

## The Positive Influence of Attachment to Power-symbol Product

Miyea Kim

*Research Institute of ICT Convergence, Sookmyung Women's University  
Cheongpa-ro 47-gil 100, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04310, Korea  
miyeakim@sookmyung.ac.kr*

### **Abstract**

*When consumers are attached to a certain brand, positive assets like self-efficacy and life satisfaction are formed. As these positive assets may have a positive influence on brand supportive behavior, forming such assets is an important task. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine how power-symbol products form positive assets like self-efficacy and life satisfaction and the influence of these positive assets on brand supportive behavior when the consumer feels economic powerlessness. The study measured the variables like attachment to the power-symbol product, economic powerlessness, self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and brand supportive behavior, and proved the relationship between these variables through the structural equation model.*

**Keywords:** *Power-symbol product, Economic powerlessness, Attachment, Self-efficacy, Life-satisfaction*

### **1. Introduction**

Brand Attachment has been studied by numerous scholars to clarify the relationship between consumer and brand. When consumers are attached to a certain brand, they feel satisfaction from consuming that brand. At the same time, positive psychological assets like self-efficacy and satisfaction of life can be formed in the process [1]. In general, when consumers feel financial risk or economic difficulties, they tend to reduce unnecessary consumptions and increase necessities. Such a psychological state that displays economic difficulties is defined as Economic Powerlessness [2], and when consumers are in the state of economic powerlessness, they seek necessities rather than power-symbol products. Also, consumers who feel financial or economic restraints, tend to prefer material goods over experiential goods [3]. However, consumers in reality often purchase bags or automobiles that symbolize status even without enough financial economic support. Thus, the study is willing to examine the relationship between brand attachment and power-symbol consumption through a structural equation model to understand consumer behavior purchasing power-symbol products even with a sense of economic powerlessness.

### **2. Related researches and hypotheses development**

According to previous studies on attachment and consumer relationships, positive attachment is expected to cause positive word-of-mouth on the brand [4]. Brand attachment is defined as a sense of closeness, fellowship, and emotional connection between consumer and brand [5] [6], and when the attachment is formed on a certain brand, the influence of positive

---

#### **Article history:**

Received (August 9, 2016), Review Result (October 10, 2016), Accepted (November 13, 2016)

emotions may broaden the realm of new ideas, activities, relationships, and others [7]. Attachment forms positive emotions and allows psychological assets like self-efficacy and quality of life to be established [1].

Self-efficacy refers to a belief in one’s abilities that may enable a person to accomplish certain tasks or reach specific goals [8]. The formation of positive emotions through attachment broadens the realm of ideas and activities of people and may have an impact on the creation of self-efficacy (H1). Also, quality of life refers to subjective happiness and includes emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being [9]. The formation of positive emotions through attachment broadens the realm of ideas and thoughts of people and may contribute to the improvement of quality of life (H2).

Brand supportive behavior is defined as a supportive behavior through the willingness to pay the premium, positive word-of-mouth, repurchase and others on certain brands [5], [10]. When people feel love or form attachment toward a certain object, they naturally share those positive experiences or joyful experiences with other people. As self-efficacy has an impact on behavioral variables like challenges on tasks and activeness, consumers with improved self-efficacy may tend to actively share his or her own experiences with other people (H3). According to past studies, the high quality of life of consumers is considered to bring positive results on word-of-mouth and goodwill of company [11]. Consumers who feel a positive quality of life may share and recommend joyous experiences to other consumers a lot more active than others (H4). Brand attachment arouses positive emotions even in the consumers who feel economic powerlessness. Moreover, it can be expected that brand supportive behavior on the power-symbol product can be created through accumulate positive assets like self-efficacy and satisfaction of life. Therefore, consumers who formed a strong attachment to a certain brand show positive supportive behavior on that brand. The study has deduced hypothesis number 1 to number 4 through this idea.

H1: Attachment to power-symbol products may heighten the level of self-efficacy.

H2: Attachment to power-symbol product may heighten the level of quality of life.

H3: Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on brand supportive behavior.

H4: Life-Satisfaction will have a positive impact on brand supportive behavior.

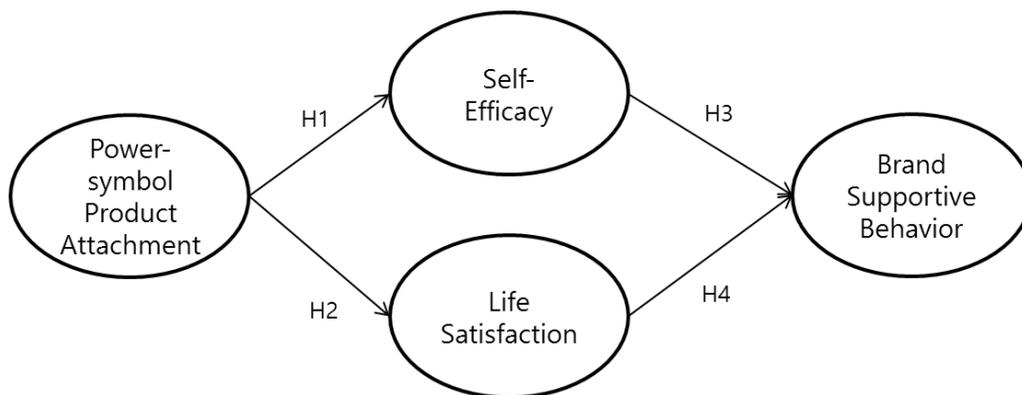


Figure 1. Research model

### **3. Research methodologies**

#### **3.1. Data collection and procedure**

The study has researched attachment to the power-symbol product, quality of life, and brand supportive behavior by targeting ordinary people. 120 people were surveyed for the study, and 109 data were used for the final analysis excluding the data with low confidence. There were 56 male respondents (51.4%), and 53 female respondents (48.6%). Meanwhile, the age structure of the survey was distributed evenly with 20 respondents in their 20s (18.3%), 20 respondents in their 30s (18.3%), 34 respondents in their 40s (31.2%), and 35 respondents in their 50s (32.1%).

The study has conducted a power recall task to prime the economic powerlessness [12], and measured attachment to the power-symbol product, self-efficacy, the satisfaction of life, brand supportive behavior. For the analysis, the SEM model was used to analyze the relationship between attachment, self-efficacy, Life-satisfaction, brand supportive behavior. For this purpose, the study has conducted a factor analysis and validity analysis by using SPSS21.0 and AMOS22 and verified the current research model through a structural equation model.

#### **3.2. Measurement**

The brand attachment was measured with the following questions after adjusting to suit the purpose of the study.

1. I will be distress if I cannot use this brand ever again.
2. It would be a pity if this brand disappears from the market.
3. It would be a pity if I cannot use this brand ever again [5].

The concept and the measurement of self-efficacy were established through the study of [8], the current study measured self-efficacy with three questions by using the researcher's values.

1. I think I can find ways to accomplish a thing that I want to accomplish even with great difficulties if I use or experience this particular brand.
2. I think I may obtain the ability and imaginative power that allows me to handle all types of unexpected situations if I use experience with this particular brand.
3. I think I obtain a sense of confidence that allows me to handle all types of situations if I use or experience this particular brand.

The study has used the concept of emotional well-being to measure the quality of life [13].

1. I think my current life would become an ideal one if I use this particular brand
2. I think I would become content with my present situation or condition if I use this particular brand.
3. I think I would be content with my life if I use this particular brand.

The study has used the most difficult behavior among the intentions to perform the behavior in the future [5] and measured brand supportive behavior with three different questions.

1. I have the intention to purchase every new product of this particular brand.
2. I have the intention to promote this particular brand even if it takes my own time, money, and effort.

3. I have the intention to purchase products in other categories which the company of this particular brand produces.

## 4. Result

### 4.1. Reliability and validity analysis

The current study has conducted Cronhach’s  $\alpha$  analysis to verify the confidence in constructs. The test result showed that all the items used in the current study were over 7. Thus, the study was able to procure a certain level of confidence in constructs. Here, the purpose of Validity was to measure the concept which the study was willing to measure. Before analyzing the structural equation model, the study has conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to examine the convergent validity of the items measured in the analysis. As shown in the following [Table 1], the construct reliability was shown to meet the standard with a value above .60. AVE (Average Variance Extracted) was determined to be appropriate with variables above .50.

Table 1. Result of reliability and validity

Construct		Standardized loadings	t-value	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach’s Alpha
Power-symbol product	1	.913		.906	.763	.958
	2	.963	25.430***			
	3	.951	24.409***			
Self-efficacy	1	.925		.902	.753	.951
	2	.935	23.828***			
	3	.932	23.547***			
Life-satisfaction	1	.941		.891	.731	.946
	2	.925	24.429***			
	3	.912	23.438***			
Brand supportive behavior	1	.922		.844	.643	.923
	2	.931	22.738***			
	3	.877	19.283***			

### 4.2. Hypothesis test

The purpose of the study was to show that brand supportive behavior on the power-symbol product may get heightened with positive self-efficacy and improvement of quality of life for the attached brand even under the state of economic powerlessness. Therefore, the study was able to confirm that positive brand supportive behavior through attachment was supported in the states of economic powerlessness. The analysis showed that the attachment to the power-symbol product was having a positive influence on self-efficacy and the satisfaction of life. Here, self-efficacy and satisfaction of life were having a positive influence on brand supportive behavior. The study was able to confirm that hypotheses 1~4 were being supported through these findings.

Table 2. Standardized path coefficient under structural model

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	S.E	C.R	p
H1: PSP attachment->Self-efficacy	.849	.071	11.385	***
H2: PSP attachment->Life-satisfaction	.899	.072	12.599	***
H3: Self-efficacy -> Brand supportive behavior	.286	.099	3.044	.002
H4: Life-satisfaction -> Brand supportive behavior	.651	.100	6.454	***
Model Fit	$\chi^2=3.658$ , CFI=.921, NFI=.895, IFI=.921, TLI=.895			

## 5. Conclusions

According to past studies, consumers who felt economic powerlessness displayed a tendency to lower the willingness-to-pay on the power-symbol product. However, consumers often purchased luxury clothing or bags even when they felt economic powerlessness in a real consumption situation. To explain such ironic consumption behavior of consumers, the study chose to structurally analyze brand supportive behavior on the power-symbol product under economic powerlessness by applying the concept of brand attachment.

According to attachment theories, attachment to a certain brand creates a close sense of friendship between the brand and the consumer. This emotional sense of friendship or connectedness may have a positive impact on self-efficacy and quality of life. Consumers extend their thinking beyond their original realm when they obtain self-efficacy which provides a sense of confidence and satisfaction of positive life through the brand, and this extension leads the consumers to become active individuals. Thus, the level of willingness to pay on the power-symbol product gets heightened through positive brand supportive behavior when consumers feel the economic powerlessness.

The test result of the current study confirmed that consumers under the state of economic powerlessness may have a high level of brand supportive behavior on the brand that may symbolize his or her power if that consumer has an attachment to that particular brand.

## Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2015S1A5B5A01016205)

## References

- [1] C. K. Kim, J. Han, M. Jun, M. Kim, and J. Kim, "The effects of brand attachment on consumer's quality of life, beyond brand performance", *Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol.27, no.4, pp.131-152, (2016)
- [2] J. Lammers, J. I. Stoker, and D. A. Stapel, "Differentiating social and personal power", *Psychological Science*, vol.20, no.12, pp.1543-1549, (2009)
- [3] H. C. Kim and T. Kramer, "Do materialists prefer the "Brand-as-Servant" the interactive effect of anthropomorphized brand roles and materialism on consumer responses", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.42, pp.284-299, (2015)
- [4] B. Carroll and A. Ahuvia, "Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love", *Marketing Letters*, vol.17, pp.79-89, (2006)

- [5] C. W. Park, M. MacInnis, J. Priester, A. Eisingerich, and D. Iacobucci, “Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers”, *Journal of Marketing*, vol.74 (November), pp.1-17, (2010)
- [6] L. Malär, H. Krohmer, W. Hoyer, and B. Nyffenegger, “Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self”, *Journal of Marketing*, vol.75(July), pp.35-52, (2011)
- [7] B. Fredrickson, “The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden and build theory of positive emotions”, *American Psychologist*, vol.56, no.3, pp.218-226, (2001)
- [8] A. Bandura, “Social foundations of thought and action”, in *The Health Psychology Reader*, David Marks, eds. London: Sage, pp.94-106, (2002)
- [9] C. R. Snyder, S. J. Lopez, and J. Pedrotti, “Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths,” Sage, California, (2011)
- [10] K. Keller, “Strategic brand management”, 4th edition, Prentice Hall, London, (2013)
- [11] D. M. Szymanski and D. Henard, “Consumer satisfaction: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, vol.29, no.1, pp.16-35, (2001)
- [12] D. Rucker and A.D. Galinsky, “Desire to acquire: Powerlessness and compensatory consumption”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol.35, pp.257-267, (2008)
- [13] E. Diener, S. Oishi, and R.E. Lucas, “Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction,” in *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, S. Lopez, and Snyder, C. R. eds, New York: Oxford University Press. 187-194, (2009)

## Author



**Miyea Kim, Ph. D.**  
Senior Researcher of ICT Convergence Institute  
Sookmyung Women’s University