it on social networks too...I think that's what makes the difference in relation to other brands, it makes Spotify unique or something like that. It made me see Spotify as more than a music platform, but a brand that is ahead, plus you get to share with friends. I'm trying to remember a word to describe, but it made me see it as more than a platform, you're not there anymore just to listen to music, you can use it to find out what people like and what they listen to."

P6: "It influenced it because it showed they care about their community, because as a company this data is not very useful, maybe to sell it to labels, maybe they use it to make recommendations, but in terms of profits, it doesn't generate none, but they did it for the community, for users to use, share, comment, like "Do you listen to Mac too?", and the other person is like "Yeah, I

do, do you?”, so yeah, it’s something that kind of improved my opinion about them.”

P9: “My opinion didn’t really change, it just a campaign that showed me how popular Spotify is. I don’t particularly care, but I might use it as a way to evaluate if I’m using the right app, I suppose you can say that through the popularity of this campaign I can determine how good of a brand Spotify is.”

Because the campaign is periodical and popular, and also bond people in a circle, there is a hypothesis it can become part of the groups’ traditions and memories, becoming part of their story, augmenting their brand love for it. Which can also cause FOMO in the non-users of the group, incentivising them to later use the app.

P14: “I get jealous, last time I saw I thought to myself “I have to go back to Spotify to have one”, but then I never went back. I like Spotify a lot but I love apple music, because it’s already on my iPhone, so it’s more practical.”

This raises the possibility that when a participant has a low engagement level with a brand, the feeling of not being excluded in the group activity with other brand user influences. It also indicates that when a brand lover feels FOMO but is certain about their brand of choice, even though they might re-

evaluate their choices, the brand love keeps them committed to their first choice.

P10: “To stop using? I would have to find an app a lot better than Spotify, I don’t see myself leaving Spotify, at all, I can’t imagine it, I’m very attached to my things, and since I’m already there, I can’t see it. The only way if Spotify gets deleted.”

P11: “I think it’s just such a good platform in terms of human connection, because music has that magic, and Spotify kind of creates it through their platform. During quarantine I felt hugged, because when I was bored during it, I used Spotify to share playlists with people. I think it has this special thing that creates a connection between people, it’s a community.”

Another participant showing that she had greater admiration for the brand because it connected her to others, when she was experiencing loneliness and belonging nowhere. In this case Spotify gave her a community, where she could share content about her activity in the platform, more specifically her playlists.

3.4. EMERGENT TOPIC: ADS IRRELEVANCY, NEGATIVE ASSOCIATION, AND OVERALL LOW CONVERSION

Participants indicated an overall lack of interest in watching ads, the appointed motives for the lack of engagement where the high volume of ads pushed online, irrelevancy of the product displayed, and the generalization of ads.

Addressing the high volume of ads encountered online P1 stated:

P1: “When I see a brand on social media, I’m not very influenced to buy the brand, maybe because of the fact that I see many brand ads, so I hardly focus on any. When I see ads, I just skip them all.”

More focused on ads generality P10 said:

P10: “A friend is better, because he already has experience, so he is more reliable than a brand ad that is made for everyone to see, and it just happened that I did.”

There was a lot adversity and non-desirable behaviors towards online ads, detected on participants. Some participants voiced a sort of disdain for ads, many of them lacked trust on them and viewed them as frauds and tools created in order to pushing them into consuming more. This is expressed by participants such as P5, P7, P8 and P13:

P5: “Advertising is very aggressive on the internet”

P7: "About the ad I don't have a feedback so it's harder to for me to trust"

P8: "Ads are made to incite consumerism... I saw it on TikTok, and I saw them testing the real product, while tv or ads make everything seem fake."

P13: "I usually don't trust the diversity and inclusivity brands portray, because it's very selective, and I know their intention is to sell, so I run away from this type of publicity."

P13 stated a willingness to do extra efforts to avoid encountering ads:

P3: "I never pay attention to anything that is an ad, and I actually always subscribe to premium, so I don't have to see ads"

Many participants mentioned not recalling an occurrence where they performed a purchase because of an ad which indicated a low conversion to purchase power in ads presented on social media. Like P3, P9 and P12 state:

P3: "From what I remember an ad has almost never converted me into buying something from a brand."

P9: "It hardly makes me want to buy something just because I saw a post or ad"

P12: “I’m not susceptible to buy through ads at all, rarely, I think I don’t remember a single time that happened”

There were exceptions were participants admitted to actually feeling some type of influence to buy because they came in contact with an ad, caused by a previous interest, a necessity or just curiosity about a product they became aware of through that ad. Like P6:

P6: “For me to buy because of an ad it’s very hard, but for me to discover a product because of an ad yeah”

Another participant addressed more indirect brand ads, namely the ones conducted by influencers, the acknowledgement of the content being endorsed by brands, added a negative light to the participant’s perception of it. P14 said:

P14: “I don’t trust brand reviews I prefer trusting people reviews, if it’s a credible influencer I don’t even think twice. But if I see it’s just an influencer doing an ad for a brand for money, I don’t trust it.”

Some participants briefly mentioned their dislike for ads during the portion of the interview concerning Spotify. The participants affirmed feeling annoyed by the ads present in the platform and choosing to pay more or even ceasing use to avoid them. This was stated by P3, P4 and P11 respectively:

P3: "I have the Spotify premium, and find it annoying if it is not premium because it has many ads."

P4: "I use the premium version, because of the ads and not being able to choose is annoying."

P11: "When I didn't have premium, I didn't like Spotify at all because of the ads, it was very unpleasant. If they brought the ads to premium I would stop using it."

3.5. EMERGENT TOPIC: JOMO – JOY OF MISSING OUT

While the majority of participants were very engaged in following the behaviors of their peers and acquaintances, others felt discouraged to acquire popular products or follow said behavior, and opted for brands with more exclusive items. This is expressed by P1, P2 and P12:

P1: "I also don't like to use products that I can see on someone else when I turn the corner, and they might not be an exclusive brand, but they have a lot of exclusive models which are my preference."

P5: "They used to do limited edition things, and they are really cool."

P12: "I'm not very influenceable (to buy because of content). And I don't like having things everybody has, I like exclusive things."

P3 and P9 refrained from sharing their Spotify Wrapped report as said by them:

P3: "This year I was proud of my Spotify Wrapped, last year I wasn't, but I feel that in the early years it was a new thing and it was cool, and now every year at the end of the year you go to Instagram and everyone is sharing Spotify Wrapped, so I don't want to be just another person sharing that."

P9: "I don't share it because everyone does, so I don't see a lot of value in sharing it too."

Jomo was also associated to the subject of loving a brand since participant P1 showed how the exclusivity of the brand NIKE models' attracted him:

P1: "I also don't like to use products that I can see on someone else when I turn the corner, and they might not be an exclusive brand, but they have a lot of exclusive models which are my preference."

4. DISCUSSIONS

After disclosing the findings originated from the interviews, this chapter presents a discussion of the obtained results and relates them to the literature review, in order to answer the previously established research objective which is exploring the manifestations of brand love and FOMO in the digital context, and discovering if they are connected through content shared on social media.

BRAND LOVE

All the elements previously indicated in the literature as components of brand love were present in participants' discourses, and as in the model chosen to conceptualize brand love in this research, which is the work of Batra et al. (2012), these were passion driven behaviors, self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, long term relationship, anticipated separation distress, overall attitude strength and confidence. Starting with passion driven behaviors, participants were very passionate about their brands of choice, some claimed to have felt love at first sight, and were willing to invest extra resources in this relationship, this included spending higher amounts of money in other products from the same brand or waiting longer to acquire a product they knew they could find elsewhere, these findings agree with previous studies by Batra et al. (2012), which referred to participants predisposition to invest high levels of resources, and put effort in using a loved brand.

The self-brand integration element was very present, since participants mentioned feeling as one with brands, even going to the extent of considering an attack to the brand as being against them too, some of them also mentioned that their favorite brands being partnered with celebrities they admired and idolized, was part of their main reasons for feeling a higher degree of identification, along with matching their personal aesthetics, and allowing them to showcase their personality. This is coherent with the literature which says that when a consumer sees in a brand the possibility to express themselves or to express their desired self, there might be a merge between their identity and the brand's identity, and a strengthening of the love feeling (Batra et al., 2012).

Just like Batra et al. (2012) said about the existence of positive emotional connection and confidence (attitude strength 2) elements, between brand and consumer, consumers felt an emotional connection so strong they felt they matched with their favored brand, it was the perfect and only fit for them, they could marry the brand, and it went to the extent of this great affection succeeding in empowering participants to fight negative feelings, as well as eliminating feelings of loneliness with the brand. The authors had previously determined this type of connection was founded in strong emotional bonds, feelings of comfort, and natural fit. Yet it's important to note that the majority of the feelings described by the brand lovers in this interview were sometimes actually directed to the experience of using the product instead of the brand

itself, some participants even admitted not associating the product with the brand.

Participants admitted intending to keep a long-term relationship with the brand. In Batra et al. (2012)'s model the consumer should be committed to the brand and envision a durable relationship with it, maybe even develop friend-like bond. There is also shared story with the brand, and it is integrated into the consumer's personal identity narrative. Participants mentioned all these relationship aspects when talking about their favorite brand, especially the integration of it in their personal identity narrative, and the creation of memories/quality time.

When talking about their loved brand, but especially the brands that were part of their routine, the majority of participants experienced high levels of separation anxiety, this seemed to be proportional to their love for the brand, the more they loved it the harder it was for them to be open to try something else, or to stop using, and some participants even recalled feeling anxious in instances when they were separated from the brand, some participants felt incapable of living without the brand, and anticipated and worried about feeling sad, in the future occasion of having to stop using the brand. Another way this manifested was towards adversity to try different brands, and disdain for brand competitors overall. This again is aligned with previous studies that claimed consumers fear and have negative emotions towards any type of

separation from a loved brand, considering the brand as irreplaceable (Batra et al., 2012, Albert & Merunka, 2013).

Participants were very satisfied with their loved brand, and perceived their products as having high quality, like said in the literature, the brand's products are satisfying to the consumer, the perceived quality is ideal, and the consumer's expectations are met (Batra et al., 2012).

Opposing to the literature that says that brand love is higher for brands with products in the more hedonic categories (Caroll & Ahuvia, 2006), the findings showcased brand love as more intense for products in utilitarian categories, since most brands indicated as favorite were considered so because they had a sort of usefulness to the consumer, this was true for Spotify, which was seen from the consumers' point of view more as an utilitarian service and part of their routine, than just entertainment, it was also true for Apple, were participants highlighted the practicality and eco-system of Apple products as a reason for loving the brand, this sums up that even though this brands are typically seen as hedonic, these consumers' seemed to love them based on an instrumental and functional evaluation. The product being an habit also created a sort of separation distress since participants found it difficult to stop using brands after becoming familiar with using their products.

In the context of content sharing's connection to brand love participants talked about how important it was for them for Spotify to be building a community for them overall, and especially through the Spotify Wrapped campaign. Because of its aesthetical qualities and community building ability, the campaign was positively received amongst the users. The content had reach in social media and outside of social media, since participants could show their reports to their friends physically, some even preferred. Overall the Spotify Wrapped campaign created a strong positive association to the brand, and made participants happy to be a part of the brand's community.

FOMO

Regarding FOMO most participants were more attracted to friends' recommendations than ads in terms of giving them a positive image of a product or service, being credible and getting them interest in it, like previously stated (Hodkinson, 2016). Many participants said they made their choice of music streaming platform based on what their friends were using and talking about. A participant had self-inflicted pressure to acquire some items because she felt is what her circle was doing too, and she felt fear of being judged, while feeling excluded. Other participants in the same situation had similar attitudes, were even though they weren't pressured they felt out of place and feared being excluded from their friend groups, a participant even called it sheep behavior. These factors indicate a strong desire to belong to a community and a fear of being excluded if they are not consuming the same products as their

friends (Lai et al., 2016, Gupta & Shrivastava), and is coherent with previous studies that claimed consumers with FOMO are susceptible to making purchase decisions recommended by their group of friends (Gupta & Shrivastava, 2021). They hardly made purchase decisions, just based on that content, but when they did they felt secure they were making an informed decision. It was also found that the way content is portrayed made FOMO feelings variate. When it came to Spotify wrapped the participants felt anxious to see their reports, and the ones who weren't users of the brand felt negative emotions such as being upset, feeling sad, feeling jealous, and feeling excluded from the circle, these unease from the non-users is expected since feeling deprived from an experience usually causes negative emotions on individuals (Sargin, 2022). Other participant pointed out that the way content was presented aggravated the feeling of missing out, not only because of the overall way people were talking about it like previously stated (Hodkinson 2016), but also the aesthetics of it all.

BRAND LOVE, FOMO AND CONTENT SHARING

Since this section's findings were theories developed from the information acquired in the other sections, it's difficult to compare to the literature, because this is a new connection being introduced.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes this research, presenting the answer to the research objective of exploring the manifestations of Brand love and FOMO in the digital context, and discovering if they are connected through content shared on social media.

Concerning brand love, this study concluded that all the brand elements of the previous model presented by Batra et al., 2012 are still relevant and appropriate to describe the concept of brand love in general and for digital brands, in relation to content shared on social media. Yet the findings also resulted in the proposition of two new elements which are convenience and social value, better explained in the theoretical contributions section of this chapter. This study reinforces previous studies about FOMO and its effects, placing it inside the context of content sharing on social media, and states that participants are very fearful of not being included in communities, and are specially affected when there are many people from a community using something they don't have, and collectively sharing content about it. Individuals are significantly more susceptible to make purchases based on their friends' recommendations than on ads, being even repelled by the second. This research concluded there is a connection between FOMO and brand Love, and proposes theories as to the roles of content shared on social media in this connection, thus answering the main objective of this thesis. The first

established connection is that the disposition a brand lover has to spread positive word of mouth and positive content about a brand, incentivizes him to make posts on social media that can influence FOMO consumers to make purchase decisions. The more a consumer loves a brand, the more positive is the content he shares and more attraction power that content possesses. When brands create content for users to share, and features to connect brand users like Spotify does, there is a improvement of the brand love relationship, because it creates a community, while there is attraction of consumers who are affected by FOMO that will want to belong to the circle or feel included in that group activity. Consumers who previously felt excluded and FOMO, can fall harder for brands after they join the brand users circle, because it not only eases their anxiety as it satisfies their need for connection. FOMO can make a consumer re-evaluate his use of his current brand of choice, but if the consumer loves the brand, the loyalty feeling makes him less influenceable by FOMO appeals.

5.1.THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study strengthened previous arguments that brands, are able to establish stronger brand love relationships with consumers when they are integrable in their daily routines' because consumers gave a lot of value to easiness, practicality, convenience, habituation and company their favourite brand had to offer. It also provided two new inputs: convenience and social

value; into the existent brand love model by Batra et al. (2012). This study suggests the addition of a seventh, and of an eighth component to the model of brand love used in this research, that could respectively be called convenience and social value, in order to make it more accurate, especially in the evaluation of brands in the digital, and content sharing context. The convenience element regards the way the brand is integrated into the consumers' day-to-day life, what importance it plays in his routines, how much it facilitates his life, how frequent he has contact with it throughout the day. And the social value element can be perceived as similar to self-brand integration, but it's a variance of it focused less on how the participant and the brand are merged in one identity, but more in how valuable the brand is in terms of enabling the consumer to better connect to other individuals, integrate a social group, or portray a social identity. Another contribution is the main finding of this research which is the confirmation that there is an existing connection between brand love and FOMO and this connection is directly created through content sharing.

5.2.PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study provides a close view on how participants emotions can be influenced by content shared on social media, allowing brands to understand what are the positive impacts they can make in enhancing brand love , and creating awareness about the negative effects of FOMO. The main contribution

is to give brands a notion of how they might take advantage of content marketing, which can be by creating sharable content that raises brand awareness, or by incentivizing consumers to share their experience with the brand on social media. If they understand how their target audience behaves and perceive content, they are able to cultivate brand love and explore consumer attraction through FOMO, not by manipulating consumers into feeling negatively, but from the community building angle.

5.3.LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Because the researcher used Spotify as the context to conduct the interviews, there might be factors like the type of service offered by the brand, and the personalized nature of the Spotify wrapped campaign, that reduces the applicability of these conclusions to other brands operating in different contexts, so it's advisable to conduct a study with a larger scope of product categories with more brand examples, to consolidate the theories presented by this research. During the analysis some information surfaced regarding JOMO and consumers' adversity to ads on social media, it could be interesting in the future to join these findings to the existent literature pertaining to these concepts.

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