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Designing to Attract in an Emerging Market: Applying Behavioural Reasoning Theory to South African Consumer Reactions to an Ultra-High Temperature Milk Product Line Extension

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ABSTRACT

In the ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk category, parent brands introduce line extensions as innovative product designs to address the competitiveness in the market. However, not knowing if consumers will purchase the product results in uncertainty for the product design and marketing team. Using the behavioural reasoning theory, the purpose of this study was to explore South African consumers' reasons for purchasing a UHT line extension that was designed to include the word 'enriched' and other extrinsic line extension attributes comprising product packaging design, country of origin and price. An exploratory-descriptive qualitative study was conducted using six focus groups involving milk consumers from a South African university. Three behavioural approaches (i.e. curiously cautious, unconditional and habitual) emerged, with differentiating characteristics of the behaviour towards the UHT line extension. Each extrinsic product attribute was characterised by specific behavioural acts that positively or negatively influenced the reasons for purchasing the UHT line extension. The behavioural reasoning theory was useful in explaining the linkage between the reasons for or against purchasing a UHT line extension product and the intended behaviour, which contributes to a better understanding of consumers' approaches to a UHT line extension. Findings can assist food designers and marketers in designing a UHT line extension that resonates with consumers.

JEL classification: I12, M30, M31, N37

Keywords: UHT milk, line extension, product design, behavioural reasoning theory, extrinsic attributes, purchasing intention

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purchasing of ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk by South African consumers in an emerging market context has continued to increase, surpassing fresh milk sales and demand in 2020 (Le Roux et al., 2020) and demonstrating a 22% increase during March 2020 that was credited to consumer stockpiling in response to COVID-19 (South African Dairy, 2020). Due to the weak cold-storage and cold-chain infrastructure in South Africa, consumer preference for UHT milk is attributed to a longer storage period, the momentum of urbanisation in the country and the use of UHT milk in school feeding programmes across South Africa (Persistence Market Research, 2015). As a result, food companies are challenged to stay competitive and to sustain market share, the achievement of which lies in innovative food product design.

A line extension signifies the introduction of an innovative product from the same product category under a familiar parent brand (Shah, 2018). The purpose of a line extension is to reach a new and diverse consumer base by enticing consumers with new product options, thereby reinvigorating a product line with the intention of increasing profits and adding value to the existing brand. A line extension can include minor product changes in function, packaging and size (Yoshioka-Kobayashi et al., 2020) or the introduction of a healthier product (Hanson & Yun, 2018). Through the introduction of a line extension product, consumers can compare the existing product with the new line extension to make more informed decisions about whether to purchase the line extension or to continue to purchase the existing and familiar product. A line extension may furthermore attract attention from new consumers who may not be familiar with the existing product, thus expanding the consumer base of product users of a specific product category. It is well established that extrinsic product attributes, in general, contribute to consumers liking or disliking a product. During the design and development of a line extension, various extrinsic product attributes can be introduced to differentiate the new product from existing products in the category. For this study, the word ‘enriched’, the country of origin (COO), the price and the product packaging design were considered in relation to a UHT milk line extension. Without a clear understanding of how consumers would behave towards a newly designed line extension, its introduction could result in an uninteresting product that fails to resonate with consumers, potentially leading to product launch failure and a decrease in market share for that product category. It was therefore necessary to determine how consumers would approach a new UHT line extension to understand their opinion of the new product better based on them explaining their approach to the product, and to establish the role of extrinsic product attributes in influencing the purchase of a new line extension.

To understand South African consumer reaction and behaviour better within the specific context of a UHT milk line extension, the behavioural reasoning theory (BRT) was used as the theoretical approach to this study. According to Claudy and Peterson (2015), as a framework, BRT has been proven valuable to explain behaviour choices. As a result, BRT has been used in different contexts (Sahu et al., 2020) with limited food-related studies applying BRT. During the systematic literature review on BRT by Sahu et al. (2020), 23 studies were identified that had used BRT, of which the review only identified Ryan and Casidy’s (2018) study on organic food purchases. Tandon et al. (2020) have lately added to this body of literature on BRT and organic food research. Kumar et al. (2021) has recently added the application of BRT on local food-related research. These studies have not been conducted in an emerging market context such as South Africa. Furthermore, most BRT research to date has applied a *quantitative* methodology (Sahu et al., 2020), resulting in numerous studies offering similar findings and confirmation of hypothesis testing of the components of the BRT within different contexts. This is not the case in *qualitative* studies employing approaches like interviews or focus group data gathering where the underpinnings of the BRT are used to understand *behaviour* within a particular context. Subsequently, an inductive approach to the use of BRT is used to explain the behaviour within

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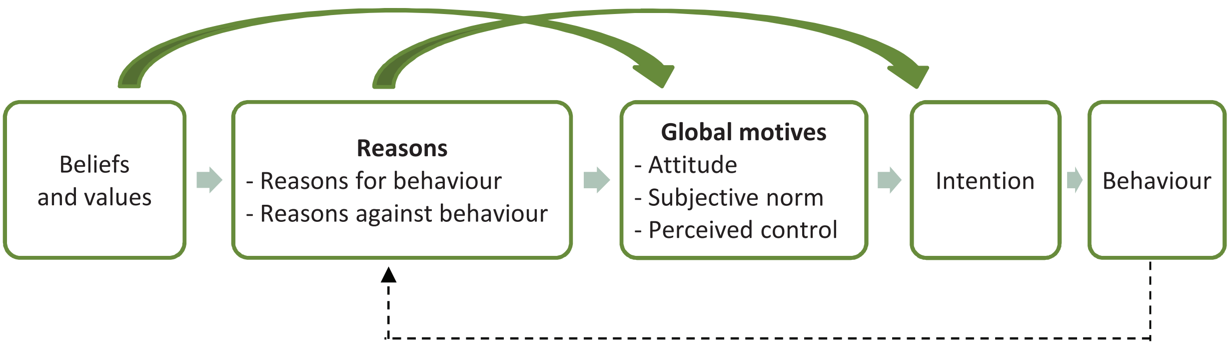
the components of the BRT. Therefore, Sahu et al.'s (2020) suggestion that qualitative studies should be employed alongside the BRT to understand consumer behaviour better fits well within the qualitative approach and an inductive use of BRT to explain behaviour. In Mitrofanova et al.'s (2021) research, as following a qualitative approach, albeit in relation to orthorexia nervosa, and Diddi et al.'s (2019) qualitative research on young adult consumers' sustainable clothing consumption, an intention-behaviour gap was subsequently identified to guide the application of the BRT in this qualitative research. Thus, following the framework of these two studies, the current study introduced the use of the BRT for a qualitative exploration of the reasons for and against purchasing a UHT line extension within an emerging market context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Approach to the Study

According to Westaby (2005), the reasons that individuals offer constitute specific cognitions that are used to make decisions with confidence and that also explain their behaviour. The BRT offers a framework that considers context-specific reasons for and against the behaviour (Westaby, 2005). This is important since reasons against portraying the behaviour have received less attention (Ozaki & Sevastyanova, 2011). Therefore, this study explored the reasons for and against purchasing a UHT line extension to determine consumers' decision-making behaviour. Importantly, reasons form the linkages between individual beliefs, global motives (attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control), intention (to purchase or not to purchase) and behaviour (action) (Westaby, 2005) (see Figure 1). This stems from the fact that the BRT is part of the group of behavioural intention theories that expands on the theory of planned behaviour (Sahu et al., 2020) and assumes that individuals' reasons influence their global motives and intentions.

Figure 1
Behavioural reasoning theory (Westaby, 2005)



Westaby (2005) proposes that reasons do not function in isolation from individual beliefs and values. Rather, the reasons that individuals offer to influence and sustain their behaviour result from the processing of their beliefs and values. Beliefs, therefore, represent the opinions or associated meanings that are consciously considered at any given time, resulting in the salient beliefs held by consumers. Thus, the reasons that consumers give in explaining their behaviour for accepting or not accepting a new UHT line extension may be to justify their beliefs about the line extension. The BRT also proposes that beliefs affect global motives, in some instances, without being fully mediated or activated through reasons (Westaby, 2005), which in turn influences the intention to purchase or not to purchase a new product. Intention theories suggest that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control, which facilitate a person's beliefs, are the primary antecedents of intention (Ajzen, 1991). Westaby (2005) consolidates these antecedents

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as global motives and proposes that they are broad substantive factors that consistently influence intentions—the main determinants of behaviour—or the anticipated actions that may result in the purchase or not of a UHT line extension as the behavioural outcome. The BRT is thus an important framework with which to explore the reasons for or against purchasing a UHT line extension because an understanding of these reasons may provide insight into the salient factors that influence consumer behaviour.

2.2. Considering the Role of Extrinsic Product Attributes

'Enriched'

Food designers and marketers are continuously challenged to develop safe and nutritious food in order to keep the consumer healthy (Bordewijk & Schifferstein, 2020). Enriched food products have been developed to provide health benefits for the consumer (Shan et al., 2017) through increasing the percentage of one or more of the nutrients that are naturally present in the food (Timpanaro et al., 2020), resulting in a functional food product. In comparison with existing products, consumer acceptance of a newly introduced functional food product is largely dependent on sensory evaluation. Should the sensory characteristics of the product differ from the usual product, consumer acceptance of the product may be low (Smarzyński et al., 2019). Therefore, since the word 'enriched' was featuring on a UHT milk product instore and very little was known about its effect on consumers' decisions to purchase a UHT line extension, it was included in this study in the form of a word-association exercise.

Product packaging design

Consumers' subjective judgements on a new product are based on the appearance and packaging features of the product. In order to differentiate new products from existing products, product packaging is used strategically to introduce consumers to new product line extensions (Vergura & Luceri, 2018). It is one of the product features that food designers need to develop because the food product is being designed to merge product function with the purpose of the packaging effectively (Bordewijk & Schifferstein, 2020). In fact, Magnier and Schoormans (2017) point out that in regard to new products, consumers use packaging to differentiate between products. When consumers do not have information about the new product and are thus unable to evaluate the intrinsic attributes of the product before purchasing, they apply the symbolic information that is implied by the packaging design. Subsequently, the visual cues (colour, quality, general appeal and others) of product packaging have been found to create strong consumer associations that influence the overall perception of the product (Sofi, 2019). According to De Francisco Vela and Ayala-Garcia (2020), these perceptions are associated with emotional experiences that designers need to understand when working on food products. Hence, different elements in the design may attract or resonate with consumers from an emerging market, influencing their intention to purchase the new UHT line extension.

Country of origin

COO labelling has become increasingly important to consumers (Bimbo et al., 2020) because trusting the source is part of their food experience (Bordewijk & Shifferstein, 2020). However, little generalisable knowledge about the effects of COO food labelling is available (Newman et al., 2014), with even less concerning the effect of COO on a UHT line extension. The inclusion of COO is known to affect product perception and evaluation (Visbal et al., 2017). However, Insch and Cuthbert (2018) point to the discrepancies in research, causing doubts about the real influence of COO on food purchase decisions. For this reason, COO labelling was included in this study because it remains a clear tool of communication between the consumer and the producer

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in distinguishing a domestic product from an imported product and may, therefore, influence the decision to purchase a UHT line extension.

Price

Price is an extrinsic product attribute considered by most consumers, and it offers a value perspective of the product (Aeni, 2020). In most instances, it is assumed to relate to the quality of the product (Rafdinal & Amalia, 2019). Therefore, consumers confronted with a UHT line extension may expect the product to have a certain price and may use this as an indicator of their willingness to purchase (Roy et al., 2014). By comparing prices of similar products in the category with those of the line extension, consumers test their product expectations, leading them to the decision for the most attractive offer (Reisman et al., 2019), which may not be in favour of the UHT line extension. Of late, the price reviews prevalent on the internet and social media platforms are influencing product purchases (Hu et al., 2019), and negative price reviews have been found to have a stronger negative impact on consumers' purchase decisions (Weisstein et al., 2017). There is currently little understanding of the role that price plays in influencing the intention to purchase a UHT line extension within an emerging market such as South Africa.

From the reviewed literature, the success of a UHT line extension is dependent on food designers' understanding of why consumers consider or do not consider a product. Since it is not clear how extrinsic product attributes such as inclusion of the word 'enriched', COO, price and product packaging design can affect the reasons to purchase the new UHT line extension, food designers may be unaware of the role that each of the attributes play in the consumer's evaluation of the new product. Since UHT milk is an important contributor to the milk consumption of South African consumers in a highly competitive market, it becomes even more important to establish which features of the new line extension will resonate with consumers and which will not. Through the findings of the current study, food designers and markets may be better able to address barriers and consumer concerns prior to launch. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine consumer reasons for and against purchasing a new UHT milk line extension and the role that specific extrinsic product attributes play in supporting the purchasing reasoning of consumers.

3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1. Study Design and Sampling

An exploratory-descriptive qualitative (EDQ) study was designed to identify and describe the experiences of participants, which allowed for an array of information (Acocella & Cataldi, 2021). The exploratory nature of the study relied on an inductive approach to investigate consumers' reasons and resulting behaviour. Purposeful sampling, typical of an EDQ design (Sandelowski, 2004), was used to recruit milk users employed at a university in South Africa to participate in the study.

3.2. Data Gathering

Focus groups provide a synergistic process in which participant interactions refine individual viewpoints to reveal insights that would not have been achieved without this group interaction (Doyle et al., 2020). Given the study objectives, this was the most suitable data gathering approach to uncover consumer reasoning and opinions regarding a UHT milk line extension. Six digitally recorded focus group discussions were held, each being facilitated by an experienced moderator. Each focus group consisted of voluntary staff members (male and female) who complied with the

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inclusion criterion of being milk users and who were enabled to join the focus group by selecting the most appropriate day and time from the list of proposed focus group slots for participation in the study. The sample size was determined through inductive thematic saturation where the development of conceptual categories that were adequate in describing and understanding the experiences and reasoning of the participants were identified. Comparable male (47%) and female (56%) representation was established among the 34 participants who were recruited from among university employees. The participants were between 18 and 49 years old, although age was not a criterion for study inclusion. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. They were assured of confidentiality and the anonymity of information and were informed that the session would be recorded. Thereafter, informed consent was signed. The study received ethics clearance from the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Health Research Ethics Committee (2013/CAES/138a) prior to the commencement of the research.

To determine participants' reasons for purchasing the UHT line extension, a vignette or hypothetical scenario (Stravakou & Lozgka, 2018) giving the context for the newly developed UHT line extension, which was next to or near the original UHT product at the point of purchase, was used to initiate the focus group sessions. This technique allows for the articulation of perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes by participants (Azman & Mahadhir, 2017) and is facilitated by the reasons that consumers give. Remaining within the context of the vignette, participants were asked to present their thoughts on extrinsic product attributes such as COO, price and packaging presentation and explain how their views would influence the purchase of the UHT line extension. Further probing was used to expand their views of each of these concepts.

During the focus group sessions, a word-association exercise was used to explore the word 'enriched'. Participants were asked: "What comes to mind when you see the word 'enriched'?" Word association is a new sensory characterisation methodology that is applied to understand consumers' perceptions of new food products (García-Segovia et al., 2020) and has been used successfully with ill-defined concepts related to food and how consumers make sense of food products (Barone et al., 2020). In this way, the words that consumers freely associate with the perceived product are considered the most relevant for consumer choice and product purchase. In the current study, the association exercise was not applied in the true context of a free word-association exercise but rather allowed participants to elaborate on their thoughts and ideas about the word 'enriched'.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data were transcribed verbatim. This was followed by an inductive approach to thematic analysis in search of the salient themes that emerged from the data. Thematic analysis is the identification, analysis and reporting of data patterns, allowing for a rich description of participant perspectives (Brawn & Clarke, 2006). Following Kiger and Varpio (2020), the process of data analysis that was applied entailed familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, developing and reconsidering categories and themes and reporting the findings. Open coding was first applied to the data to identify distinct concepts, after which codes were grouped to form categories that best represented the codes. Axial coding was then applied to form the categories that best represented the similarities, differences and the relationships across the categories. Broad themes could then be assigned to the categories that were developed from the reasons that the participants had presented. Johnson et al. (2020) stress the importance of rigour and quality of data in qualitative research. To address these issues, the trustworthiness criteria summarised by Nowell et al. (2017) were applied. *Credibility* was achieved through prolonged engagement with the data and the participants in the study, *peer debriefing* during code generation and *member checking* during the focus group interviews. The thick descriptive data obtained ensured *transferability*, and

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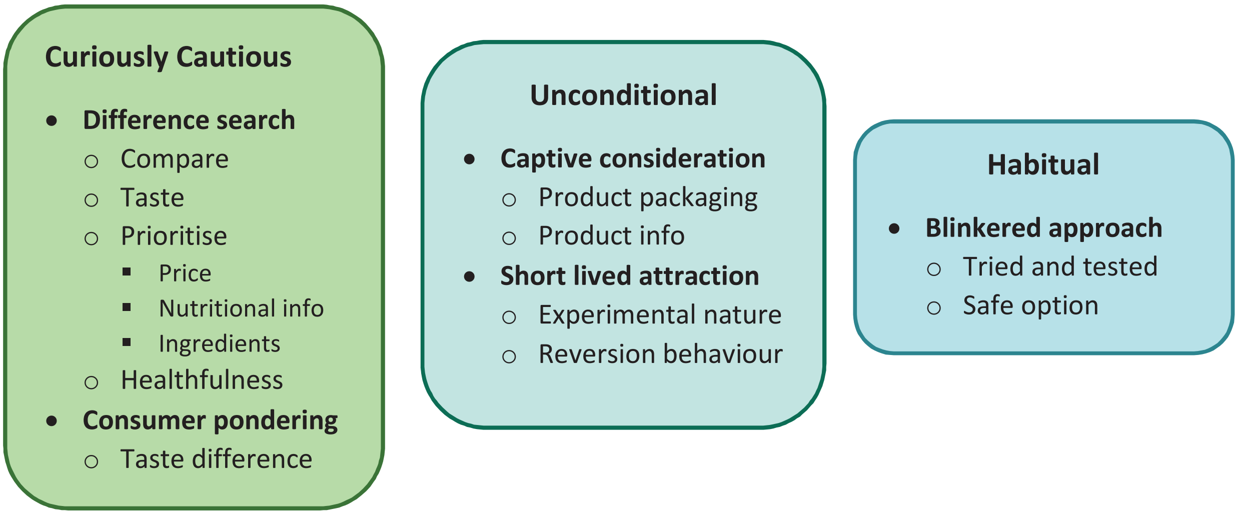
through a logical, traceable and documented research methodology, *dependability* was addressed, which contributed to the *confirmability* of the data.

4. FINDINGS

Three different consumer behavioural approaches (themes) emerged from the data involving consumers' reasons for purchasing a UHT line extension: (a) curiously cautious; (b) unconditional; and (c) habitual. Figure 2 provides an overview of the approaches and presents the associated behaviours as categories emerging from the data to describe each consumer approach.

Figure 2
Consumer behavioural approaches with related categories



Curiously cautious behavioural approach

The curiously cautious behavioural approach is characterised by a cautious consumer who analyses the existing (old) and line extension (new) product attributes through a difference search. In the current study, the reasoning for this approach was that the participants were *"curious to see and compare"* the differences between the old and the new product and to *"see if [they] can see a difference … and then make a decision"* at the point of purchase. According to one participant,

> *[I]f I were to get them in the shelf like this way [next to each other]*, *I will definitely, definitely will compare.*

In regard to determining the difference between the old and the new product, participants indicated that they would *"actually consume and see if they are different in various attributes"* and not rely on product information to guide their purchase decision.

Cautious consumers seem to *prioritise* the *"the price difference"* between the products, which was clearly explained by this participant:

> *I first … look at the price. Then after looking at the price … I then … it's then that I can look at the other factors like the ingredients. But my first … It's the price, it's the price. I first look at the price*.

Thereafter, an investigation into the *"nutritional information … check there what the difference is"* and *"look for the ingredients [product information]"* was used to determine *"which one is more healthier than the other"*, resulting in a healthfulness approach as explained by this participant:

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[B]ut also, I would also like to know the difference in … the health benefits … I'm going to read through the content that … are that … which are different from both of them and see which one is more healthier than the other.

Although the difference search is an attempt to identify the attributes of the improved product, it may not be persuasive and may result in some of these consumers opting for *"what [they] know*". In other instances, awareness of the new product may generate a *"peaked curiosity"*. This may result in them purchasing the new product, especially *"if I think this could be interesting. This could be, you know … I try it"*. For some curious consumers, a helpless state of attraction to the new product arises that does not involve consideration of the price as much as the experience resulting from using the product and thereafter, a decision regarding the product is made. This is explained by one participant as follows:

I'm usually a sucker for … for being curious and stuff … So I'll, I'll try it once and even if it is more expensive. And then after that, if it's not as great as I thought it was, then I'll go back to the cheaper one.

The results of the difference search indicated a certain degree of consumer consideration regarding the taste of the new product and the potential differences between the product they know and the new product: *"I always wonder if the same product … will have the same taste as the one that [I] know"* or if it has been *"tampered with … the sensory attribute"*.

The importance of tasting the new product was indicated in these quotations. It would be good to have *"a smaller one just to taste it"* and *"people that are demonstrating … and letting you taste this new product"*.

Therefore, for this focus group, product comparison and profound thoughts about the product form the behavioural strategies used during the decision to purchase the new line extension.

Unconditional approach

The unconditional approach is demonstrated by a captivated consumer who is drawn in and attracted by specific attributes of the new food product or a consumer who does not have the time to study the product differences. In this approach, consumers show a captive consideration of the product as their attention is drawn to the product packaging, which may be found to be *"more attractive … better designed"*, thereby *"grabbing"* the attention of the consumer. The effect of product packaging is best described by this participant:

I would probably look at it and think it's more attractive because the packaging is more attractive and better designed.

Immediately visible product information that explains or highlights features of the new product that are important to the consumer is another product attribute that can capture the attention of the consumer at the point of purchase:

Because I'm seeing all the information I need right in front of me, so [I] don't have to turn back and try and find that fine print. Look how many vitamins … does it have any of this nutritional information? So I think it's very inviting … yes, how it's presented.

A new product must capture the consumer's initial attention in order for the product to be considered for purchase:

I'm just thinking … If it's not a product that I know and … [is not] advertised very well, then I probably also would not even see that. I would probably just see the original and think that's some other brand or something else. So, if it's not like well advertised, and they don't say why it's beneficial to buy something different, then I wouldn't even notice it probably … because it doesn't look familiar.

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However, the risk with the unconditional approach to a new line extension is that consumers may have a short-lived attraction to the product. This attraction may be of an experimental nature and may result in consumers opting to *"buy the new one, try it and taste it first"*, possibly meaning, *"[T]ry it once"*. The reason for this behaviour is explained in the quotation below:

> *I would try it. First time and … just see … the taste. But obviously, price matters … you know … it's milk at the end of the day … even if it tastes nice.*

Therefore, these consumers may portray an unconditional attraction to the new product without questioning any particular aspect of the product or the marketing strategy aimed at attracting the consumers' attention, thus trying the product simply because it is new. The outcome for the tested product may be reversion behaviour, with consumers returning to the product they know and suggesting discontinuation of any further trial purchases of the new product.

Habitual approach

The habitual consumer approach describes those who are not temped by the newly introduced product, suggesting a more resistant approach to shopping. These consumers would rather stay with *"the tried and tested brand"*. As one participant said, *"I look for what I know [as I am] more familiar with it … I don't know the other one"*. The participant added, *"[It] feels the safer route"*. Consumers adopting this approach have a general distrust of 'improved' food products. One participant stated,

> *I'll go with what I know, which is the old one … because sometimes, I'm scared that the new developments … sometimes, they're sweetened … they add a lot of things and I don't want to read, so I'd rather go with what I know.*

For habitual shoppers, very little appears to persuade them to consider another product. Their loyalty to the familiar product seems to anchor their decision to purchase the known product.

Role of extrinsic product attributes

The specific extrinsic product attributes of (a) the use of the word 'enriched', (b) designed product appearance, (c) COO, and (d) price can be identified as playing a supporting role in consumers' reasons for and against purchasing a UHT line extension. The UHT line extension may not be noticed if the product design does not catch the consumer's attention by immediately emphasising the differences between the UHT line extension and the existing UHT products. Through an analysis of the findings, differentiating product attribute behaviour emerged as being specific to the way that consumers approach each of the extrinsic product attributes as indicated in Figure 3.

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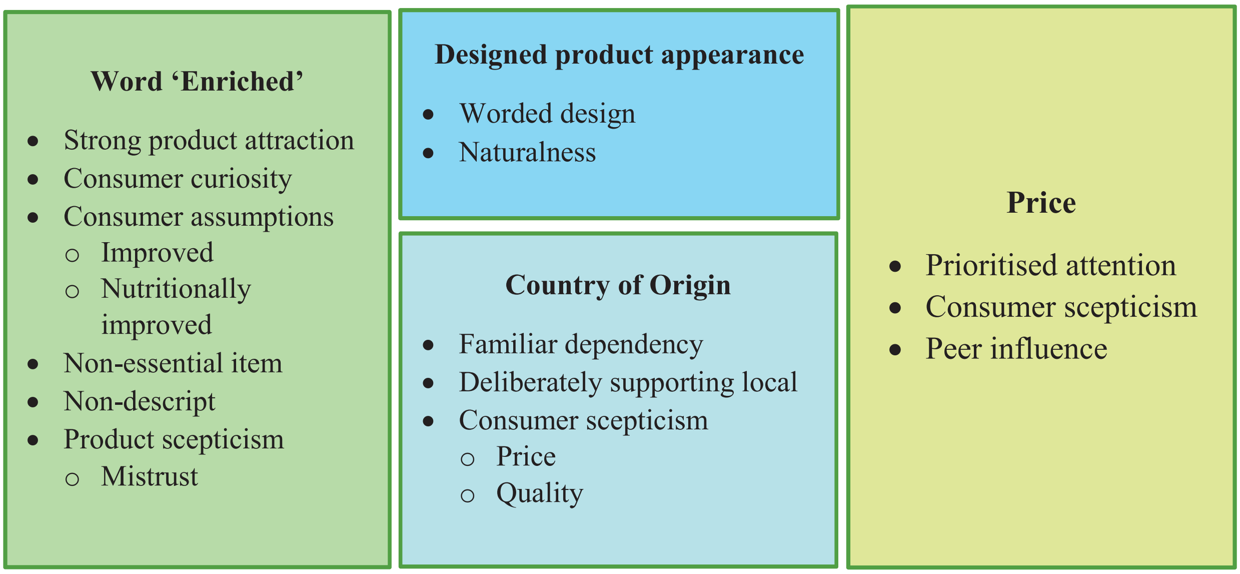
Figure 3
Extrinsic product attributes with related categories



'Enriched'

Analysis of the word-association data for the term 'enriched' identified differing consumer opinions. Some participants perceived 'enriched' as a strong product attraction, *"a powerful word"* that *"draws ... attention"*. However, for others, this was considered more of a curiosity since these consumers wanted to know *"what exactly"* had been added. One participant contended, *"Once you study it, then you want to know with what"* and *"Wording influences the consumer's choice"*. The word 'enriched' also led to a variety of assumptions regarding what the participants expected the enriched product to contain. According to these participants, the assumptions included the idea that the product was improved:

> *They've added a lot of new things to the product ... For me, that's attractive ... to me. Like there's more nutrients; there's more vitamins in this product ... I'm just interested in that there's more than [it] has to offer.*

The participant continued, *"[T]hey tried to actually make it more than the original"*.

For some participants, the assumption was that the new product was nutritionally improved: *"[W]hen they say enriched, they mean with nutrition"* and, therefore, it *"should be healthy"*. As participants explained, *"There should be extra vitamins and stuff in there"* that add extra *"nutritional value"* because *"it has nutrients that were not in the original ... product"* to *"improve the intake of vitamins and whatever"*, hence making it *"more improved"*.

The participants asserted that line extensions create expectations of what the product offers. More specifically and based on the word 'enriched', the participants maintained that consumers *"expect there is a change in terms of the nutritional information"*, resulting in *"much [more] of the nutrients than [in] just the ordinary original"* and, therefore, the product should *"actually taste better than the original"* or *"slightly better"*. However, because the expectation is that nutrients have been increased in the UHT line extension, it *"should not change the taste because those things aren't flavourants"*. As a consequence of being labelled 'enriched', consumers may expect the new product to *"have something that the old one doesn't have"*, with the result that it is *"more expensive"*. According to one participant, the word 'enriched' may also lead to consumers assuming that not only is the product improved in terms of sensory and nutritional characteristics but also there may be a change in other ways such as the new product may be *"better in terms of the shelf life than the other"*.

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'Enriched' could also be considered unimportant by consumers whose diets are nutritionally adequate and thus do not find *"it necessary to take the new product"*. For some participants, the word was vague and without meaning and was, therefore, disregarded. These participants *"usually don't read"* the information on products or only focus on the product that they are familiar with, *"going straight to what [they] know"*. They would not *"bother looking at this"*. Introducing 'enriched' into the product description may have the effect of creating scepticism since some consumers may perceive such terms as *"fancy words … but it's not entirely the truth"*. As one participant explained

[B]asically marketing … what they want you to see … what they think will attract you to their products.

The intentions of companies launching such products could be doubted if consumers saw the term being used as a way to *"sell products"*. It was said, *"They're just trying to make it sound better"* or they only wanted to *"make money … do whatever it is that they want to do. Put ['enriched'] on a packet to make you buy it"*.

Hence, dangers exist in the promotional use of the term 'enriched' on a UHT line extension. As shown, understandings of the term vary widely and can underpin different behavioural responses. So, while the term 'enriched' catches the attention of some consumers, its interpretation may not always be that intended by the food designer.

Designed product appearance

The appearance of the designed UHT line extension packaging is intended to attract consumers. When effective, the packaging itself creates interest: *"[J]ust from looking at the packaging … really get attracted"*. Two important aspects of packaging design emerged during the focus group discussions, indicating different requirements for UHT line extension packaging. Worded design features were important for some participants who were less attracted to images and would rather consider what was written on the pack *"as pictures don't do it for [me]"*. These participants were *"look[ing] for the small print"* and the value of this information. One participant explained

Information is what attracts me … rather than how it's advertised.

In relation to the UHT milk line extension, an implied 'naturalness' in the design of the packaging was another element that some participants preferred to see. Suspicion was raised if a product seemed *"far too artificial"* in its presentation. It was important that the new product should not be presented as

… looking less natural. It's like they've tried to do something on the milk and then that's where it does not sound good….

You'd assume that this one has … some sort of probably GMO … some sort of like, enhancements … some way….

The effectiveness of the design for the UHT milk line extension was dependent on the inclusion of both worded information and a natural product appearance.

Country of origin

When considering a new product, consumers seem to show support for locally produced products. There may be reassurance in the familiar feature of place:

Because you know, there's many things coming into the country – then you read about it, the meat and stuff like that. So, I'd rather stick to what [I] know.

Consideration of *"which country it comes from"* could be generally aligned with loyalty towards the *"South African brand"*. Wanting to support local producers resulted in participants

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"trying to buy South African" and in doing so, *"supporting South African companies over other countries"*.

Consumer scepticism emerged regarding products from other countries. The price of new line extensions would reflect the production costs and the export strategies elsewhere. Participants' experiences suggested that *"other countries' products would be more expensive"* or *"priced low"*.

In particular, if a product from another country was priced lower than a local product, the quality was questioned. There could be concern that *"they have compromised on a lot of good things about the product"*. In other instances, consumers might be *"scared to try it"* since previous products have caused safety scares, and this could occur with new products from a different country. Consumers could be *"uncertain about the quality"* for a number of reasons, with COO concerns being a proxy for doubts that are not possible to resolve.

When considering a new UHT line extension sourced from another country, supporting local may contribute to consumer reluctance. In the current study, scepticism was evident about price being a reflection of production costs and exporting strategies and regarding the quality of products from places where there was doubt about production standards and where problems had been experienced in the past.

Price

Among the attributes of the new line extension, price attracted considerable attention. Consumers indicated that they would *"first look at the price"*. This would help them establish the pricing placement of the new product and *"then see if it's in the same range"* as the established product.

In some instances, price is *"important if it's a new product … if it is cheaper than the one [usually bought] … obviously something to gain"*. However, doubts may emerge for some would-be purchasers, with the cheaper price possibly deterring purchase. As one participant stated

> *If it is a lot cheaper than the old one, it makes you think how much did they actually add … [A]nd if they have added all these things, and if the old one is a standard price, then why is it lower than this one? … [T]hat will make me immediately not go for it.*

However, a higher-priced item does not mean it will not be considered by some consumers because *"the slightly expensive … sort of gives me an idea that what it's enriched with"*. In particular, *"health-conscious consumers … won't even think about the price … Only interested in the nutrients and all that … [B]ut some who doesn't [*sic*]care about nutrition or that will say 'No, no, it's expensive for me'"*.

Although there are differences regarding the influence of price in purchasing a new food product, the decisive factor may be peer influence:

> *Maybe somebody introduces me to say, 'Okay, there is a new product like that' … [W]ithout such information, I will stick to the original until maybe several consumers come and say, '[W]hy don't you try this?' … So I will not be convinced simply by the high price.*

Price as an extrinsic product attribute is a priority attribute that influences the purchasing decisions of consumers. This attribute can result in consumer scepticism if the product is priced too low or too high. Consumer assumptions are not necessarily based on facts, and through peer influence, consumers' minds can be changed to consider the new line extension.

5. DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION

This paper presents an analysis of the reasons for and against purchasing a new UHT milk line extension and the role that specific extrinsic product attributes play in supporting consumers' reasoning. Because the BRT uses reasons to explain the underlying behaviour of

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people, its application helps to position the three consumer behavioural approaches derived from the reasons to purchase or not to purchase a UHT line extension (see Figure 4), confirming the important role reasons, as proposed in the BRT framework, play in predicting possible behaviour (Sahu et al., 2020). The curiously cautious behavioural approach was identified when reasoning indicated a difference search or a between-alternative evaluation where consumers compare different products along the same attribute, thus representing cautious consumption as a freedom to consume in whatever way they choose (Yngfalk & Yngfalk, 2015). The curiosity underpinning their actions is considered an information-seeking mechanism (Hsee & Ruan, 2020) that contributes to consumers' pondering and hesitation regarding the purchase of a new product. Through their cautiousness, the consumers attempt to minimise any negativity towards the product and to maximise the ease with which they are able to justify their reasons to purchase the UHT line extension as the correct purchasing decision. In relation to BRT, it is important to acknowledge that reasons help individuals justify or defend their actions (Pennington & Hastie, 1993) through which they are able to cautiously justify UHT line extension purchases.

Reasons specific to the unconditional behavioural approach are characterised by the captive consideration of the consumers who are attracted to the UHT line extension whereby the consumers' ability to navigate through a visual environment of different product packaging designs and information enables them to identify the product that stands out from competitors. However, this behaviour signifies trial purchases, which is an information-gathering technique to negate uncertainty about the product (Smith & Swinyard, 1983). This may result in future purchases or immediate discontinuation as BRT clearly postulates that reasons have a strong influence on intention (Norman et al., 2012).

Consumers characterised by the habitual behavioural approach opt for a blinkered approach whereby they pay less attention to the new product and engage in repetitive purchases of their established product preference, thus requiring little or no conscious effort for decisions about the unfamiliar product. In relation to BRT, consumers displaying habitual behaviour show a strong attitude towards not engaging with the new UHT line extension, supported by reasons not to do so, resulting in clear avoidance behaviour towards the new UHT line extension. In relation to BRT, this can be explained by Norman et al. (2012), who found that a strong attitude, reasons for and past behaviour of binge drinking had a significant direct effect on intention of binge drinking in the following week. Similarly, Nicholls and Schimmel (2016) found that reasons pertaining to BRT were direct drivers of future generosity behavioural intentions. This suggests that predictively, the behaviour of the habitual consumer will possibly be the same towards line extensions in the future.

The significance of these behavioural approaches lies in the different ways in which consumers approach the new UHT milk line extension. These distinctions could assist food designers in addressing factors that are important to at least two of these behavioural groups when introducing a new UHT line extension. It is suggested that in relation to the BRT, the three behavioural approaches may change through the experience of the UHT line extension. In turn, this may lead to new reasons for or against further use of the UHT line extension (represented by the dotted line), specifically in relation to the curiously cautious and the unconditional behavioural approach but less so for the habitual product-loyal behavioural approach.

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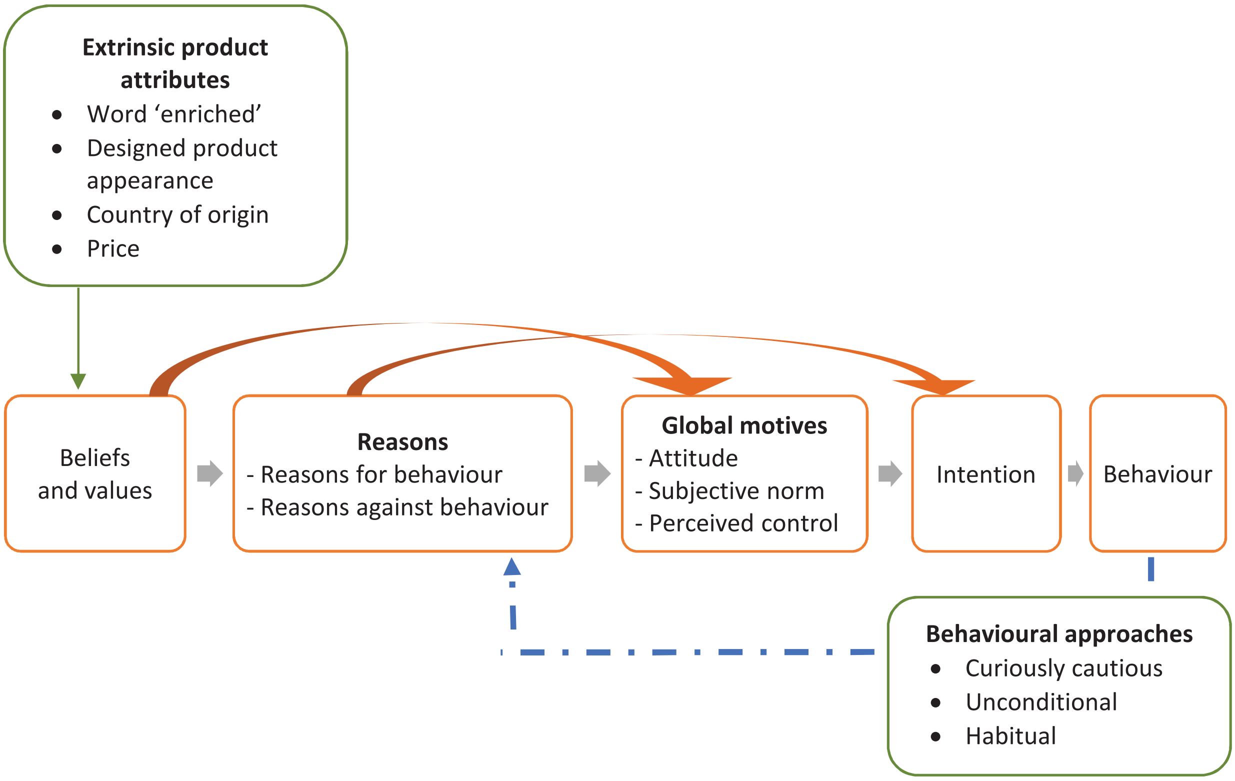
Figure 4
Ultra-high temperature milk line extension within the behavioural reasoning theory (Westaby, 2005)



The BRT proposes that behaviour originates from a person's beliefs that give impetus to the reasons for or against specific behaviour (Claudy & Peterson, 2014). This study suggests that consumers have specific beliefs about extrinsic product attributes (the word 'enriched', designed product appearance, COO and price) that result in the reasons why they will choose or not choose a UHT milk line extension. Based on the BRT proposition, the study more importantly highlights the influence extrinsic product attribute beliefs may have on the differentiation between the behavioural approaches that emerged. As a result, this study does not submit behaviour as a general and unspecified outcome, as have been done in various other studies where the focus was on the influence of the components (e.g., Diddi et al., 2019; Mitrofanova et al., 2021; Nicholls & Schimmel, 2016; Tandon et al., 2020) and not specifying the behaviour. This study rather identifies the typical behaviours in relation to the reasons consumers give when a UHT line extension is considered, suggesting that researchers should aim to specify the actual behaviour resulting from the reasons. This may result in a better understanding of the specific behaviours related to the reasons stemming from consumers' beliefs. As explained, the BRT provided a framework to inductively explore the behaviours resulting from this study and therefore assisted in interpreting the influence of extrinsic product attributes related to a UHT milk line extension and resulting behaviours.

Managerial Implications

Front-of-pack message displays using, for example, the word 'enriched' influence consumer perceptions of the new product before it is first purchased (Biondi & Camanzi, 2020). Through consumer curiosity relating to the word 'enriched', a strong attraction to the product emerges. In this, there are various assumptions and expectations about what consumers believe the enriched product entails. The current study emphasised the fact that not all consumers are attracted to the product through the word 'enriched'. Importantly, food designers and marketers should consider

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the non-essential and non-descript—even ambiguous—additions to the product that could potentially underpin consumer scepticism.

It is understood that consumers' first impressions of a product involve the physical properties of the product (Blijlevens et al., 2009) that are presented through product design; however, not all consumers consider the physical properties to be of great importance (Melovic et al., 2020). This was the case with the use of the word 'enriched' for the UHT line extension. Moreover, Bimbo et al. (2017) found that the more natural the perceived appearance of a product, the higher the associated level of acceptance among consumers. The word 'enriched' was one of the product appearance attributes that the participants noticed when considering the UHT line extension. The participants also pointed out that a worded packaging design may be used to evaluate the product, and strategy food designers and marketers should use such a design to attract consumers to the features of the product.

Conversely, price was a prioritised extrinsic product attribute resulting in price comparisons between existing products and the price point of the UHT line extension product. Consumer thinking in relation to high or low pricing may result in associations with high or low product quality (Albari & Safitri, 2018); this was indicated in the scepticism of price evaluations for the UHT line extension. Although price plays an important role in the purchase decision of any product, peer influence may play an even greater role during the introduction of a new UHT line extension. Peer enthusiasm or antipathy may have a direct influence on consumers' purchase decision regarding a new UHT line extension. This influence may be important for food designers and marketers to consider when developing a UHT line extension since the target market appears to be influenced more by peers than directly by the product.

Through globalisation and the influx of foreign goods, COO has become a significant influencer in consumer purchase intentions (Dharmadasa & Chanaka, 2017). According to Lo et al. (2017), consumers who are keen to support locally produced products epitomise consumer ethnocentrism; however, this is also attributed in many instances to scepticism about the quality of foreign products. Food designers should recognise the importance of locally produced food products to the consumer and ensure that their attention is captured through the newly designed product. In relation to the BRT, the way in which the extrinsic product attributes influence the behaviour of consumers when confronted with a UHT line extension suggests that COO influences the beliefs that underpin the reasons for or against the purchase. Food designers and marketers should be cognisant of the influence of consumer beliefs when designing a new UHT line extension since they guide the intention to purchase, thus affecting a successful launch.

6. CONCLUSION

Through consideration of the reasons for and against purchasing a new UHT milk line extension and the role that specific extrinsic product attributes play in supporting consumer reasoning, different consumer behavioural approaches emerged, particular to the South African emerging market context. These were indicative of the diverse ways that consumers considered the UHT line extension. Through the identification of these behavioural approaches, designers of new UHT milk line extensions would be able to assess how well the line addresses the factors that are important to each consumer group. An understanding of the way in which emerging market consumers use extrinsic product attributes to determine whether they should purchase a UHT milk line extension highlights the importance of each of these attributes, which may be overlooked during product development and marketing. Food designers and marketers should be cognisant of the role of each of these attributes because different consumer behaviours pertain to these extrinsic attributes. Although the BRT provided an insightful framework to explore consumer reasons in an emerging market context, not all the components of the theory were unpacked comprehensively in

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this research. This is potentially a useful direction for future studies, as is the influence of global motives on intentions to purchase a UHT line extension. The latter has not yet been explored for this product category, much more so in emerging markets. A further limitation is the exploratory design approach used in this study. Although valuable in providing a better understanding of a phenomenon less researched in South Africa, the reasons established for or against purchasing a new UHT milk line extension may not be applicable and transferable to other countries. Similar research could be conducted in other countries to compare the findings from this study and to identify possible behavioural differences. In using the exploratory design approach, the extrinsic product attributes identified and studied in this research have provided some insight into the relevance of some of the attributes. This is, however, not exhaustive and further studies may need to explore other attributes and influences on new UHT milk line extensions. These could include factors like sustainability; detailed packaging design elements such as logo, print and colour; and other relevant features, among which advertising and marketing strategies.

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Brand Love and Brand Forgiveness: An Empirical Study in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Brand love is an interesting and important concept that required further research in brand management. This study tested the impacts of consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and brand anthropomorphization on brand love and brand forgiveness in the framework provided by the theory of planned behavior. Regression analyses showed that brand anthropomorphization and subjective norms have a significant impact on brand love. Brand love positively influences brand forgiveness and acts as a mediator between subjective norms, brand anthropomorphization, and brand forgiveness constructs. Besides mediation, brand anthropomorphization directly influences brand forgiveness. The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge on brand love and brand forgiveness concepts by presenting empirical research findings that investigate brand love antecedents. This study has also shown the significant impact of anthropomorphizing a brand on brand forgiveness and brand love.

JEL classification: M1, M3

Keywords: brand love, brand forgiveness, anthropomorphism, retail brands

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1. INTRODUCTION

Brand love is among the primary goals of successful brand management (Langner et al., 2015) and has received increasing attention in the last decade after the study of Batra et al. (2012). Exploring consumers' emotions toward brands has become increasingly important as emotions are significant factors that build up brand loyalty and equity. Brand love is an intense feeling and consumers' passionate emotional attachment to a brand, and a significant concept for marketing practitioners and academicians (Joshi & Garg, 2021). The majority of studies about brand love have focused on the benefits of consumers' love for the brand and are related to brand loyalty, willingness to pay a higher price, positive word of mouth, and willingness to forgive the brand for product or service failures (Kim et al., 2019). Consumers usually feel love for their favorite brands (Batra et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013), and brand love contributes to brand loyalty (Algharabat, 2017), brand equity (Palazon et al., 2017), willingness to pay a higher price (Bairrada et al., 2018), and word of mouth (Strandberg & Styvén, 2020).

In today's increasingly competitive and complex markets, understanding brand love antecedents and outcomes are essential for marketing managers as previous studies have shown the significant impact of brand love on brand loyalty and equity (Algharabat, 2017; Palazon et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019). Moreover, the consumer's emotional attachment to the brand or brand love can be more effective than mere satisfaction, for example, for positive word of mouth (Loureiro et al., 2017). Studies related to the brand love concept mainly focus on its meaning and conceptualization after the research by Shimp and Madden (1998), and from then on, some other studies have been published regarding the antecedents of brand love (Vernuccio, 2015; Bairrada et al., 2018). Brand love can be an effective marketing tool as it leads to positive word of mouth and repeat purchases, but it is a still relatively under-researched topic that requires further attention (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020). Within that context, this study focuses on the antecedents of brand love and examines the relationship between brand love and brand forgiveness concepts in the theoretical framework of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Hegner et al., 2017).

The theory of planned behavior is one of the major frameworks used in marketing studies to examine consumer behavior (Ajzen, 1991). A review of the theory of planned behavior has shown that the model can be used in many different research contexts by including additional predictors or variables (Han & Stoel, 2017). In this study, brand love, brand anthropomorphization, and brand forgiveness concepts are analyzed within the theoretical framework provided by the theory of planned behavior following the positive expectations that brand love increases consumers' willingness to forgive the brand's possible faults.

Brand anthropomorphization, which is attributing human characteristics to lifeless objects, is getting increased attention in the consumer-brand relationship context as examining its impact on brand love and brand forgiveness helps to develop these concepts (Schmid & Huber, 2019). Besides anthropomorphization, brand love has received increasing attention because of its potential to influence customer engagement and brand loyalty; however, studies that explore brand love are still scarce (Palusuk et al., 2019). Due to its significant impact on consumer psychology and brand loyalty, a continuous exploration of the brand love concept from a marketing and branding perspective is required (Joshi & Garg, 2021). In particular, available research about anthropomorphism in the brand love context is limited (Palusuk et al., 2019). Filling this important gap in the literature, this study focuses on brand anthropomorphism and brand love concepts. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by examining anthropomorphism, brand love, and brand forgiveness in an emerging market. Brand love is very important for both marketing practitioners and academicians (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020). Examining consumer-brand relationships in various cultures is necessary since culture has a direct influence on how people approach love and create bonds with brands (Palusuk et al., 2019). Within that context, the current study aims to contribute to the literature on brand love and brand forgiveness by

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presenting original empirical research findings that investigate the antecedents of brand love and by revealing the impact of brand anthropomorphization on brand love and brand forgiveness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Love

Brand love was initially introduced by Shimp and Madden (1988) and can be explained as a consumer's emotional attachment to a brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The concept was firstly explained by adapting the interpersonal love theory to the marketing and consumption domain (Hegner et al., 2017). After the interpersonal love theory, the self-inclusion theory of love (Aron & Aron, 1986) was used to explain brand love, pointing out that a consumer loves a brand when it has high integration with the consumer's self-concept (Ahuvia, 1993). Besides, the identity theory was also used to explain brand love since a brand with high resonance with a consumer's self-image is more likely to express the consumer's identity (Strandberg & Styvén, 2020) and facilitates brand love (Zhou et al., 2020).

Since brand love has an essential role in strong relationships between consumers and brands (Kohli et al., 2014; Kaufmann et al., 2016), researchers have examined it from many perspectives to contribute to its growing literature. For example, Koo and Kim (2013) conceptualized store love for retail ready-to-wear brands and stated that love was a significant antecedent of brand loyalty. Rodrigues and Rodrigues (2019) have shown that luxury brands' perceived mystery and intimacy influence brand love positively, and brand love mediates the impact of brand image on consumers' purchase intentions and the impact of brand image on word of mouth. Loureiro et al. (2017) have shown the mediating effect of brand love between online brand engagement and electronic word of mouth, while Joshi and Garg (2021) pointed out the impact of brand love on loyalty intentions through the mediating effect of brand engagement. Brand love was found to mediate the relationship between brand experience and word of mouth (Rodrigues & Brandão, 2020). Strandberg and Styvén (2020) have stated that brand love has a significant impact on the positive word of mouth for place brands, while Schmid and Huber (2019) have indicated that brand love can be felt for both hedonic and utilitarian brands. In parallel, Zhang et al. (2020) have studied brand love in the destination branding context and stated that tourists can feel love toward a destination brand. Kumar et al. (2021a) explored brand love for natural products and showed that the product's region, image barriers, and usage barriers shaped brand love. Additionally, Lee and Hsieh (2021) have shown how community engagement facilitated brand love. Shen et al. (2021) have found that brand love is more critical than satisfaction and perceived value regarding revisit intentions for casual customers of restaurants. Additionally, both self-esteem and susceptibility to normative influence have been found to mediate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty (Le, 2020).

Besides those findings, researchers have reported different facets of brand love. Fournier (1998) has indicated six dimensions of brand-consumer relationships: love and passion, commitment, inter-dependence, self-connection, brand partner quality, and intimacy. In another study, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) proposed that brand love consists of attachment, positive evaluations and emotions, passion, and demonstrations of love for the brand. Albert et al. (2008) have contributed to the dimensions of brand love that constituted dreams, memories, intimacy, idealization, pleasure, unicity, passion, and affection. In addition to these studies, Ahuvia et al. (2008) have stated that brand love has three aspects such as the cognitive, affective, and conative brand love. After these studies, Batra et al. (2012) have explained brand love with seven dimensions: positive and negative effects, satisfaction, loyalty, attitude strength, self-related cognitions, and functional quality. Loving a brand consists of rational benefits and rational components, so in

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consumer-brand relationships, rational appearances impact brand love (Huber et al., 2015; Hegner et al., 2017). In alignment with its research questions, the current study has operationalized brand love as having three dimensions, which are commitment, intimacy, and passion (Hegner et al., 2017).

The literature on brand love has grown in the last decade, while previous studies examined the brand love construct within several perspectives, such as its conceptualization, and relevance for the self-concept, digital space, services, luxury products, and other brand-related constructs (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020). Only a few studies have been focused on its antecedents and concentrate on a variety of topics such as self-expressiveness (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Algharabat, 2017; Strandberg & Styvén, 2020), information-seeking, perceived value, and personal interaction (Junaid et al., 2020), brand identification and self-brand connection (Palazon et al., 2019), the antecedents of brand love (Vernuccio et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021b), brand love antecedents regarding local food consumption (Kumar et al., 2021a), and explaining brand love with the theory of planned behavior (Hegner et al., 2017). Within that context, the current study examines the antecedents of brand love in the theoretical perspective of the theory of planned behavior.

2.2. The Theory of Planned Behavior and Brand Love

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is considered one of the most critical consumer behavior theories. It is a broadened version of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The theory states that a consumer's intentions are influenced by their attitudes and perceived control, and also subjective norms (Ajzen, 2011). This theory has been used as a theoretical framework for many studies in marketing on a variety of topics such as examining green purchasing behavior (Chan & Lau, 2001; Yadav & Pathak, 2016), marketing managers' intentions (Ferdous, 2010), brand-following behavior on social media (Chu et al., 2016), brand love (Hegner et al., 2017), revisit intentions for tourism destinations (Soliman, 2019), eco-conscious consumer behavior (Hameed et al., 2019), and patronage intention for food (Ukenna & Ayodele, 2019).

Attitude is a relatively enduring propensity to respond either favorably or unfavorably towards an object (Simons, 1976). Consumers' attitudes toward brands inevitably influence their emotions such as brand love Batra et al. (2012). When consumers have a strong positive attitude towards a brand, they are more likely to develop strong emotional attachment, feelings, and love to it. Positive evaluations form the basis of attitudes and can be considered as elements that contribute to the dimensions of brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). For example, perceived value has been found as an antecedent of brand love (Bairrada et al., 2018). In this context, H1 is developed as:

H1: *A positive attitude towards a brand is positively related to brand love.*

Besides attitudes, the subjective norm is defined as people's preference to behave in conformity with other people's expectations and to behave as one must act. If consumers think that it is not acceptable to use or like a brand, they will be less likely to develop a strong emotion like love. According to Karjaluoto et al. (2016), subjective norms represent consumers' beliefs of whether loving a brand is accepted or not. Subjective norms may be reflected as word of mouth or recommendations that influence consumers' purchase decisions. In parallel, Zhang et al. (2020) have shown that potential tourists are more likely to develop love toward a destination brand due to the positive influence of a celebrity endorser. Consumers prefer brands according to some reference groups (Vernuccio et al., 2015). For example, a sense of belonging to and being accepted by an online brand community influences brand love (Palazon et al., 2019). Similarly, brands with a higher perceived value and prestige are liked more by consumers (Bairrada et al., 2018), as such positive characteristics make them more acceptable by others. Within that context,

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subjective norms are expected to directly impact brand love (Hegner et al., 2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed.

H2: *Positive subjective norms regarding a brand are positively related to brand love.*

Anthropomorphizing is attributing human-like characteristics and perceiving human-like attributes in objects or things (Gutherie, 1993). In addition to attitude and subjective norms, anthropomorphism is another factor influencing brand love. It can be operationalized as the perceived behavioral control over the consumer-brand relationships, as human-like characteristics like having consciousness decrease perceived behavioral control over brands (Hegner et al., 2017). According to Epley et al. (2007), the basis of anthropomorphism is associating human-like characteristics with the real or imaginary behaviors of objects or non-human agents. Anthropomorphized brands are considered actual human beings with emotions, minds, and consciousness (Puzakava et al., 2009). When people anthropomorphize brands, they evaluate them as human beings and make more favorable evaluations, so brand anthropomorphization directly impacts brand love (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2017).

Anthropomorphized brands have a social nature, and their relationships with consumers are more similar to interpersonal relationships as if brands are members of society (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). It becomes easier to develop emotions and connections with brands if they are considered human-like agents. For example, Bairrada et al. (2018) have found that a brand's intimacy, uniqueness, and prestige contribute to brand love. Brand managers generally apply anthropomorphizing strategies like using a brand character to emphasize their human-like characteristics (Hegner et al., 2017). The anthropomorphization of a brand can lead to increased engagement, which positively affects brand love (Loureiro et al., 2017). For example, the personal branding of celebrities contributes to brand love through the mediating role of the common meaning of consumption and shared signs of the consumer culture (Zhou et al., 2020). As a result of their comprehensive literature review, Palusuk et al. (2019) have stated that brand love can appear in the early stages of a consumer-brand relationship similar to a marriage, in which customers "fall in love" with a brand and feel passion and intimacy. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: *The anthropomorphization of a brand is positively related to brand love.*

2.3. Brand Forgiveness

Forgiveness is getting over negative thoughts or replacing negative feelings with positive ones, and it can be valid in consumer-brand relationships (Kim et al., 2019). Forgiveness is considered a complex cognitive, affective, and behavioral phenomenon (McCullough & Worthington, 1995). The perceived behavior of brands, which is the result of brand anthropomorphization, influences consumers' emotions and thoughts. The human-like characteristics attributed to brands change people's reactions toward them. For example, consumers may show varying levels of forgiveness for product or service failures depending on the level of personal identification with the brand (Kim et al., 2019).

H4: *The anthropomorphization of a brand is positively related to brand forgiveness.*

Forgiving a brand's wrongdoings may be a result of emotional or cognitive processes. When consumers have a powerful attachment to a brand, they become more willing to forgive it in cases of problems (Aaker et al., 2004; Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Fedorikhin, 2008). Consumers are usually more willing to forgive mistakes made by brands if they have a strong relationship with

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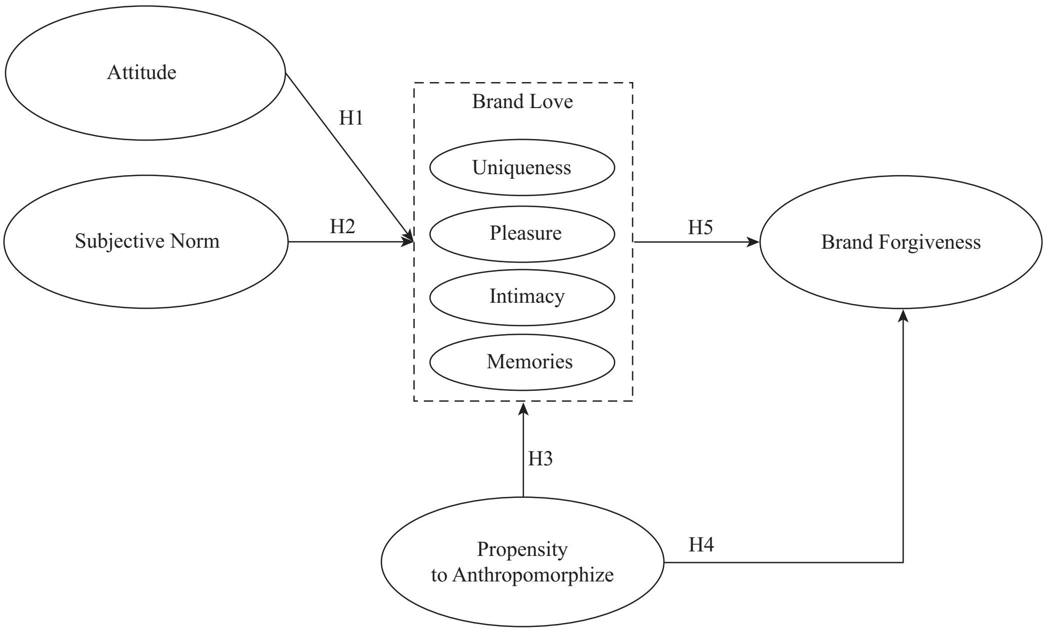
the brand (Heinrich et al., 2012) or feel love toward it (Hegner et al., 2017). Brand love directly influences brand loyalty (Algharabat, 2017), positive word of mouth (Strandberg & Styvén, 2020), brand equity (Palazon et al., 2019) and can be associated with resistance to negative news and information towards a brand (Batra et al., 2012). Joshi and Garg (2021) have also shown that brand love positively influences brand loyalty and brand engagement acts as a mediator in the brand love-loyalty relationship. Therefore, H5 is developed as:

H5: *Brand love is positively related to brand forgiveness.*

The research model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The research model



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection Procedure

A global sportswear brand is used in the study. Clothing is a way of self-expression for many consumers and ready-to-wear is an appropriate product category to study consumer-brand relationships. Besides their generally vast target markets, ready-to-wear brands are more likely to create strong bonds with their consumers than other brands (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2017). Within that context, apparel brands gained significant attention of marketing scholars worldwide (Joshi & Garg, 2021). The brand targets mass and upper-mass consumer segments in Turkey with a wide range of ages, gender, occupation, and lifestyle. Data were collected through online questionnaires using the snowball sampling method, which turned out a convenience sample with 247 complete surveys.

3.2. The Scales

The scales were adopted from Hegner et al. (2017). The attitude construct was measured by four items, including the participants' opinions about the brand regarding being funny, interesting,

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rewarding, and desirable. Subjective norm was measured by three items that included the participants' views about the opinions of others and the society about their brand choice. Brand anthropomorphization was measured by four items and had questions about the participant's perceptions of the brand's free will, emotions, consciousness, and mind. Brand forgiveness was measured by four items, including the participant's intention to defend the brand, take revenge on the brand, and repurchase it. Brand love was measured by twelve items associated with the uniqueness, pleasure, and intimacy of the brand and the memories evoked by it.

The items were translated into Turkish and then re-translated into English (Ball et al., 2002). The original and re-translated items of the brand love scale are listed in Appendix Table 1. After taking the opinion of a marketing professional, items were finalized in Turkish. Responses of participants were collected on a 5-point Likert scale, from "*1-Strongly disagree*" to "*5-Strongly agree*" options.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and the Reliability of Scales

After the elimination of incomplete questionnaires, 247 valid surveys were obtained. 65% of the participants were female. The mean age was 30, with a standard deviation of 10. Participants' education level was 1% primary school, 23% high school, 50% undergraduate, and 26% graduate level.

The factor analysis results for brand love scale items were highly satisfactory, with a KMO value of 89% and items loading on four dimensions as indicated in the literature while explaining 83% of the variance. The scale was reliable with Cronbach's Alpha levels greater than 0.7 for all dimensions of brand love, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Brand love scale factor analysis

Factors and Related Items	Communalities	Factor Loadings	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Uniqueness (UN)				
UN1	0.870	0.869	13.041%	0.724
UN2	0.783	0.707		
Pleasure (PL)				
PL1	0.773	0.830	28.035%	0.917
PL2	0.814	0.861		
PL3	0.833	0.823		
PL4	0.826	0.808		
Intimacy (IN)				
IN1	0.753	0.595	18.412%	0.864
IN2	0.876	0.781		
IN3	0.812	0.843		
Memories (ME)				
ME1	0.858	0.822	23.778%	0.934
ME2	0.903	0.894		
ME3	0.892	0.847		
Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.896 Bartlett test of sphericity = 2383.866, $p = 0.000$ Total variance explained = 83.266%				

Note: Principal component analysis and varimax rotation were used.

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Factor analysis results for the other scale items were also satisfactory (KMO = 89%). The scales were reliable with Cronbach's Alpha levels that are greater than 0.7, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Factor analysis results for other scale items

Factors and Related Items	Communalities	Factor Loadings	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude (AT)				
AT1	0.720	0.818		
AT2	0.748	0.815	17.899%	0.815
AT3	0.522	0.637		
AT4	0.704	0.748		
Subjective Norm (SN)				
SN1	0.882	0.890		
SN2	0.902	0.897	19.785%	0.945
SN3	0.885	0.912		
Brand Anthropomorphisation (BA)				
BA1	0.795	0.818		
BA2	0.667	0.615	19.460%	0.906
BA3	0.867	0.818		
BA4	0.819	0.783		
Brand Forgiveness (BF)				
BF1	0.655	0.740		
BF2	0.531	0.622	18.615%	0.834
BF3	0.846	0.875		
BF4	0.820	0.849		
Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.862 Bartlett test of sphericity = 2716.293, $p = 0.000$ Total variance explained = 75.760%				

Note: Principal component analysis and varimax rotation were used.

4.2. Brand Love as the Dependent Variable

Regression analyses were conducted for testing hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. As an initial check, sub-dimensions of brand love, which were uniqueness, pleasure, intimacy, and memories, were analyzed one by one as dependent variables. The impact of the subjective norm, attitude, and brand anthropomorphization on the dimensions of brand love construct were analyzed with separate regression analyses.

After this initial check, their impact on the first-order or composite brand love construct was calculated by taking the arithmetic average of brand love dimensions. The regression analyses showed that attitude did not significantly impact brand love, so hypothesis 1 (H1) regarding the relationship between brand love and brand attitude was not confirmed. On the other hand, subjective norms significantly influenced brand love, with significant p levels for all dimensions, so hypothesis 2 (H2) regarding the positive relationship between subjective norms and brand love was confirmed.

Brand anthropomorphization had a significant effect on the uniqueness and pleasure dimensions of brand love but did not have a significant impact on the intimacy and memories dimensions. Since brand love is multi-dimensional, some of its dimensions may show different trends than others (Schmid & Huber, 2019). The results of the multivariate regression analyses are illustrated in Table 3.

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Table 3
Multivariate regression analysis results for brand love

Dependent Variable	F	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Independent Variables	Unstandardized *B*	Standardized *β* Coefficients	Significance (*p*)	VIF
Uniqueness	41.370 (p = 0.000)	0.338	0.330	SN	0.202	0.243	0.000	1.343
				AT	0.063	0.079	0.214	1.473
				PA	0.354	0.370	0.000	1.685
Pleasure	57.528 (p = 0.000)	0.415	0.408	SN	0.239	0.273	0.000	1.343
				AT	0.084	0.100	0.094	1.473
				PA	0.402	0.399	0.000	1.685
Intimacy	67.529 (p = 0.000)	0.455	0.448	SN	0.567	0.686	0.000	1.343
				AT	0.012	0.016	0.787	1.473
				PA	–0.034	–0.036	0.560	1.685
Memories	81.925 (p = 0.000)	0.503	0.497	SN	0.652	0.703	0.000	1.343
				AT	0.067	0.075	0.173	1.473
				PA	–0.052	–0.049	0.404	1.685
Brand Love	110.129 (p = 0.000)	0.576	0.571	SN	0.415	0.591	0.000	1.343
				AT	0.056	0.084	0.099	1.473
				PA	0.167	0.207	0.000	1.685

Since the impact of attitude was insignificant, it is interpreted that the theory of planned behavior was insufficient to explain brand love.

4.3. Brand Forgiveness as the Dependent Variable

Brand anthropomorphization had a significant effect on brand forgiveness ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.544$), so hypothesis 4 (H4) regarding the positive relationship between brand anthropomorphization and brand forgiveness was confirmed.

All dimensions of brand love had significant effects on brand forgiveness and the significance and standardized beta values were computed as follows: uniqueness ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.462$), pleasure ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.581$), intimacy ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.328$), and memory ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.340$). Besides, the first-order brand love had a significant impact on brand forgiveness ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.527$). Thus, H5 could not be rejected.

4.4. Brand Love as a Mediator

Previous analyses had shown that subjective norms had a significant impact on brand love, and brand love had a significant impact on brand forgiveness. The mediating effect of brand love was analyzed by Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro procedure, model 4. The mediation analysis showed that brand love mediated the relationship between subjective norms and brand forgiveness.

The analysis was repeated for brand anthropomorphization. Although it did not have a significant effect on the first-order brand love construct, it influenced brand forgiveness and the uniqueness and pleasure dimensions of brand love. A mediation analysis revealed that both the direct and indirect effects of brand anthropomorphization on brand forgiveness were significant. As can be seen in Table 4, brand love acted as a mediator variable between brand

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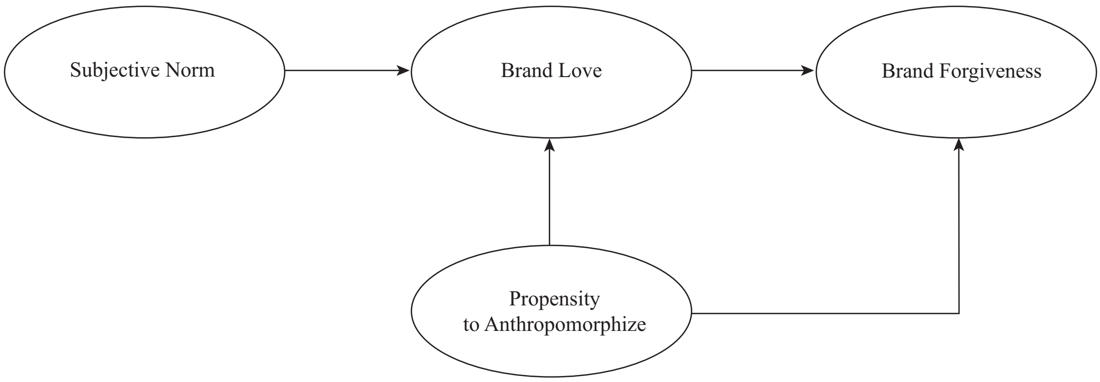
anthropomorphization and brand forgiveness. PROCESS analysis results and model statistics are reported in Appendix Table 2 and Appendix Table 3.

Table 4
Mediation analyses for brand love

Dependent Variable: Brand Forgiveness					
Independent Variable	Brand Love (Mediator)	Direct effect	Indirect Effect		
			Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Mediation
Subjective norms	Brand Love	No (p = 0.889)	0.2019	0.4540	Yes
Brand anthropomorphisation	Brand Love	Yes (p = 0.000)	0.0768	0.2938	Yes

The results of the analyses are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2
The mediation relationship



5. DISCUSSION

The findings showed that a positive attitude towards a brand does not significantly influence brand love, while subjective norms significantly influenced brand love. Accordingly, it can be interpreted that the theory of planned behavior was not sufficient in explaining brand love. Although the theory of planned behavior provides a strong theoretical domain in consumer behavior and it has been used in many studies, it may have some limitations and the attitude construct may be insignificant depending on the research context (Han & Stoel, 2017). This study contributes to the literature by examining brand love and forgiveness constructs within the theory of planned behavior in an emerging market context, as emerging markets have a big potential for marketers in various sectors (Joshi & Garg, 2021). By examining the antecedents of the brand love and brand forgiveness constructs, this study provides marketing managers and academicians with empirical evidence regarding the factors that can shape consumer-brand relationships. Examining brand love is crucial for both marketing managers and academicians (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020).

The findings of this study have partly supported Hegner et al. (2017), who stated that the theory of planned behavior was effective in explaining brand love in their sample; although the impact of attitude on brand love was significant for both high and low-involvement cases in their study, it was insignificant in the current study. This finding can be explained by the fact that the attitude construct in Hegner et al.’s (2017) study was conceptualized as the “attitude towards loving a brand” while the current study has conceptualized it as the attitude toward the brand,

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in alignment with its research questions. Although attitude is a substantial factor for feelings and judgments toward brands, a strong emotion such as brand love may stand independently. For example, Bairrada et al. (2018) have shown that perceived quality was also insignificant in explaining brand love.

On the other hand, the significant impact of the subjective norm on brand love was in alignment with Hegner et al. (2017) and Palazon et al. (2017), who have shown the impact of belonging to a brand community on brand love. While people may have specific attitudes towards a brand, they can be influenced by other individuals' opinions in their social network, such as reference groups or role models. Factors that make brands more attractive in social contexts such as perceived brand value and prestige were previously shown to positively influence brand love (Bairrada et al., 2018). This finding can also be explained by the relatively collectivist culture of Turkey compared to the more individualistic Western cultures. In the Turkish culture, others' views have a strong impact on people's attitudes. Culture directly influences consumers' approach to brand love, i.e. collectivist cultures tend to attach higher importance to love from a social and community perspective, while individualistic cultures view love as more related to one's individual identity (Palusuk et al., 2019).

Although the theory of planned behavior is a widely studied topic in the literature, brand love and brand forgiveness are relatively new concepts. This study has contributed to the literature by presenting empirical research findings on the relationships of these constructs with another attention-raising concept, brand anthropomorphization. Brand anthropomorphization has been conceptualized within the theory of planned behavior, but the findings of this study showed that this theoretical domain is not sufficient for explaining the antecedents of brand love.

The second finding of the study was the significant positive impact of brand anthropomorphization on brand love. In particular, brand anthropomorphization positively influenced brand love for the uniqueness and pleasure dimensions. This finding supported the findings by Delgado-Ballester et al. (2017), who have also examined brand love in the clothing product category. Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014) stated that the perceived level of anthropomorphism is a significant antecedent of brand love, and it is more important than the perceived quality of the brand. The findings have also supported Rauschnabel and Ahuvia's (2014) study in the ready-to-wear industry and showed the mediating effect of brand love between anthropomorphizing a brand and brand forgiveness. Attributing personal characteristics to a brand is important for loving it. Furthermore, brand love has been shown to mediate the relationships between brand image and purchase intention, brand image and word of mouth, brand experience and word of mouth (Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019; Rodrigues & Brandão, 2020).

Another important and unique contribution of the current study is showing the significant direct impact of brand anthropomorphization on brand forgiveness. Associating human-like characteristics with brands may lead to human-like considerations regarding brands as if they have feelings and consciousness (Epley et al., 2007; Puzakava et al., 2009). Therefore, brand anthropomorphization leads to higher brand forgiveness. When brands are considered as humans, people become willing to forgive them and make more positive evaluations (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2017). Zhou et al. (2020) have also shown the positive impact of a celebrity's congruence and attractiveness on consumers' emotions toward brands.

This study has shown that brand love has a positive effect on brand forgiveness. This finding has supported Bauer et al. (2009) and Hegner et al. (2017) and showed that consumers are more likely to ignore a brand's mistakes if they have cognitive solid and affective bonds with brands. Besides, Palazon et al. (2017) have posited that brand love positively influences brand equity. The findings of the current study also support the positive effect of brand love on brand equity. As the propensity to forgive a brand increases, repurchase intentions and loyalty also increase and contribute to brand equity.

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In summary, the study results revealed that brand anthropomorphization significantly influences brand love and brand forgiveness. Subjective norms significantly affect brand love, and brand love acts as a mediator in the subjective norm-brand forgiveness and the brand anthropomorphization-brand forgiveness relationships. Sajtos et al. (2020) have pointed out the importance of examining brand love in different contexts. As a relatively new construct, brand love will develop better by accumulating knowledge from different cultures. Hoping to contribute to this knowledge accumulation, this study presented empirical research findings from Turkey.

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study findings point to guidelines for brand managers to create brand love for their brands to increase customer-brand relationships. An important practical implication of these findings is that brand love is an important factor for ensuring consumers' forgiveness in cases of product failures and avoiding possible reputation loss problems. Brands benefit from consumers' love in increasing brand loyalty and repurchase intentions (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). In addition, the current study has shown that brand love is positively related to brand forgiveness. Therefore, firms must establish a good relationship with their customers and deserve their love to gain a competitive advantage. Having more positive and stronger relationships with consumers may be enabled by several actions. First of all, as a basic requirement, brands must keep their promises to their customers. Second, they must exceed expectations and create a favorable image associated with uniqueness, pleasure, intimacy, and memories. Differentiation will be a good strategy to evoke stronger and more favorable consumer emotions. To that end, firms must invest in strategic marketing actions to build and maintain favorable symbolic brand attributes. For example, firms can design attractive events or experiences for their target consumers or employ specific programs to retain their loyal customers (Yi & Jeon, 2003). Besides, offering interactions with the brand on social media may also contribute to brand love since Laroche et al. (2013) have shown that such activities lead to positive word of mouth and brand loyalty. While mass marketing mediums may be utilized for building positive attitudes and feelings, social media may be a more direct channel to create bonds and experience brand-related emotions in an interactive way. Such marketing actions will increase a brand's competitive power since brand love directly influences positive word of mouth, which is among the most trusted means of communication and sources of information (Strandberg & Styvén, 2020). All of these actions support brand love, and consumers become more likely to recommend the brand to others and forgive its mistakes.

According to the findings, anthropomorphism provides good opportunities for branding. Supporting previous findings, this study has shown that brand anthropomorphism motivates consumers to develop human-like bonds with brands and increasing levels of anthropomorphism increases brand love (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Since ready-to-wear brands are more self-expressive, they become a symbol of status or unique identity for many customers. As an emerging market, consumers in Turkey are highly involved in fashion shopping. This study has shown that brands can differentiate their brands and build stronger emotional bonds with their customers by including human-like features. Using influencers or celebrities, getting endorsed by opinion leaders, or communicating in the first person can be listed as some ways for brand managers to present human-like characteristics of their brands (Puzakova et al., 2009). Using such attributes in marketing activities such as social media marketing or in-store promotions are more likely to generate positive emotions and influence consumers' brand love and forgiveness positively.

Regarding brand forgiveness, firms that want to have a unique and strong positioning in the market and a high level of customer loyalty must establish brand love because brand love acts as a barrier in case of a crisis or a brand failure and decreases consumers' likelihood to churn. Taking customers' emotions into consideration in product or service failures, providing a sincere

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apology with the product or service redress may effectively stimulate brand love and brand forgiveness.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As with other academic studies, this study has some limitations. First of all, it was based on a convenience sample and a single brand. Secondly, it has a correlational nature, which does not allow for inferences about causal mechanisms in the model. Besides, the attitude construct was operationalized differently from previous studies (Hegner et al., 2017). Although that was a difference that has contributed to the originality of the current study, it may limit the ability to compare the findings with previous research. Finally, the scales were translated into the local language. This can also be seen as an issue although the researchers followed the generally accepted item adaptation procedures strictly.

Future research can be carried out by random sampling methods with different respondents and brands. Similar studies may also be conducted in other product categories or services by using more than one brand. Further studies can consider separating luxury and non-luxury brands and examine the differences between them. Besides, the impact of culture needs more research. Studies that focus on the interpretation of consumer-brand relationships and distinguish between hedonic and functional products in various cultural settings will contribute to the existing knowledge about brand love. In particular, examining the influence of marketing actions of highly self-expressive brands such as apparel and luxury brands would be beneficial. Because the consumer perspective may differ depending on the geographic location and cultural context, such research would contribute to marketing practitioners in multinational companies by providing guidelines for implementing their marketing campaigns across countries. So, future studies may be conducted comparing different countries and taking marketing communication activities of brands into consideration. Another direction for future research may be measuring the actual levels of brand love and interpreting the findings by examining the associated customer complaints. Such an effort would be very effective in revealing the relationship between brand love, brand forgiveness, and consumer complaining behavior and present solid findings. Moreover, the impact of brand anthropomorphism on brand love and forgiveness can be examined further by distinguishing different product categories and brand characteristics. Finally, other antecedents of brand love can be explored, aiming to find a more robust theoretical framework.

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APPENDIX

Table 1
The original and re-translated scale items (Hegner et al., 2017)

Items	Original item	Item in Turkish	Re-translated item
Uniqueness			
UN1	This brand is special.	… markası özeldir.	… brand is special.
UN2	This brand is unique.	…, eşsizdir.	… is unique.
Pleasure			
PL1	By buying this brand, I take pleasure.	…'dan bir ürün satın almak beni memnun eder.	I am pleased to purchase a product from …
PL2	Discovering new products from this brand is a pure pleasure.	…'un yeni ürünlerini keşfetmek benim için bir zevktir.	It is my pleasure to discover the new products of …
PL3	I take a real pleasure in using this brand.	… markasını kullanmak benim için gerçekten bir zevktir.	It is truly a pleasure for me to use the … brand.
PL4	I am always happy to use this brand.	… markasını kullanmak bana her zaman mutluluk verir.	Using the … brand always makes me happy.
Intimacy			
IN1	I value this brand greatly in my life.	… markasının hayatımda önemli bir yeri bulunur.	The … brand has an important place in my life.
IN2	There is something almost "magical" about my relationship with this brand.	… markasıyla aramızda neredeyse "büyülü" denilebilecek bir bağ vardır.	There is an almost "magical" bond between me and the … brand.
IN3	There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with this brand.	Benim için … markasıyla aramızdaki ilişkiden daha önemli bir şey yoktur.	For me, there is nothing more important than my relationship with the … brand.
Memories			
ME1	This brand reminds me of someone important to me.	… markası bana, benim için önemli birini hatırlatır.	The … brand reminds me of someone important to me.
ME2	This brand brings my memories back.	… markası, bazı anılarımı aklıma getirir.	The … brand brings back some memories.
ME3	I associate this brand with some important events of my life.	… markasını hayatımdaki bazı önemli olaylarla ilişkilendiririm.	I associate the … brand with some important events in my life.

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Table 2
Brand love PROCESS procedure mediation analysis results-1

Brand anthropomorphization → Brand love → Brand forgiveness					
Outcome variable: Brand love					
Model summary		*p*	R^2	MSE	*F*
		0.000	0.2975	0.3546	103.7617
Model	Variable	coeff.	se	*t*	*p*
	Brand anthropomorphization	0.4403	0.0432	10.1863	0.000
Outcome variable: Brand forgiveness					
Model summary		p	R^2	MSE	*F*
		0.000	0.3714	0.4537	72.0749
Model	Variable	coeff.	se	*t*	*p*
	Brand anthropomorphization	0.3522	0.0583	6.0369	0.000
	Brand love	0.3906	0.0723	5.4056	0.000

Table 3
Brand love PROCESS procedure mediation analysis results-2

Subjective norms → Brand love → Brand forgiveness					
Outcome variable: Brand love					
Model summary		*p*	R^2	MSE	*F*
		0.000	0.5246	0.2400	270.3537
Model	Variable	coeff.	se	*t*	*p*
	Subjective norms	0.5082	0.0309	16.4424	0.000
Outcome variable: Brand forgiveness					
Model summary		*p*	R^2	MSE	*F*
		0.000	0.2775	0.5214	46.8682
Model	Variable	coeff.	se	*t*	*p*
	Subjective norms	–0.0092	0.0661	–0.1386	0.889
	Brand love	0.6380	0.0942	6.7752	0.000

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Value Co-Creation on Public Social Media at Different Stages of the New Product Development Process. A Case Study of a Polish Clothes Manufacturer

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the value co-creation theory in the context of the new product development process. The aim of this study is a comparison of interactions that lead to creation of value on public social media. The considered interactions are at different stages of the new product development process: an idea generation and product development (crowdsourcing) and post-launch (product offerings). The place where interactions take place is Facebook fan page of a Polish clothes manufacturer. The DART model of value co-creation is the framework of the comparison. The results show that interactions at the stage of ideation and product development phase attracted more attention from the social media users than post-launch ones. Interactions at the stage of idea generation phase encouraged social media users to communicate with other social media users. It was rare with post-launch activities in the form of product offering. The study is qualitative, based on a case study of a Polish clothes manufacturer with the use of an in-depth interview and netnography.

JEL classification: M30, M31

Keywords: value co-creation, crowdsourcing, new product development, social media

1. INTRODUCTION

Value co-creation is an important issue in marketing literature. Prahalad, Ramaswamy and Venkat (2004) point out that interaction is crucial to value co-creation. In the past, interaction between the consumer and the company occurred principally at the point of sale and lasted through the consumption.

Currently, with the research focus on Internet usage and social media, interaction points are shifting. First, interaction on social media engages the company and both consumers and other social media users. Second, continuous interaction is possible regardless of the purchase or even intention of purchase. It may concern also products at the development stage.

One of the methods of interaction with social media users during the new product development process is crowdsourcing. According to Howe (2008, p. 1), crowdsourcing is "the act of taking a task traditionally performed by a designated agent (such as an employee or a contractor)

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and outsourcing it by making an open call to an undefined but large group of people". Online communities of people sharing common interests are the strength of crowdsourcing.

The major aim of this study was to investigate differences in value co-creation interaction on public social media at different stages of the new product development process. Value co-creation interactions at two stages of the new product development process were compared – idea generating with the use of crowdsourcing and product launching. The methodological approach is the DART model proposed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). This work takes the form of a case study of a Polish clothes manufacturer. Interactions with customers at the company's Facebook fan page were investigated. The study is qualitative with the use of an in-depth interview with a company representative, netnography and data collected on social media.

This paper has been divided into five parts. The first part deals with a literature review about (1) value-co creation, (2) value propositions at different stages of new product development, (3) value co-creation and social media, (4) the DART model, which leads to the identification of a research gap. The second part provides the data and method explanation. In the third part, the results of the study are presented. The fourth part is a discussion where findings are evaluated and interpreted. The fifth part is the conclusion where limitations and future research directions are also shown.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Value Co-Creation

Value co-creation is an emerging subject of academic discourse. As some authors show, there is still a need to merge the knowledge about value co-creation. Even the definition of value is incoherent. Chandler and Lusch (2015) show three main types of value – economic, financial and social and the combination of them. Galvagno and Dalli (2014) suggest two types of value: material or symbolical.

Galvagno and Dalli (2014) integrate the contribution made by other scholars to the theory of value co-creation. In a systematic literature review, they identify three main theoretical perspectives of the value co-creation research: service science, innovation and technology management, marketing and consumer research. They also imply that all of those perspectives are strongly bonded. Each of the perspectives is described below.

The service science perspective is the dominant perspective (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014). In this research area, value co-creation is evaluated with the use of service-dominant logic. According to Vargo and Lusch (2016), who introduced service-dominant logic into theory, this perspective is still growing. Initially, scholars have investigated the service-dominant logic at the dyadic relations level (e.g. consumer-company). However, it has turned into a more general perspective which we can apply to a larger number of actors involved in value co-creation.

Service-dominant logic describes service as the unit of exchange (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 8). Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 256) define service as "the application of competences (knowledge and skills) for the benefit of another party". Before the service starts, actors need to be invited to share their skills and knowledge. Those "invitations from actors to one another to engage in service" (Chandler & Lusch, 2015, p. 8) are value propositions. Based on value propositions, actors use their skills and knowledge (operant resources) to create value. Each actor determines the value individually. The same value proposition can cause unique value for every actor involved in process. Actors create the value through the interactions between them (Bai & Yu, 2021).

Interactions are also a central part of the innovation and management technology perspective (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014). However, in this stream of research, the use of technology in creating innovation is highlighted. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), technology is a part of

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successful interaction. Important places of interaction are interactive websites and social media (Lorenzo-Romero & Constantinides, 2019).

The other part of successful interaction is the positive attitude of managers toward value co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Much of the current literature on value-co-creation pays particular attention to interactions between companies and consumers. It is caused by the micro-level investigation of value co-creation process at the early stage of theory evolution (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 6). More attention has focused on investigation of the consumer's attitude toward value co-creation activities. Thus contributes to the development of marketing and consumer research perspective.

2.2. Value Propositions at Different Stages of the New Product Development Process

Value proposition is an invitation to interact. One actor sends this invitation to others. Consumers and companies are actors taking part in interactions and thus in the value co-creation process. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), every interaction between the consumer and the company is of critical importance for value co-creation.

In their article, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) show potential points of interaction. The points mentioned by them are "information search, configuration of products and services, fulfilment, and consumption" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 11). Under the previous marketing orientation, customers were considered as passive participants of goods and services exchange. Thus, value propositions in the past research were existing products and services offered by companies.

However, the character of interaction is changing. Additionally, relationships between consumers and companies are changing. The role of consumers now is not only a purchase of products. They share knowledge with companies and become partners in product co-creation (Maklan et al., 2008). In effect, they become an important resource in the new product development process.

Bretschneider and Zogaj (2016) point out that interaction between consumers and companies leads to development of new products. Existing products and services are still regarded as value propositions (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 256). However, there is also another value proposition. Companies may invite consumers to take part in the new product development process.

Hoyer et al. (2010) show four stages of the new product development process: ideation, product development, commercialisation, post-launch. Previously, co-creation of value took place only at the two last stages – commercialisation and post-launch. Nowadays, it is possible to interact with customers also at the beginning of this process – in the ideation and product development phase.

Crowdsourcing is a tool of interaction between companies and consumers. According to one of the definitions, it is "the act of taking a task traditionally performed by a designated agent (such as an employee or a contractor) and outsourcing it by making an open call to an undefined but large group of people" (Howe, 2008, p. 1). This group may help a company in idea generation (Fedorenko & Berthon, 2017), idea screening (Sarmah & Rahman, 2017) or design (example of 99designs). Nowadays, online open calls make this group of people larger than decades ago.

Companies may offer twofold value propositions in the form of open calls. First, companies can spread them through the website of a company that specialises in undertaking crowdsourcing activities for other parties (e.g. 99designs, InnoCentive). Second, a company can announce them in its own channels, like the official website or the company's social media.

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2.3. Social Media and Value Co-Creation

Social media is an egalitarian place of interaction between users (Peters et al., 2013). As interaction is crucial for value co-creation (Prahalad 2004), social media is a place where value co-creation is possible. Also Rashid et al. (2019, p. 779) have noticed that "value co-creation and social media have a natural alliance". Vargo and Lusch (2016, p. 7) highlight the network nature of value co-creation. Peters et al. (2013, p. 282) define social media as "communication systems that allow their social actors to communicate along dyadic ties".

Bhimani et al. (2019), in their systematic literature review about social media used for innovation activities, mentioned four types of social media: public, company-built, company-licensed and innovation intermediary. According to them, public social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) are commonly used in interaction between companies and external users, i.e. customers and consumers.

A systematic literature review about social media and value co-creation conducted by Rashid et al. (2019) concerned social media use in co-creation and new product development. However, the major concern of their research was co-creation activities. The aim of co-creation, as they show, is new product development. Their research draws little attention to co-creation of value at the stage of commercialisation and post-launch or deep understanding of interactions between actors involved in value co-creation.

Last, social media is not commonly used to co-create value in Poland. Bojanowska (2018) conducted research on the sample of sixty Polish small and medium-sized enterprises. According to her findings, Polish companies do not regard social media as a crucial point of interaction. Their posts occur irregularly. Companies treat social media as a place where information about a company's website address is available.

2.4. The DART Model

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) suggest that consumers are not only passive participants of the market. Consumers want to affect the business of their suppliers. To create the environment for the cooperation among actors, there is a necessity to interact with consumers. The basis of this interaction is four elements: dialogue, access, transparency and risk. Each of the elements is described below.

Dialogue must be conducted between equal partners with the use of technology (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). According to Russo Spena et al. (2012, p. 24), it is "interactivity, deep engagement and a reciprocal propensity to act". According to Mai et al. (2020), it is "the process of communication and sharing knowledge between customers and providers".

Access is a possibility of an individual to gain all needed information from the company or other consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). According to Mai et al. (2020), this information should be possible to get before the product purchase.

Russo Spena et al. (2012, p. 24) states that "transparency involves the symmetry of information during interactions, which enables the rise of strategic information and trust capital for both partners". Mai et al. (2020) show the importance of public information about companies' prices, costs, and profits.

The risk/benefits assessment of a product is possible because of dialogue, access and transparency. Because of those elements, an individual can judge potential risk or benefits of products or services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). To enable the analysis of interactions at the stage of generating new ideas, the risk/benefit definition has been extended. In this article, the risk/benefit applies to value propositions, not only to products and services.

Until now, the DART model has been used to investigate the determinants of co-creation in citizen energy projects (Ryszawska et al., 2021) and user satisfaction in the e-hailing service

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(Jenal, Mohamed, Hanawi, Athirah, & Idros, 2021, p. 2445). Then, the model was used to investigate tourists' experience in the hotel industry (Solakis et al., 2021), patients' value co-creation behaviour (Mai et al., 2020), interactions in temporary shops in Italy (Russo Spena et al., 2012), to explain the repurchase intention (Reche et al., 2019) or the mediator's role in supporting co-creation for vulnerable consumers (Johns & Davey, 2019, p. 5). Donatto et al. (2017) use the DART model to describe values co-created between companies at the social business-to-business network.

There are two studies with the use of the DART model which consider phenomena related to social media and new product development. One attempt to investigate social media with the DART framework (Schiavone et al., 2014) aims to highlight the importance of technology in interaction. In this research, the DART model applies to social media in general. The main conclusion is that technology management should be regarded as the fifth element of the DART model when concerning co-creation on social media.

The aim of the second study (Permatasari et al., 2021) is to create a value co-creation model which leads to success in the commercialisation phase of domestic product development in Indonesia. They conducted qualitative research with the use of in-depth interviews, observations, archival materials. They collected the data based on IKKON (Innovation and Creativity through Archipelago Collaboration) program, which aims "to develop a good quality and marketable innovative economic products (…)" (Permatasari et al., 2021, p. 416). In their research, the DART model applies to all the phases of new product development. Researchers compare the new product development processes before and after the IKKON program implementation. However, there is no information about the type of the developed products and tools used in the new product development process.

2.5. Research Gap and Research Question

Crowdsourcing in the new product development process is an important subject of research. Still, only few studies investigated crowdsourcing with the use of value co-creation theory. Bai and Yu (2021) researched crowdsourcing with the use of a value co-creation model. However, they focus on a crowdsourcing platform, disregarding crowdsourcing on public social media.

Interactions that lead to co-creation of value start with a value proposition. In social media, there is a possibility of setting various value propositions. The aim of this research is to investigate interactions between the company and consumers on public social media. Interactions at two stages of the new product development process are compared with the DART framework. The first type of interaction begins with a value proposition as a crowdsourcing open call during the ideation or product development stage. The second type of interaction begins with a value proposition in the form of product offering at the post-launch stage.

To my best knowledge, crowdsourcing activities on public social media have never been investigated with the use of the DART model of value co-creation introduced by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). No previous studies try to investigate the value propositions on social media at different stages of new product development.

In conclusion, the research question is: what are the differences between interactions based on value propositions at the product ideation and development stage and the post-launch stage of the new product development process.

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3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1. Research Method and Sampling

The research question is: what are the differences between interactions based on value propositions at the product ideation and development stage and the post-launch stage of the new product development process. This question is novel because it is an attempt to find differences between value co-creation interactions at different stages of the new product development process. It is also novel because the stage of product ideation and development is regarded as the value proposition.

The research method of the study is a single case study of a Polish clothes manufacturer. Finding a big sample of Polish companies that interact with customers and use crowdsourcing on social media at the level of ideation and product development stage of the new product development process is difficult or almost impossible. Thus, the study uses qualitative analysis in order to gain insights into new phenomena of Polish companies' activity on public social media. Analyses are conducted at two levels: consumers and company. That is because of the two-side character of value co-creation interactions.

Data were collected with the use of three methods. First, an in-depth interview with a company representative was conducted in June 2021. The representative is in charge of online communication with consumers. It is a person who has the widest knowledge about the communication held by the company on social media. This part of the study helps to understand the phenomena from the company's perspective. Then, netnography on the Facebook group of the company was conducted from 1 July to 16 August. This step helped to observe both company and consumer. As Kozinets (2002) claims, netnography is "an online marketing research technique for providing consumer insight". If needed, data got during the in-depth interview or netnography were compared or checked with the company's website.

Data got with the use of the above methods are both qualitative and quantitative. Those data were analysed through the lens of the DART model to find out the differences between interactions based on value propositions at the product ideation and development stage and the post-launch stage of the new product development process.

3.2. Characteristics of the Company

The MyBasic company is a Polish manufacturer of clothes for babies, kids and adults. The company sells products only in an online shop. A major form of communication with customers and consumers is online channels – website, electronic newsletter, and social media. The social media used by company are: blog, Facebook, Instagram.

The focus of the research is the activity at the company's Facebook fan page, because this is the major form of interactions concerning non-existing products. Those interactions start with the value proposition in the form of a crowdsourcing open call.

Other types of interactions at the Facebook fan page are linked to the commercialisation and post-launch phase of the new product development process. At these stages, product offerings and information about promotions are the dominant type of posts. A product offering is the second form of value proposition which is investigated in this research.

Over 30000 people follow the Facebook fan page of the company (August 2021). The company is an active participant of the fan page. The sample comprises 40 posts shared in 46 days between 1 July 2021 and 16 August 2021. According to this sample, the forms of interaction with users are posts about product offers (34 posts), crowdsourcing (2 posts), and promotions in the online shop (2 posts). In one post, the company shared photographs of its products sent by one of consumer. In the other, it announced a new functionality of the official website.

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3.3. Data Gathering and Analysis

The data were gathered with the use of three methods. First, an in-depth interview with a company representative was conducted. The representative is to manage the online communication with consumers and has the widest knowledge about social media interactions with customers. The data are qualitative – a transcription of the interview.

Thanks to netnography, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The first type is the record of comments made by consumers and the company in response to the company's value propositions. The second is quantitative data containing: number of posts made by company, number of posts which concern value proposition at the product ideation and development stage of the new product development process, number of posts which concern value proposition at the post-launch stage of the new product development process, numbers of reactions or comments related to each of the posts.

Each of the posts is also attributed with the information if consumers interact with the company or whether consumers interact with other consumers. Interaction between the company and consumers is defined as both consumer reaction to the post (likes, comments) and the company's reaction to the consumers' comments. Interaction between consumers is defined as responding to other consumers' posts, especially when one consumer mentions the other in his or her comment.

As a result, all the data were analysed with the use of the DART model. Information was assigned to one of the elements of the model: dialogue, access, risk or transparency.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The DART Model for Interaction at the Ideation and Product Development Stage and at the Post-Launch Stage of the New Product Development Process

The result of the analysis is the DART model for both crowdsourcing posts at the ideation and development stage of new product development and product offer at the post-launch stage of new product development. The result is shown in Table 1, and then the differences between both interactions are shown.

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Table 1
The DART model for interaction at the ideation and product development stage and the post-launch stage of the new product development process

	Value proposition at the ideation and product development stage of the new product development process – crowdsourcing	Value proposition at the post-launch stage of the new product development process – product offering
Dialogue	In this type of posts, the company asks consumers for product propositions, advice. The company communicates on Facebook with customers as equal partners. As the representative of the company mentioned: "we try to communicate in the way that consumers feel they affect our brand". It is visible in crowdsourcing posts. One of consumer comments is: "I really appreciate that you set the store's assortment according to needs. Two sides are satisfied!". Facebook possibilities define rules of the dialogue. Consumers may only comment on posts shared by the company or react in response to them (e.g. like, super, sad). In the sample, there are two posts that concern crowdsourcing. The company shares also information about an expected form of communication (comments or reactions). Those posts are the most popular among consumers. The first of them gained 1500 reactions and 249 comments. Here, the company asked consumer to give feedback as one of reactions: "I love it", I like it", " laugh". In the second crowdsourcing post, the company asked for help in developing a collection for toddlers. The company asked consumers to choose out of 6 propositions of products for toddlers and to give their feedback in comments. The post gained 30 reactions ("I like it", "I love it") and 685 comments. 68% of comments are just the act of choosing products that the company should develop. 4% of comments are the part of the company participation. The company mostly encourage consumers to give more feedback about their needs (10 items). 10% of total comments are the part of communication comments that are a continuation of one consumer comment. And last, 18% of comments (124 items) were both the act of choosing and advice about product features. This type of comments is a possibility for the company to gain consumer insight, which sometimes is not easily accessible, like: "maybe bodysuits, rompers and jumpers with full length zipper through the centre (...) for children requiring, e.g. cardiological diagnostics (cables from monitoring or holter) or after operations – a blessing" or "on the other hand, all parents who use reusable diapers will buy (product number-edit.) 3".	In this type of posts, the company spreads information about new products or new characteristic of products. For example: "SHORT LEGGINGS are recommended for summer! Narrow and fitted cut allows freedom of movement. And this flexible and airy material. And with 28 COLOURS, everyone will surely find the right one for themselves". Posts that encourage consumers to interact in the form of products offers are the major part of Facebook communication. Every post gained at least one reaction from consumers. Reactions are always positive – "I like it", "I love it". Three of posts with the highest amount of reaction are about, successively, a dress for children and two about clothes for an adult and a child. There are 12 posts that are not commented on by consumers, which is about 35% of this type of posts. In 14 cases, shared posts caused the formulation of the market need by consumers. Consumers mention the needs of product availability in different sizes, colours, for example: "and all size M. There are men under 175 cm and your clothes are too big". Consumers ask for advice concerning size or laundry care instructions. Sometimes consumers share their opinion about products: „your clothes are the best", „the sweatshirts are fantastic and nothing happens to them in the dryer". Facebook possibilities define rules of the dialogue. Consumers may only comment on post shared by the company or react in response to them (e.g. like, super, sad). The average number of comments for all posts is 5. The average number of reactions for all posts is 21.

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continued Table 1

	Value proposition at the ideation and product development stage of the new product development process – crowdsourcing	Value proposition at the post-launch stage of the new product development process – product offering
Access	Posts with crowdsourcing activities create conditions for consumer-to-consumer interaction. However, this communication does not concern existing product features, but previous experience in product use and personal preferences. In those types of posts, the company spreads information about future products and consumers have even the possibility of deciding what the product should be like. The company has access to tacit knowledge from customers.	Posts with product offerings rarely create conditions for consumer-to-consumer interaction (4 cases). Consumers help each other in choosing the right size or model of clothes. Communication between the company and consumers is twofold. First, the company introduces a new product offer. Second, the company pays attention to consumers who interact on social media in the form of responding to their comments. This type of posts gives consumers a possibility to ask other consumers or the company about product features.
Risk	The company's risks are twofold. First, this type of interaction may cause disappointment to some consumers; like the representative of the company mentioned, they want consumers to have "the feeling that I have the influence on what happened remains" with no "no such feeling of being deceived or disappointed or just attracting attention and nothing else". That occurs when a person engaged in the interaction feels that the company does not respect her/his input. Second, there is a risk that product ideated with consumers may not meet customers' expectation.	There is a risk that consumers may not interact in response to a product offer. The offered product may not meet consumers' expectation.
Transparency	Transparency is an important part of interaction. According to its official website, the company offers high-quality clothes made in Poland. The company makes clothes with the use of certificated oeko-tex fabrics. The company also tries to use less foil. Consumers may choose eco boxes for their orders. As a result, consumers are aware of ecological standards of production. Still, consumers are not provided with the information about profit, costs and prices, like for example consumers of Polish clothes company Elementy.	According to its official website, the company offers high-quality clothes made in Poland with the use of certificated oeko-tex fabrics. The company also tries to use less foil. Consumers may choose eco boxes for their orders. It is easy to get to know production standards in terms of ecology. Consumers can consciously decide whether to interact with the company according to the ecological issues. However, they still have no access to the information about profit, costs and prices.

Source: own research.

4.3. Differences

Major differences between interactions are visible in dialogue and access in the DART model. Interactions starting with a crowdsourcing open call attract more attention of the social media users. In addition, the company needs to establish additional rules of communication. It is unnecessary when the company presents a product offer.

Then, crowdsourcing posts are more engaging for consumers. Many of them take part in product development. In one corwdsourcing post, the company gained consumer insight from a large group of consumer. Answering 35 posts about a product at the stage of product launch, the company gained only 14 comments in which consumers mention their needs and preferences about products. Thanks to one of the crowdsourcing posts, the company gained 124 comments which are about product preferences and consumer needs. Some of them may be helpful in finding a niche for the company.

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An effect of crowdsourcing open calls is both customer-company and customer-to-customer communication. In the case of product offerings, customer-company is a major form of communication. Crowdsourcing open calls cause higher risk than product offerings. Some consumers may feel disappointment when the company does not use their input.

Transparency is similar in the case of both interactions. However, at the stage of product ideation and development, it helps customers to decide whether to engage in the creation of a product. At the post-launch stage, it helps to decide about the purchase.

5. DISCUSSION

This study is novel because of the use of the DART model to analyse interactions between the company and the consumer, also at the stage of ideation and new product development on social media. It is also a first attempt to compare the interaction between the consumer and the company at different levels of the new product development process.

According to my knowledge, in the literature there is one study which applies the DART model to the new products development process (Permatasari et al., 2021). Researchers compare the new product development model before the special program IKKON and after it. The aim of the IKKON program was to strengthen the creative economic sector in new product development. We do not know of tools which are used during the product development process and the type of product. However, at the ideation and product development stage, one difference is that in the product development model proposed by the IKKON program, consumers' needs are an important part of value co-creation. Before the IKKON program, consumers were not an active part of new product development. Similarly to the model proposed by the IKKON program, according to the results, consumer needs are also an important part of crowdsourcing activities on social media, as it helps to get to know consumer needs and preferences in the new product development process.

According to Schiavone et al. (2014), when as far as co-creation on social media is concerned, we should conduct analyses with the extended DART model. The fifth concerned element should be technology management. They define technology management as management of different social media networks, posting in order to encourage users to co-create. However, in their research, they analyse a case of the company that co-creates with users with the use of few social media channels: YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. In the case of my research, the company uses only Facebook fan page to co-create with consumers at different stages of new product development and the use of the fifth element was impossible. However, even with the use of one social media channel, in the case of co-creation as crowdsourcing, the company needs to manage consumers and set rules for commitment. This is in line with Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) definition of dialogue.

This study shows that the type of value proposition on social media may result in different interaction. The results show that value propositions based on a crowdsourcing open call are more interesting for social media users than product offerings. Social media users want to take part in development of new products. It is in accordance with Maklan et al. (2008), who claimed that consumers become partners in new product development. Then, interaction based on a crowdsourcing open call is not dyadic. This result is an additional support for social media definition proposed by Peters et al. (2013, p. 282).

Last, this study suggests the enrichment of the definition of access in the DART model when using it to analyse value co-creation before product launch. Mai et al. (2020) regarded access only as consumers' possibility of getting to know the product before purchase. However, according to the results of this study, this part of the DART model may be regarded also from the perspective of companies. Thanks to crowdsourcing, at the ideation and product development stage of the new product development process, access is the possibility for the company to get from customers the knowledge about demanded product characteristics before the launch of the product.

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Those results are significant also for practitioners. They are provided with the knowledge about the possibility to both attract social media users' attention and get knowledge about consumer needs from social media users.

6. CONLUSION

In this study, value is co-created as social media users and the company interact. Social media users and the company are actors who take part in value co-creation. The third actor is Facebook as a provider of technology. The aim of this research was to investigate interactions between the company and social media users at different stages of the new product development process. As a result, differences are presented – value propositions at the idea generation attract more attention of social media users and induce social media users to communicate with each other.

This study has limitations. First, interactions on only one public social media were investigated. Second, the DART model was investigated only from the perspective of one company. There was no direct insight from social media users. Moreover, it is beyond this study to examine a part of interaction that occurs outside social media (e.g. purchase of the product, consumption).

In further research, different interactions in other public social media may be investigated. It is also interesting to study if diverse interactions lead to creating specific value. A further study with more focus on differences between interactions in different crowdsourcing activities (e.g. voting, contest) is also suggested.

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Success and failure rates of new food and non-food products introduced on the market

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical and empirical research reveals that despite implementing new product development and management best practices, many projects fail with new product strategies. But what if failure rates as high as 90% are true? This would mean that high costs of product innovation are incurred by many stakeholders who create a specific network of relationships, not just enterprises. The widespread belief that the new product failure rate is 90% is not supported by empirical evidence. The aim of the paper is to present the real market effects of new products, success and failure rates, from the point of view of food and non-food companies representing various industries. The research measures in the field of marketing and sales effects of new products are also proposed. The method used in this paper is a literature review in the area of new product development and management. The author assumes that the review and conceptual nature of this research is dominant.

Practical and social implications of the study, its originality concerns the results that provide the basis for the improvement of enterprises' efforts in the field of a new product strategy. The limitations of the study include a complex character of considered theoretical constructs and they also concern the used secondary data sources on which the considerations in the article are based. The values of the paper reflect the directions of enterprises' conduct in the new food and non-food product development process. Failure and success rates are in fact difficult to quantify. The research contribution to marketing sciences primarily includes the formulation of a set of real success and failure rates in food and non-food industries.

JEL classification: L81, M31, M21

Keywords: food or non-food products, new product, marketing, success and failure rates of new product, new products introduced on the market

1. INTRODUCTION

Inconclusive information about success and failure rates of new products introduced on the market is presented in scientific publications as well as in research reports from consulting agencies and online sources which have been published since the 1960s. It can be assumed that project teams responsible for development and introduction of a new product on the market would not accept such a high risk rate of new product failure (90%) with an extremely low level of business security, including low success rates of new products on the market. It is therefore no surprise that

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the effects of new food and non-food product development and management are becoming more and more important issues in the scientific literature and economic practice regarding product innovations. Threats to enterprises and their target markets, such as destabilization and a decline in confidence in their self-regulatory capacity, were identified by various research, advisory and decision-making institutions which in response took regulatory measures to increase market security and sustainable development (Wheelwright & Clark, 1992; Cooper, 1993; Wu, Kefan, Gang, & Ping, 2010; Walker & Russell, 2013; Cooper, 2019; Cooper, 2021).

Literature reports on New Product Strategy, Project Management, Success and Failure Factors contain important conclusions that describe critical issues in the New Product Development Process (NPDP). Empirical research reveals that the New Product Development success rate (NPD) is still low (Crawford, 1979; Griffin, 1997; Stevens & Burley, 1997; Cooper & Edgett 2008; PDMA, 2012; Rutkowski, 2007, 2016). However, for at least two reasons, the literature sources do not provide a complete picture of the safety factors associated with new product development and introduction. First, the vast majority of these studies used non-representative questionnaire research methods in companies, involving only one person in each department or strategic business unit. Second, studies were retrospective in nature, events occurring later in the process are more likely to be recognized as major determinants of NPD project performance than earlier events. Market and business issues dominate the last phases/stages of NPDP (Wheelwright & Clark, 1992; Trott, 2011); therefore, the role of marketing and technology-related success factors for a new product may be underestimated. Therefore, we focus more on cost and time aspects than on the feasibility of new technological solutions and market opportunities (Urbanowska-Sojkin, 2012; Walker, 2013). The results of empirical research also indicate that the market and innovation orientation is positively related to market performance of a new product when an enterprise has sufficient network capacity to manage network dynamics and project managers have high networking competences to effectively mobilize stakeholder support for particular customers. The results also show that NPD performance is highest when the market orientation (entrepreneurship) and maturity of the relationship network are at a high level, which supports the proposed three-way interaction (Rutkowski, 2016; Mu, Thomas, Peng, & Di Benedetto, 2017).

2. FACTA ET FABULAS – DIVERGENT INFORMATION ON NEW PRODUCT FAILURE RATE ON THE MARKET

The common claim that 80–90% of new products fail in the marketplace is a "myth". Empirical studies do not confirm this belief, popular and often presented in scientific publications and among managers. No matter how many times it is written and talked about or how many managers believe it, it is wrong to say that 80–90% of new products are market failures. The actual failure rate for new products is in the range of 30–40%. Table 1 identifies research work, views from practitioners, consultants, blogs, textbooks, online course materials, and other sources that report high failure rates. Wherever the discussion comes down to new product failure rates, a value of 80% or greater appears. Table 1 is only an illustration of the many reports that may be referred to. This table should not be taken as evidence that the failure rate is 80%, but that it is a common belief that has been disclosed in various sources over the past 60 years.

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Table 1
Examples of bibliographic sources containing the common belief that the new product failure rate is high

Bibliographic source	Failure rate
O'Meara, J.T. (1961). Selecting profitable products. *Harvard Business Review*, *39*, p. 83.	80%
Schorr, B. (1961, April 5). Many new products fizzle despite careful planning, publicity. *Wall Street Journal*, p. 11.	89%
Why do products fail? http://www.theproduct.com/marketing/product_failure.htm	85%
http://faculty.msb.edu/homak/homahelpsite/webhelp/New_Product_Failure_Rates.ht m	75%
US Department of Commerce	90%
Hill, Ch., & Jones, G. (2013). *Strategic management theory*: *An integrated approach* (pp. 142–144).	80–90%
Gourville, J. T. (2006, June). Eager sellers and stony buyers: Understanding the psychology of new-product adoption. *Harvard Business Review*, *84*(6).	40–90%
Schlossberg, H. (1990). Fear of failure stifles product development. *Marketing News*, *24*(10), 1–16.	95%
University of North Texas. *Why do new products fail?*. http://courses.unt.edu/kt3650_4/sld003.htm	50–80%
Friedman, H. H. (2011). *Product policy*. http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/economic/friedman/mmproductpoliy.ht m	80%
Dillon, K. (2011). I think of my failures as a gift. *Harvard Business Review*, *88*(3).	80%
Venadar. *External innovation*. http://www.venadar.com/what_we_do.html	80%
Schneider, J., & Hall, J. (2011, April). Why most product launches fail. *Harvard Business Review Magazine*. https://hbr.org/2011/04/why-most-product-launches-fail	75%
Copernicus Marketing, Consulting and Research. (2010). *Top ten reasons for business failure*. GreenBook. http://www.greenbook.org/marketing-research.cfm/top-10-reasons-for-new-product-failure	80–90%
Berman, R. (2010). Why are new products launched?. *Rob Berman's Blog*. http://www.rob-berman.com/why-are-new-products-launched-part-1-of-4/	81%
Scanlon, S. *Why a high failure rate in social media?*. You Brand, Inc. http://www.youbrandinc.com/social-media/why-a-high-failure-rate-in-social-media/	80–90%
Neuro-Judge_testowanie-produktow, BlueFox. *Przełom w testowaniu produktów*. www.bluefox.com.pl	80–95%
Woźniczka, J., Hajdas, M., & Kowal, W. (2014). *Zarządzanie marketingiem*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu.	30–80%
Nobel, C. (2011). *Clay Christensen's milkshake marketing*. https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/clay-christensens-milkshake-marketing	95%
Schroeder, K. (2017). *Why so many new products fail (and it's not the product.* https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/marketing/2017/03/why-so-many-new-products-fail-and-it-s-not-the.html	80%
Kocina, L. (2017). *What percentage of new products fail and why?*. MarketSmartNewsletters; https://www.publicity.com/marketsmart-newsletters/percentage-new-products-fail/	80%

Source: Author's elaboration and Castellion & Markham (2013) or Rutkowski (2021).

The sources of references to the failure rate of new products on the market presented in Table 1 are difficult to verify. The New Product Failure Rate is defined as the percentage of new products actually released that do not meet the marketing and trade goals of the business unit that launched

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the product within a specified time period. The New Product Failure Rate refers to the percentage of products launched that did not meet sales targets. This indicator is not the same as the indicator showing that new products do not work technically or turn out to be unsafe on the market. Neither does it address the Mean Time Between Failure or Defect (MTFD) or the Production Performance Index (PPI).

After analyzing many literature sources, it cannot be stated whether the authors referred to the failure rates of generated ideas for a new product or a new product on the market[1]. The ambiguity between the failure rates of ideas and new products can contribute to continual misinformation that new product failure rates are around 80% (Vardhan, 2020). For example, in a frequently cited article by Stevens and Burley, it is stated that the failure rate is high (Stevens & Burley, 1997). But it is overlooked that these authors referred to generated ideas for a new product, and not to commercialized products. Stevens and Burley suggest that it takes 3,000 "raw" ideas at the start of NPDP to achieve one commercial success. In the same article, they also state that for every two products launched, there is one commercial success: a 50% new product failure rate.

A study by the Product Development and Management Association (PDMA) found that failure rates vary by industry, ranging from 35 percent for healthcare to 49 percent for consumer goods. In contrast, according to Nielsen's "The Why Behind the Try" study, 63 percent of respondents said that, despite a high failure rate, they had invested in a formal or semi-formal product development methodology such as Stage Gate or Design for Six Sigma (DFSS).

In the structure of marketing offer, new products are important for the financial condition and long-term success of a company. An organization's ability to systematically create ideas, design, develop, and successfully market a new product is critical to survival in turbulent environment.

3. THE REAL FAILURE RATE OF A NEW PRODUCT

In 1977 and again in 1987, Crawford conducted a literature review, eliminating all reports unsupported by research and reporting only empirically verified failure rates. In both cases, he found that the new product failure rate was approximately 35% (Crawford, 1979, 1987). According to him, "*a new product is not created until it is successfully introduced on the market, that is, until the product achieves, what management expects of it. Until then, it is really just a concept in a temporary physical form. The form is blocked when it is successful: otherwise we try new variants. This means that failure only occurs when management abandons the concept*" (Crawford, 1987, p. 21). Crawford then identifies commonly accepted success factors for a new product, such as technical uniqueness, competitive advantage, market offering diversity, safeguarding market position, sales and profitability. Crawford's definition was used in later empirical work such as the first Product Development & Management Association (PDMA) study assessing new product practices and performance (Page, 1993, p. 284) and in two subsequent PDMA studies (Griiffin, 1997; Adams, 2004). These studies revealed that the failure rate was 42% for the 1985–1989 period, 40% for 1995, and 46% for the 2003–2004 period. Since then, other empirical work has actually shown that the rate is around 40%. Nineteen peer-reviewed studies from 1945 to 2004 showed that the failure rate was in the range of 30–49%, with some understandable industry differences (Castellion, 2012; Christensen et al., 2018). These studies show failure rates for new products launched by more than 1,000 business units across nine industries. Table 2 presents scientific sources containing the results of empirical research on the failure rates of a new product on the market.

[1] Clayton Christensen is often cited in the above sources as the author of the claim that the failure rate is 95%. He developed the theory of "breakthrough innovation" that was considered the most important business idea of the beginning of the 21st century.

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Table 2
Examples of bibliographic sources containing the results of empirical research on the failure rates of a new product on the market

Bibliographic source	Failure rate
Booz, Allen, & Hamilton (1965). *Management of new products*. New York, NY: Booz, Allen, & Hamilton.	33%
Crawford, C. M. (1987, July-August). New product failure rates: A reprise. *Research Management*, *30*(4), 20–24.	35%
Cooper, R.G. (1979). Identifying industrial new product success. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *8*, 124–135	48%
Cooper, R.G., & Kleinschmidt, E.J. (1986). An investigation into the new product process: Steps, deficiencies and impact. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *3*, 71–85.	39%
Cooper, R.G., & Kleinschmidt, E.J. (1993). Uncovering the keys to new product success. *Engineering Management Review*, *11*, 5–18.	33%
Griffin, A. (1997). PDMA research on new product development practices: Updating trends and benchmarking best practices. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 14*, 429–458.	40%
Haffer, M. (1998). *Determinanty strategii nowego produktu w polskich przedsiębiorstwach przemysłowych* (p. 151). Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika. (Research 1990–1994).	24–30%
Ernst, H. (2002). Success factors of new product development: A review of the empirical literature. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *4*(1), 1–40.	30–40%
Adams, M. (2004). *Findings from the PDMA Research Foundation CPAS Benchmarking*. http://www.pdma.org/shop_pdma_description.cfm?pk_store_product=25	24–46%
Rutkowski, I. P. (2007). *Rozwój nowego produktu, metody i uwarunkowania* (p. 37). Warszawa: PWE.	41.6%
Barczak, G., Griffin, A., & Kahn, K. (2009). Trends and drivers of success in NPD practices: Results of the 2003 PDMA best practices study. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *26*(1).	41%
Product Development Institute. (2010). http://www.stagegate.com/newsletter/article_feb_2011.htm	38–55%
Rutkowski, I. P. (2016). *Metody innowacji produktu, macierzowo-sieciowe metody pomiaru dojrzałości procesu rozwoju nowego produktu* (p. 36). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu.	40–44%

Source: Author's elaboration or Rutkowski (2021).

The information difference between Table 1 and Table 2 is extremely important. The widespread belief that the new product failure rate is 80% is therefore not supported by empirical evidence. Table 1 contains biographical sources in which the information about the failure rates of a new product on the market has not been confirmed by empirical studies, while Table 2 contains information about the failure rates of a new product on the market that has been confirmed in empirical studies. Failure rates are in fact difficult to quantify. There are different definitions of success and failure of a new product between companies and between researchers. Empirical evidence may be the result of methodological artifacts built into empirical research. However, multiple studies conducted over such a long period by different researchers reduce the probability of a method error.

A 2004 best practice study by the Product Development & Management Association (PDMA) found differences in failure rates across industries, ranging from 35% for healthcare to 49% for FMCG. When the best business units in the PDMA study were separated from the rest, the study showed a striking difference in failure rates: 24% (the best) versus 46% (the rest). Table 3 shows

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the failure rates for new products by sector/industry. For example, consumer goods and services show a higher rate than healthcare or software. While there are some industry differences, no 80% new product failure rate has been identified in any of the industries studied.

Table 3
New product failure rates by industry

Industry	Percentage of failure rate
Chemicals	44%
Other materials	39%
Industrial services	43%
Consumer goods	45%
Consumer services	45%
Investment goods	35%
Healthcare	36%
IT software and services	39%
Technology	42%

Source: Lee and Markham (2016).

As a conclusion from the information in Table 3, the difficulties in developing an industry standard for the success or failure of a product can be cited. There is no real consistency in defining the failure (or success) of a new product. Each new product may have a specific strategic goal. After fulfilling this goal, it is removed from the product line, from the company's offer. For example, you might consider a company that has used a series of new products to make it more difficult for competitors to introduce new products. As soon as a competitor's new product "failed" on the market, the company removed its own new products from the offer. It was a strategic success, not a failure, even though the "new" product was no longer on the market.

To empirically answer the question about the new product success rate level, you can refer to Mintel's global new product database and corporate websites. A sample of new product introductions from 2010–2012 was collected for various food categories. About 1,500 new products were identified from eight food categories: baby food, bread, breakfast cereals, chocolate, dairy, desserts and ice cream, fruit and vegetables, meals and lunch. Mintel's studies defined the failure of a new product if it was not listed on the website at least 18 months after its introduction on the market. When the product was still available on the website in 2013, it was considered as a success. Based on the above definitions, 66 percent of all new products that were tested and reported by Mintel were successful. Success rates have also been calculated separately for eight product categories and there is a significant difference between product categories as shown below (see Table 4).

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Table 4
New product success indicators in the food sector

Food product category	Success rate
Baby food	87.5%
Bakery products	70.9%
Cereals	65.1%
Chocolate products	78.2%
Dairy	61.5%
Desserts and ice cream	57.6%
Fruits and vegetables	62.2%
Ready meals / lunch dishes	57.0%

Source: Stanton, (2014).

Research works consistently deal with issues focusing on the processes of new product development, in which the analyzed phenomena are relatively new and perceived as necessary for an effective NPD. Since the 1960s, various phenomena in NPDP have been analyzed in the available literature, and the focus of research is shifting from defining the right process to ensuring its proper implementation, better management, better measurement and continuous improvement.

4. THE SUCCESS MEASURES OF NEW PRODUCT STRATEGY

Measurement of the level of business performance has been an important element of planning and control in the management process for many years (Khosravi, Newton, & Rezvani, 2019). The effectiveness of the control of the new product strategy and new product development process will depend on the adequacy of the measurement instruments used. Historically, companies most frequently and widely used financial measures to monitor the management performance of an organization (Reinertsen & Smith, 2001; Carboni & Russu, 2018). However, financial measures alone do not provide full information about the company's performance. Revenues, profits and other financial resources can be subject to numerous manipulations (limiting expenditure on research and development, training, marketing, falsifying and concealing information). An important problem is what happens over time, when the effects of these "savings" reveal a decrease in competitiveness, a decrease in profits, a loss of growth dynamics and a decrease in the level of success of new products introduced on the market, a decrease in confidence in the company (Rutkowski, 2007).

Effective strategic management also requires the use of non-financial measures. That is why more and more companies measure customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, image, brand reputation and value, competence development and other non-financial aspects of the company's operations. The problem is that many companies fail to link these actions to strategic goals, or establish a relationship between the actions taken and the results achieved (Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017). The consequences are wrong decisions and wasting funds on programs-projects that do not contribute to the improvement of the company's results and its market position. Research has shown that different companies make similar mistakes (Cooper, 2017). Table 5 presents selected goals of the new product strategy which are of different financial, marketing (market) and technological nature and contain detailed criteria in the sense that they significantly determine the overall success of a new product on the market. On the other hand, the level of success of a new product on the market should be treated as a general measure of the company's

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competence in the field of product innovation, in particular the effectiveness of the new product development strategy. Table 5 includes both the measures of competence in achieving specific goals in the product innovation process (House-Price model) and the measures related to the level of achieving the goals of new products after the period of commercialization and introduction on the market.

Table 5
Measures of competences in achieving specific goals in the new product strategy

Goals of the product innovation process --- (level of experience and competence)
Specific performance indicators for a new product (e.g. runtime, energy consumption).
Unit production cost.
Time to market TTM – total development time, from the initial stage of development to the start of production.
Time for research and development TRD – time and cost of the research phase to start the development phase.
Break-even point after production launch BEAR – time from the start of production until the investment costs are covered with returns from new product sales.
BET break-even time – the time from the start of the study to the moment when the profits from the product equate with the investment made in a given project.
Rate of return, return on investment RF or ROI – the result of dividing the sum of profit by the sum of investments after commercialization of a new product
Goals of the new product after the commercialization period
Normal break-even point – BEP.
Equalizing capital threshold – the time in which the present value of sales of a new product covers the present value of total expenses.
The threshold for raising capital – the moment when a new product generates a financial surplus that allows for reinvestments that extend the life cycle or support the development of other products.
Net present value – NPV.
Internal Rate of Return – IRR.
Sales of a new product (e.g. in the first 12 months).
The level of profit from the sales of a new product (e.g. in the first 12 months).
Market share of a new product (e.g. in the first 12 months of sales).

Source: Author's elaboration based on: House & Price (1991); Kirsner (2015); Rutkowski (2021).

Previous studies have shown that the success of a new product is determined by the following independent dimensions of factors: related to the recipient of the marketing offer, of a financial nature, related to the effectiveness of the process and technological competences. It should also be remembered that each of these dimensions can also contribute to the failure of a new product. A particularly low level of process efficiency and technological competences can significantly affect the new product failure rate. Therefore, companies often have to sacrifice some level of success in one dimension to be more successful in another. Thus, with the currently available knowledge, there is no ideal process for developing a new product, as evidenced by the long-standing relatively high rate of failure or partial failure of a new product on the market (Castellion & Markham, 2013; Rutkowski 2016; Cooper, 2017).

4. CONSLUSIONS

The statements made in paper are based on examples of bibliographic sources containing the common belief that the new product failure rate is high and published empirical research on the failure rates of a new product on the market. The paper presents the real market effects of new products, success and failure rates, from the point of view of food and non-food companies representing various industries. The useful research measures in the field of marketing and sales effects of new products are proposed.

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The indicators presented here are not expected to be fully exhaustive or provide an instant "silver bullet" for the success of product innovations. Different types of managerial bias (e.g., group thinking and confirmatory bias) can make it difficult to access potentially useful information. Nevertheless, the paper discusses direct and significant problems related to the use of established measures of the success of product innovation, also in terms of the food and non-food industries. And at this point, it can be assumed that the indicators of the new product success on markets are better than those presented in the sources referenced in the paper. The research contained in the article provides indicators that can be part of a holistic and effective evaluation of new products on the market.

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