Brand Happiness: The Searching and Finding of the "Holy Grail" of Marketing

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Brand happiness is the "holy grail" of marketing! This means that it is not only one of the highest goals consumers aspire to by interacting with brands; rather, it is the highest brand goal that marketers should seek to employ in order to establish their brand's "eternal vitality", in its long-term success. The authors conceptually and empirically assess this provocative statement based on two predefined conditions. Conceptually, they define brand happiness and argue that it is an autonomous brand goal (i.e., it is conceptually different from related constructs such as emotional brand attachment and brand satisfaction), (first condition); and that it is a stronger predictor of brand success than related constructs (second condition). Empirically, the authors assess these conditions in six studies by developing and validating a scale to measure brand happiness. The results reveal that brand happiness is a valid and reliable construct with joy, vigor, pride, and serenity as correlated factors. The brand happiness scale is stable across brands, respondents, and cultures, is empirically distinct from related constructs, and is superior in affecting purchase intention, price premium, and word-of-mouth.

Markenglück ist der „heilige Gral" des Marketing! Es ist damit nicht nur eines der obersten Ziele, das Konsumenten im Umgang mit Marken anstreben, sondern auch das höchste Markenziel, das Vermarkter versuchen sollten zu erreichen, um die „ewige Lebenskraft" ihrer Marke, den langfristigen Erfolg, zu sichern. Auf der Grundlage von zwei vordefinierten Bedingungen untersuchen die Autoren diese provokative Aussage konzeptionell und empirisch. Auf der konzeptionellen Ebene definieren sie Markenglück und sehen es als ein eigenständiges Markenziel an (z.B. unterscheidet es sich konzeptionell von verwandten Konstrukten wie der emotionalen Markenverbundenheit und Markenzufriedenheit) (erste Bedingung), das ein stärkerer Indikator für den Erfolg einer Marke ist als ihre verwandten Konstrukte (zweite Bedingung). Auf der empirischen Ebene untersuchen die Autoren diese Bedingungen in sechs Studien anhand der Entwicklung und Validierung einer Skala zur Messung des Markenglücks. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Markenglück ein valides und reliables Konstrukt ist, bestehend aus den Faktoren Freude, Lebendigkeit, Stolz und Gelassenheit. Die Markenglücksskala ist über verschiedene Marken, Personen und Kulturen stabil, unterscheidet sich von anderen verwandten Konstrukten und ist ihnen in der Beeinflussung der Kaufbereitschaft, Preispremium und Mund-zu-Mund Kommunikation überlegen.

brand behavior, brand happiness, brand management, brand goals, scale development

Markenverhalten, Markenglück, Markenführung, Markenziele, Skalenentwicklung

1. Introduction

We all want to be happy! The pursuit of happiness is a compelling lifelong phenomenon. The attainment of a state of happiness is commonly regarded as the "Holy Grail" or the "Highest Good" in life (e.g., *Kesebir/Diener* 2008; *Pavot/Diener* 2013; *Veenhoven* 2012). People constantly search for ways to achieve this pleasurable and highly desirable state of greatest emotional fulfillment and therefore engage in activities such as leisure, interactions with other people (e.g., *Demir/Davidson* 2013; *Wang/Wong* 2014), and goal pursuit (*Klug/Maier* 2015; *Sheldon* et al. 2010). Nowadays, individuals identify the consumption of products and brands as being an important and effective route to happiness (e.g., *Bettingen/Luedicke* 2009; *Nicolao et al.* 2009).

Marketers have begun to exploit the growing importance of products and brands for the consumer's experience of happiness. In doing this, they use the concept of happiness in numerous marketing activities by promising happiness in slogans (e.g., Bliss' "Achieve a Higher State of Happy" and Golden Coral's "Help Yourself to Happiness") and promotions (e.g., Unilever's "Share Happy" and Coca-Cola's "Open Happiness" campaign). However, such happiness-related marketing activities do not provide much evidence that marketers have actually recognized that, because happiness is one of the highest consumer goals, it must also be one of the highest, if not the highest brand goal, the "holy grail" of marketing.

It is astonishing that marketing and consumer research has devoted so little attention to the promising concept of brand happiness and its position in the hierarchy of marketing or brand goals (*Schnebelen/Bruhn* 2017). We build on these shortcomings in two important ways. First, we specify the emotional construct of brand happiness (BH) from the consumer's perspective. Second, we critically analyze whether this new emotional concept has specific characteristics which justify its position as the ultimate brand goal. We will enrich the currently prevailing parallel investigations of brand constructs by introducing the concept of a "brand goal hierarchy" which ranks brand goal constructs according to their levels or intensities of emotion.

We structure the paper according to our three research objectives. First, we develop a conceptual framework for the evaluation of brand happiness as the highest brand goal. Second, we empirically develop a reliable BH scale in a three-step scale development and validation process (i.e., qualitative, exploratory, and confirmatory stages, performed in studies 1-5). Third, we empirically show the discriminatory and superior predictive power of the BH scale (study 6). Our findings answer the research question as to whether brand happiness can be seen as the "holy grail" of marketing. Finally, we derive significant implications.

2. Empirical and Conceptual Background to Brand Happiness

2.1 The Quest for the "Holy Grail"

For decades, the quest for the greatest happiness in life, the "Holy Grail", has concerned many philosophers and researchers. They have undertaken daunting tasks to identify important routes to happiness. Ancient Greek philosophy (e.g., Socrates, Plato, and notably Aristotle) introduced the *eudaimonic perspective*, which theorized that living a good, virtuous and fulfilling life, a life that is lived by fully exhausting one's potential, is an important pathway to happiness (*Kashdan et al.* 2008). Moreover, happiness was perceived to

be predicated on a life characterized by freedom, harmony, and serenity (*Stephens* 2007). Over time, a different perception of the pathways to happiness emerged, the *hedonic perspective*. This direction of thought stems from hedonism, which was driven by the thoughts of philosophers such as Aristippus and Epicurus. They defined pleasure as being life's ultimate goal and the means to live a good life (*Kesebir/Diener* 2008; *Ryan/Deci* 2001). Happiness was then associated with experiencing the greatest possible amount of pleasure and avoiding pain and was defined as being the sum of all pleasurable experiences (*Kashdan et al.* 2008; *Ryan/Deci* 2001).

The dominant understanding of happiness today draws on this hedonic perspective, and regards happiness more "as feeling good than being good" (*McMahon* 2006, p. 43). According to this affective understanding, happiness is defined as a balance between positive and negative affects (e.g., *Bradburn* 1969). Within the emotional state view, happiness is conceptualized as consisting in the experience of various positive emotions, such as euphoria, excitement, joy, elation, contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure (*Delle Fave* et al. 2011; *Shin* 2010). This view reflects the experience of happiness as an emotional state that has different levels of intensity, and combines a sense of pleasantness with various degrees of arousal. Consequently, two forms of happiness exist; in the pleasant, high-arousal state, happiness occurs in its intense form and is experienced as excitement or joy. In the pleasant, low-arousal state, happiness occurs in its mild form and is associated with peacefulness or serenity (*Mogilner et al.* 2012; *Russell* 1980). Besides the affective understandings of happiness, it can also be cognitive in nature. Happiness is then viewed as life satisfaction, the evaluation of life in a positive and favorable manner (*Diener et al.* 1985; *Veenhoven* 2012a).[1]

In today's world, the individual's quest for the "Holy Grail", the greatest happiness or greatest emotional fulfillment in life has extended to the purchase and consumption of products and brands. Marketing and consumer research demonstrate that different types of purchases, experiences, and advertisements are promising routes to happiness. For instance, based on the initial findings from *Van Boven* and *Gilovich* (2003), *Nicolao et al.* (2009) pointed out that experiential purchases make consumers happier than material purchases. In a similar vein, *Bettingen* and *Luedicke* (2009) hypothesize that happiness is triggered by different types of brand experiences. Moreover, it is shown that the promotion of happiness in different forms of advertisements (e.g., TV-spots, print ads) spills over to consumers and makes them feel happier. As a consequence, consumers judge the ad and the product being promoted on the basis of their experience of happiness (e.g., *Goldberg/Gorn* 1987; *Labroo/Rucker* 2010). The effectiveness of these routes to happiness is reflected in beneficial consumer reactions. For example, research has produced evidence that happiness is a predictor of satisfaction, loyalty (*Gelbrich* 2011), service quality, and commitment (*Hellén/Sääksjärvi* 2011). However, until now, only one study has directly examined the determinants and consequences of brand happiness (*Schnebelen/Bruhn* 2017). The study demonstrates different brand- and situational-related determinants of brand happiness (e.g., brand relationship quality, brand goal-congruence, pleasantness, and fair-

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1 The positive and negative affect components as well as life satisfaction shape the construct of subjective well-being, which is defined as the affective and cognitive evaluation of life and/or its specific domains (Diener 1984; Veenhoven 1984). The two terms, subjective well-being and happiness, are used interchangeably or the affective component of subjective well-being is referred to as happiness (e.g., Diener 2000; Veenhoven 2012a).

ness) and supports the behavioral power of brand happiness (e.g., (re-)purchase intention, price premium, and brand forgiveness).

The research on happiness in marketing and consumer research has mainly focused on purchase and consumption situations. Thus, the link between happiness and brands is still an underexplored field of marketing research (*Bettingen/Luedicke* 2009; *Schnebelen/ Bruhn* 2017). Moreover, current research has not considered a multi-dimensional character of this construct (e.g., *Mogilner et al.* 2012; *Nicolao et al.* 2009). We address these two shortcomings by bringing the research fields of brands and happiness together in the multi-dimensional construct of brand happiness.

2.2 Brand Happiness as the "Holy Grail" of Marketing?

Defining brand happiness. Despite significant advances in defining happiness in psychology and sociology, little attention has been devoted to the understanding of happiness in marketing and consumer research. In marketing, happiness is predominantly defined as an emotional state that is situation-specific (e.g., induced by purchases, consumption, events), that varies in intensity, that is short-term, and that is subjective in nature (e.g., *Mogilner et al.* 2012; *Schuchert-Guler et al.* 2001). Drawing on the significant importance people ascribe to happiness and the understanding of affective happiness in psychology, sociology, and marketing, we define brand happiness as follows: Brand happiness is a consumer's greatest emotional fulfillment, a moment-based experience of pleasant high and low arousal emotions, induced at different brand contact points (e.g., via purchase, consumption, advertisements).

Characteristics of brand happiness. From this definition, it follows that brand happiness is characterized as being the greatest emotional fulfillment that a brand can provide for consumers (fulfillment). It is a moment-based, temporary (duration) positive emotional state (character) with different gradations of intensity, ranging from high- to low-arousal pleasant emotions (intensity). It comprises a range of different positive emotional experiences and, therefore, has a multi-dimensional character (complexity). It is induced at different brand contact points and is, therefore, situation-specific (specificity). It has as a strong tendency to elicit action (activity). This characteristic is a general one of all happiness concepts (*Veenhoven* 2012b).

Hierarchy of brand goals. The assumption of the existence of a highest brand goal requires that other goals are subordinated to it. A "hierarchy of brand goals" means that each successive brand goal depends on the achievement of the antecedent brand goal. We posit that the brand goal at the top of the hierarchy is brand happiness. Other brand goals (e.g., brand satisfaction, brand attachment, brand love) contribute to the consumer's experience of happy moments. Within such a hierarchy, brand goals are arranged according to their emotional intensities, such that brands go successively through different emotional stages in order to obtain the capacity to provide their consumers with the most intense emotional experience, happiness. The positioning of brand happiness at the top of the hierarchy as the highest brand goal is justified by two supporting arguments:

First, happiness is an inherent desire that is deeply rooted in human beings. It is the highest life goal, a state that provides the greatest emotional fulfillment (e.g., *Kesebir/ Diener* 2008; *Pavot/Diener* 2013). This is why it is urgent that individuals are offered means to satisfy their desire to be happy. Brands offer consumers the prospect of achieving

happiness (*Bettingen/Luedicke* 2009; *Mogilner et al.* 2012; *Schnebelen/Bruhn* 2017). Because of the short-term and situation-specific nature of brand happiness, marketers can find numerous opportunities to provide activities to influence brand happiness which will have a long-term impact on brand behavior. Moreover, it cannot be said that the desire for other states is equally perpetual, deep, and strong as the desire to be happy. Thus, the desire to be delighted by a brand, loving a brand, being attached and related to a brand, or having a favorable attitude towards a brand are of subordinate importance to brand happiness.

Second, the most important argument in support of brand happiness being a candidate for the "holy grail" of marketing is its superior effect on consumer behavior (*Schnebelen/Bruhn* 2017). A specific characteristic of happiness is its strong tendency to elicit action, its function as a "go signal" (*Veenhoven* 2012b, p. 463). People attempt vehemently to achieve a state of happiness by enthusiastically engaging in various activities (e.g., socializing, working, leisure; (*Tkach/Lyubomirsky* 2006). Transferring this to the context of brands means that, if brands are able to make consumers happy this will motivate them to engage in favorable brand behaviors (e.g., (re-)purchase) in order to maintain their level of happiness or re-experience it. Thus, brand happiness might be a central but hitherto widely neglected driver of consumer brand behavior (*Schnebelen/Bruhn* 2017).

These arguments suggest brand happiness to be the highest brand goal, the "holy grail" of marketing. However, two important, necessary conditions have to be fulfilled for this assertion to hold. First, brand happiness has to be autonomous; thus, it must be conceptually and empirically distinct from related but hierarchically subordinate concepts (precondition). Second, its influence on consumer behavior must be stronger than that of other concepts (main condition).

Differentiation of brand happiness from related constructs. According to the precondition, brand happiness needs to be conceptually different from related constructs, such as affective-relational constructs (emotional brand attachment, customer delight, brand love, and brand relationship quality) and cognitive-evaluative constructs (brand satisfaction, brand attitude, brand experience, and brand involvement).

Brand happiness is characterized as a pleasant emotional experience that varies in intensity between high and low arousal. In contrast, customer delight is only an intense, high-arousal positive emotional reaction which comprises joy and surprise (*Oliver et al.* 1997). Emotional brand attachment also differs from brand happiness in its emotional character, because it is the experience of relational emotions that are moderately positively aroused (affection, passion, connection; *Thomson et al.* 2005). Brand love and brand relationship quality are partially affective, capturing affective aspects in terms of the emotional qualities of relationships towards brands (*Batra et al.* 2012; *Fournier* 1998). Hence, they are not themselves emotional, but more relational in nature. Moreover, brand happiness is a short-term emotional state that is induced at different brand contact points. It can occur expectedly or unexpectedly either during or immediately after contact with a brand (e.g., via purchases, consumption, or advertisements). In contrast, customer delight is evoked by consumption that surprises (*Oliver et al.* 1997), and emotional brand attachment, brand love, and brand relationship quality are developed over time through experiences with the brand (*Batra et al.* 2012; *Fournier* 1998; *Thomson et al.* 2005). They are thus longer-lasting and less situation-specific than brand happiness.

Cognitive-evaluative constructs differ even more noticeably from brand happiness than the affective-relational constructs. Broadly speaking, while brand happiness is a purely emotional-based construct, which is moment-based, situation-specific, and thus induced in different brand-related situations, brand satisfaction, brand attitude, and brand involvement refer to overall evaluations of affective and cognitive aspects of brands (*Oliver* 2010; *Park et al.* 2010; *Zaichkowsky* 1985). Consequently, these constructs include cognitive-judgmental processes that are non-emotional, longer lasting, and less situation-specific than the emotional experience of brand happiness. More similar to brand happiness are brand experiences, because they also include emotional reactions to brand-related stimuli. However, they are not purely emotional in nature, but additionally refer to sensory, intellectual, and behavioral aspects (*Brakus et al.* 2009).

In support of the precondition, brand happiness is conceptually different from related affective-relational as well as cognitive-evaluative constructs. In a next step, the pre- and the main condition have to be supported empirically to hold for brand happiness to be accepted as the highest brand goal. With respect to the precondition, we have to provide evidence of discriminant validity; with respect to the main condition, we have to show superior predictive validity. For this purpose, we develop a valid and reliable scale to measure brand happiness.

3. Scale Development

The aim of the scale development process is to collect emotions which have been studied individually in prior research and to demonstrate how they can be collated within the construct of brand happiness. Due to the highly innovative character of the topic of brand happiness and the absence of an appropriate theory that could be taken as a basis for the scale development, we decided to approach the measurement of brand happiness in an exploratory manner. This allows us to capture the construct of brand happiness in its full depth and diversity. In doing this, we follow the scale development processes proposed by *Aaker* (1997), *Batra et al.* (2012), *Brakus et al.* (2009), and *Thomson et al.* (2005).

The scale development process consists of six studies, which make up three stages. We start with open and exploratory studies, and end with more focused and confirmatory studies. The qualitative stage identifies the broad domain of aspects that consumers associate with the experience of happiness induced by a brand. This item generation is based on qualitative interviews with consumers and experts (study 1) as well as on an extensive interdisciplinary literature review. Next, in the exploratory stage, studies 2 and 3 reduce the initial item pool to a manageable size. Study 2a applies mean and variance criteria, and study 2b additionally uses exploratory factor analysis to reduce the initial item pool. Study 3 reduces the item pool further and determines the dimensionality of the scale, based on a set of exploratory factor analyses. Finally, studies 4, 5 and 6 constitute the confirmatory stage. Study 4 evaluates the internal consistency, stability, and structure of the scale, while study 5 examines cross-cultural validity, and study 6 further validates the scale and analyzes its discriminant and predictive validity. With regard to the last two aspects, we appraise the empirical evidence in support of the pre- and main conditions which sustain the assertion that brand happiness is an autonomous brand goal that might, beyond that, function as the highest brand goal or, rather, the "holy grail" of marketing.

3.1 Qualitative Stage: Item Generation

Procedure. At this early stage of the scale development process, we want to ensure a maximum level of abstractness. To guarantee content validity, we established the definitional bounds of the brand happiness concept by collecting all the relevant associations that consumers have with happiness in general and those that they have with brands in particular. To achieve this, we design the qualitative stage as being exploratory, following a two-step procedure: First, we conducted 69 personal interviews to uncover the implicit definitions of brand happiness that consumers' bare in minds. Second, in order to compile a comprehensive list of consumers' associations with brand happiness, we collated the associations generated through our personal interviews with results from happiness research in philosophy, psychology and sociology, as well as marketing and consumer behavior.

Step 1: personal interviews (study 1). Open-ended surveys in the form of free-association tasks were conducted in this first study to obtain an understanding of consumer's conceptions of happiness in general and pertaining to brands in particular. The interviews were conducted with 21 U.S.-resident consumers and 44 German-speaking consumers (half of whom were non-students). The responses allowed us to develop a preliminary set of descriptors for associations with happiness and brand happiness. We started at a general level, asking participants to define happiness and to describe their associations with it. By doing this, the risk of losing sight of important aspects was reduced. Next, we narrowed our focus and instructed participants to name one brand that makes them happy, to give reasons why their chosen brand makes them happy, and to describe their happiness experiences with this brand. Additionally, participants were invited to name all the adjectives that first come to mind when they think about the happiness that the selected brand induces. By following the approach used by *Romani et al.* (2012), we did not employ happiness-related terms, preselected brands, or specific brand contact situations in order to provoke the participants to draw on their own brand happiness perceptions and experiences. This allows us to develop a generalizable brand happiness scale, which refers to the intangible character of a wide range of brands and not to the attributes of physical products or services.

The results showed that 94% of the respondents claim that brands have the capacity to make them happy and to provide them with the greatest emotional fulfillment. This supports our assumption that brands can make consumers happy. Consumers' perceptions of happiness that are induced by a brand are best described as being positive, complex, and comprising specific emotional patterns, because respondents reported mainly emotional associations with brand happiness (e.g., "a very tangible feeling of joy", "I also feel a sense of energy […], optimism, fun and adventure", "Being able to relax and just enjoy", "A sense of joy, excitement and peace", "I also feel a sense of pride owning something so beautiful that performs well". In conclusion, our working definition is supported by actual consumers' conceptions of happiness induced by brands. The personal consumer interviews produced a list of 78 emotional associations.

To capture the construct of brand happiness more broadly, four interviews were conducted with expert judges (economists and psychologists) in order to ensure content validity of the BH scale (e.g., *Pons et al.* 2006). They evaluated the definition of brand happiness and assessed the relevance of the items identified for measuring the construct of brand happiness. This process validated our working definition and resulted in the elimi-

nation of four items that were considered irrelevant in the context of happiness as pertaining to brands, as well as in the identification of five additional relevant items in this context.

Step 2: interdisciplinary literature review. To enrich the list of associations with brand happiness generated through the personal interviews with consumers and experts, we draw on the results that we obtained from an interdisciplinary literature review of approaches that define and measure happiness in psychology and sociology, as well as in marketing. The conceptual considerations of happiness (definitions and gathered individual conceptions of happiness) and the most important scales used in psychology and sociology for measuring affective happiness, the Affect Balance Scale (*Bradburn* 1969), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; *Watson et al.* 1988), the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH; *Kozma/Stones* 1980), and the Affectometer 2 (*Kammann/Flett* 1983), gave us an impression about the emotional tone of happiness. These scales measure happiness most often using emotional items such as excited, joyful, serene, relaxed, optimistic, proud, contented, tranquil, and peaceful. These findings support our view that the experience of happiness might consist of high- as well as low-arousal emotions. The results of this inquiry allowed us to add 34 emotional associations to our list.

Moreover, we conducted an intensive literature review in the field of marketing and consumer research. First, we reviewed studies that measure affective happiness with single items (e.g., *Goldberg/Gorn* 1987; *Mogilner et al.* 2012) or with multiple items (e.g., *Garg et al.* 2007; *Gelbrich* 2011). While most of these measures capture happiness in its intense form (e.g., joyful, enthusiastic, and excited), *Mogilner et al.* (2012) measure both the intense (excited) and mild form (peaceful) of happiness. Second, we reviewed studies that measure consumption emotions in order to found adequate emotion scales for the purpose of measuring the emotions associated with (brand) happiness that we identified through personal interviews and the interdisciplinary literature review. Items were drawn from the Consumption Emotion Set (*Richins* 1997), the Affective Response Scale (*Batra/Holbrook* 1990), and the Emotion Scales proposed by *Batra* and *Ray* (1986), *Edell* and *Burke* (1987), and *Holbrook* and *Batra* (1987) to extend our list to 282 items. After eliminating redundant emotional associations, a total of 135 emotional words remained, which we retained in adjectival form for our subsequent investigations.

3.2 Exploratory Stage: Item Reduction and Identification of the Scale Dimensions

3.2.1 Study 2

Participants and procedure. We used a funnel-shaped item-reducing procedure, starting at a general level. Thus, to reduce the long list of generated emotional adjectives to a more compact item battery, we conducted two quantitative pilot studies. First, a non-student sample of 28 consumers (61% female, mean age = 35) was used to conduct study 2a.[2] This study structured the questionnaire according to the scheme used in the work of *Brakus et al.* (2009) as well as *Thomson et al.* (2005). Participants were invited to name one brand that makes them happy and to evaluate on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging

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2 For the linguistically different versions of all our questionnaires, we applied the back-translation procedure as used by other researchers (e.g., *Homburg/Pflesser* 2000).

from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well), how well the 135 words describe their typical feelings towards this brand. We randomly sent one of the three versions of the questionnaire (they only differed in the order of the items listed) to each participant. Items with means lower than 4.0 were eliminated. This procedure reduced the original 135 items to a list of 58 emotional adjectives.

Second, in this early stage of the item reduction process, we further took account of the individuality of the consumers' experience of brand happiness. To do this, we again applied a non-student sample in study 2b and asked 159 consumers (47% female, mean age = 28) to think about one brand that makes them happy and rate how well the 58 items describe their typical feelings towards this brand (1 = not at all; 7 = very well). As proposed by *Thomson et al.* (2005), we removed items with a mean rating below 4.0 and a restricted variance (SD < 1.5). Overall, 87.90% of the items fulfilled these criteria. The remaining items were included in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Varimax rotation (*Aaker* 1997; *Brakus et al.* 2009; *Thomson et al.* 2005).

Result. The EFA grouped the data into 10 factors. After this, we eliminated items with loadings < .5 on the dominant factor and loadings > .4 on other factors (cross-loadings). Because we wanted to identify the dimensional structure of brand happiness without already having a theory or concept that postulates possible factors, we incorporated the remaining 34 items in the subsequent study in order to identify the factor structure underlying the brand happiness construct.

3.2.2 Study 3

Participants and procedure. The aim of study 3 was to further reduce the 34 items and to fix the dimensionality of brand happiness by performing EFA's with a narrower focus. The study was conducted in two steps: First, we generated a sample of strongly "happy brands" by asking 80 undergraduate students and consumers to name three brands in different product categories that make them happy. We applied the brands that were most frequently indicated by participants in our subsequent analyses (number of mentions are in parentheses): *Apple* (29), *BMW* (11), *Nike* (10), *Coca-Cola* (6), *Audi* (5), *Esprit* (5), *Giorgio Armani* (5), *Nivea* (5), *Sony* (5), *Tommy Hilfiger* (5), *Jack-Daniels* (4), *Lindt* (4), *Nokia* (4), *Samsung* (4), *Biotherm* (3), *Estée Lauder* (3), *L'Oreal* (3), *McDonalds* (3), *Mercedes-Benz* (3), *Nespresso* (3), *Nestlé* (3), *Omega* (3), *Starbucks* (3), and *Tissot* (3). Second, we asked a new non-student sample of 206 participants (49% female, mean age = 24) to choose one brand on the list of the above identified brands that makes them especially happy, and to judge on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree") how well the 34 items describe their typical feelings towards this brand.

Results. The result of an EFA was a five-factor solution (eigenvalues > 1; explained variance of 65.90%). Because of the narrow focus in this study, we applied a stricter loading criterion (> .7) to further eliminate items and to uncover the dimensionality of brand happiness. In total, 17 items were found to fulfill the criterion.

With the aim of further item reduction, three independent judges were asked to evaluate the 17 items regarding their degree of semantic similarity, as suggested by *Brakus et al.*

(2009). A final EFA on the remaining 12 items revealed four distinct factors (see *Table 1*).[3] The first factor was labeled joy, because it contains emotions that reflect consumers' exuberance towards brands. The second factor, vigor, expresses a high degree of activation and vitality. The third factor, pride, includes items indicating feelings of self-enhancement in relation to a brand. The last factor, serenity, refers to emotional harmony and balance.

Table 1: Dimensions of Brand Happiness: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Emotion item	Factor			
	Joy	Vigor	Pride	Serenity
Glad	**.82**	.17	.07	.28
Cheerful	**.83**	.31	.04	.21
Joyful	**.80**	.15	.27	.16
Lively	.25	**.81**	.18	.13
Peppy	.24	**.86**	.19	.11
Vigorous	.12	**.82**	.27	.04
Proud	.07	.36	**.76**	.07
Superior	.15	.11	**.85**	.10
Worthy	.12	.21	**.81**	.21
Relaxed	.23	.11	.08	**.88**
At ease	.19	.07	.08	**.90**
Comfortable	.18	.08	.21	**.78**

Note: Factor analysis used a Varimax rotation. Bold values indicate the factor on which each item predominantly loads.

On the whole, these results confirm that the experience of brand happiness takes on different intensities, ranging from high (joy, vigor, and pride) to low (serenity) arousal emotions. Nevertheless, we consider that the term, "emotional expressiveness", which signifies outward emotional display (*Kring et al.* 1994), is more suitable and precise than the term "arousal" for capturing the dimensional structure of brand happiness. Consequently, we conceptualize brand happiness as being the consumer's greatest emotional fulfillment in terms of his or her moment-based experience of pleasant emotions released at different brand contact points (e.g., via purchase, consumption, advertisements). These emotions occupy a zone on a continuum of strongly expressive (joy and vigor) and weakly expressive (pride and serenity) emotions.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the overall BH scale and its dimensions in order to assess internal consistency or reliability (*Nunnally* 1978). All resulting values were acceptable, ranging from .82 to .86. The item-to-total correlations of each individual item reached values between .72 and .90, with an averaged correlation of .79, in further support of the internal consistency of the BH scale.

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3 In accordance with Aaker (1997), it is reasonable to argue that factor five vanished in the final factor analysis, because only the first four factors were the most weighty and interpretable ones (no items had a sufficiently high loading on the fifth factor).

3.3 Confirmatory Stage: Scale Validation and Condition Assessment

3.3.1 Study 4

Participants and procedure. Study 4 validates the internal consistency, stability and structure of the BH scale in four ways: test-retest reliability, Cronbach's alpha, construct validity, and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA's). First, the established pool of 24 brands (see study 3) was adapted by asking 20 consumers to name three brands that make them happy. Four additional brands were frequently mentioned and rated by participants as making them strongly happy (*Adidas*, *Chanel*, *Feldschlösschen*, *Haribo*), increasing the pool of happy brands to 28. Then, nine experts judged the happiness level of this happy brand pool on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "weakly happy brand" and 7 = "strongly happy brand"). The expert judgments suggested the elimination of eight brands (*Omega*, *Biotherm*, *Estée Lauder*, *Nestlé*, *Nokia*, *Sony*, *Tommy Hilfiger*, *Tissot*). As a result, a pool of 20 brands was retained for subsequent investigations.

Second, to increase the generalizability and variance of the BH scale, 367 (34% female, mean age = 26) undergraduate students rated the 12 items of the BH scale separately for two randomly assigned and known brands. To prevent systematic bias, 10 additional items from study 2 were incorporated (*Aaker* 1997). As well as the brands, the items were randomized to reduce possible order effects (*Brakus et al.* 2009). Moreover, a control measure for brand happiness was included to capture whether respondents evaluate the BH scale for a brand that makes them extremely happy or one that makes them weakly happy ("How happy does the [brand] make you"?) and thus to ensure variance in the BH scores.[4] A two-week test-retest period was chosen in order to ensure that the participants were not retrieving answers they had already given to the questions ("memory effects") and to avoid differences in the brand happiness ratings between the two survey waves due to intervening changes in the experience of brand happiness ("brand happiness effects"). In total, 103 respondents (65% female, mean age = 26) agreed to complete the same questionnaire a second time around for one of the two brands randomly assigned to them during the first test period.

Test-retest reliability. To determine the robustness and stability of the BH scale, the ratings at the two measurement points were correlated, yielding the following test-retest correlations: $r_{\text{overall BH}} = .87$, $r_{\text{joy}} = .87$, $r_{\text{vigor}} = .76$, $r_{\text{pride}} = .83$, and $r_{\text{serenity}} = .73$. Because these scores exceed a value of .70, substantial test-retest reliability is demonstrated (*Nunnally* 1978).

Cronbach's alpha. The assessment of the internal consistency provided an additional comprehensive reliability test of the BH scale. The accurate values calculated for Cronbach's alpha (brand happiness = .90, joy = .94, vigor = .92, pride = .86, and serenity = .85) and the reasonable values achieved for the item-to-total correlations (ranging from .62 to .85) are indications of internal reliability.

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4 Sufficient variance was created on the BH scale, because approximately one half of the respondents report on a weakly happy brand, the other half on a strongly happy brand, with significant differences (first brand: $M_{\text{strong}} = 4.83$, $M_{\text{weak}} = 1.81$, $p < .01$; second brand: $M_{\text{strong}} = 4.78$, $M_{\text{weak}} = 1.88$, $p < .01$).

Construct validity. Construct validity requires adequate convergent and discriminant validity (*Pons et al.* 2006). Convergent validity is ensured when the average variance extracted (AVE) of a construct exceeds the minimum requirement of 50%. Discriminant validity is adequate when the AVE exceeds the shared variance between any two constructs (i.e., their squared correlations; *Fornell/Larcker* 1981). The results support the condition that the AVE of each dimension exceeds the minimum value of .50 (AVE_{joy} = .85, AVE_{vigor} = .78, AVE_{pride} = .68, $AVE_{serenity}$ = .70) and that the AVE exceeds the shared variance between any two constructs (joy-vigor = .71, joy-pride = .51, joy-serenity = .60, vigor-pride = .61, vigor-serenity = .51, pride-serenity = .43). These results therefore offer evidence of construct validity.

Confirmation of the brand happiness dimensions. As shown, test-retest reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and construct validity provide evidence of a highly reliable measurement scale. To confirm the dimensional structure of the BH scale, an EFA was carried out. Contrary to the expectation of a four-factor solution, only three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, which explained 81.12% of the variance. Respectively, joy and vigor items load on the same factor. To test the possibility of a nested factor, an EFA on the six joy and vigor items was conducted. Two factors, nested within the joy/vigor factor, were extracted: joy and vigor, explaining 88.44% of the variance.

Since no theoretical justification for the structure of the brand happiness construct exists presently, to the best of the author's knowledge, we performed the following set of CFA's to confirm the dimensional structure and to uncover the relationship of the four factors to the broader brand happiness construct (see *Table 2*): a null model (Model 1), a three-factor model with uncorrelated factors (Model 2), a one-factor model for which all

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Comparisons

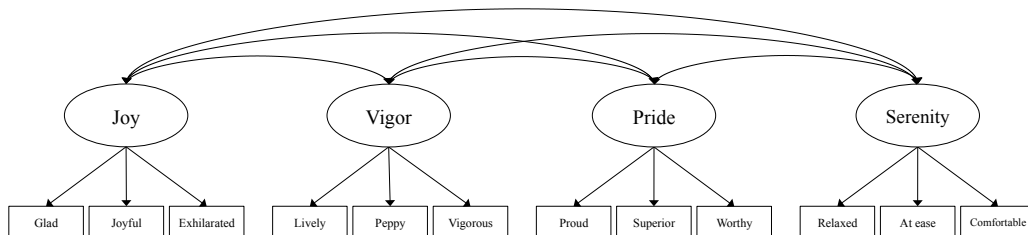| Model	Chi-Square	d.f.	Chi-Square Difference (d.f. Difference)[a]	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA
Null (Model 1)	4063.73	66	NA	NA	NA	.260
Three-factor uncorrelated (Model 2)	714.70	54	3349.03 (12)***	.80	.83	.181
One-factor (Model 3)	623.95	54	93.30 (1)***	.83	.85	.170
Second-order with three dimensions (Model 4)	234.67	51	389.00 (3)***	.94	.95	.099
Three-factor correlated (Model 5)	234.67	51	0	.94	.95	.099
Nested model (Model 6)	184.68	49	49.99 (3)***	.95	.96	.087
Four-factor uncorrelated (Model 7)	1208.04	54	1023.36 (5)***	.65	.71	.242
Second-order with four dimensions (Model 8)	188.59	50	1019.45 (4)***	.95	.96	.087
Four-factor correlated (Model 9)	161.09	48	27.50 (2)***	.96	.97	.080

Notes: NA = not applicable; ***p < .01
[a] Chi-square differences are calculated between sequenced models (e.g., the null versus the one-factor model, the one-factor model versus the second-order model with three dimensions).

items loaded on a single brand happiness factor (Model 3), a second-order construct with three dimensions (Model 4), a three-factor model with correlated factors (Model 5), a nested model (Model 6), a four-factor model with uncorrelated factors (Model 7), a model that assumes brand happiness as a second-order construct with four dimensions (Model 8), and a four-factor model with correlated factors (Model 9).

A test of the nine different models disclosed that the four-factor correlated model (Model 9) is the model that fits the data best, with a good fit. It should be noted that, despite the slightly different exploratory factor structure revealed in studies 3 and 4, on the confirmatory stage, the models with four factors (Models 7, 8, and 9) out-perform the models with three factors (Models 2, 4, and 5). This demonstrates the superiority of the four-factor structure (study 3), with the four-factor correlated model (Model 9) as the best model. *Figure 1* presents the final measurement model of brand happiness.

Figure 1: Measurement Model of Brand Happiness

3.3.2 Study 5

Participants and procedure. The BH scale was designed so that it is able to measure the degree of happiness that every brand induces. That is, the BH scale is generalized across different sets of brands. To further test the generalizability, robustness, and stability of the BH scale, its invariance across different cultures is analyzed using CFA (*Pons et al.* 2006). Measurement invariance tests "whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute" (*Horn/McArdle* 1992, p. 117). Because eastern and western cultures differ in many respects, and particularly with regard to self-construal (e.g., *Lu et al.* 2001; *Spassova/Lee* 2013), an invariance check across these cultural settings is an effective test for our purpose.

The questionnaire that was used for this study contained the 12 brand happiness items that were identified in the earlier studies, as well as demographic variables. With the help of an undergraduate student, 154 eastern (e.g., Russia and Ukraine) and 160 western (e.g., Switzerland, Germany, and Italy) respondents, in total, (52% female, mean age = 26) were encouraged to answer the 12-item BH scale for one randomly selected brand from the happy brand pool used in study 4.

Results. Configural and metric invariance are the most important property tests for assessing the generalizability, robustness, and stability of the BH scale. The configural invariance model exhibited acceptable fit statistics (see *Table 3, Model 1*). In addition, all factor loadings are significant (p < .001) and load with values > .70 on their respective di-

mension. Together with the fact that the latent variables are discriminant in both samples,[5] configural invariance is displayed in the cross-cultural case (*Steenkamp/Baumgartner* 1998). For the test of metric invariance, the factor loadings were constrained to be equal across the two cultural groups. The resulting acceptable fit statistics (see *Table 3, Model 2*) and the non-significant chi-square difference between the baseline model (Model 1) and the invariance model (Model 2) indicate an adequate level of metrical invariance (*Steenkamp/Baumgartner* 1998).

To summarize, the BH scale is invariant across the two cultural groups, such that a similar factor structure (configural invariance) and equivalent factor loadings (metric invariance) are exhibited across the two cultural groups. These results further validate the generalizability, robustness, and stability of the BH scale.

Table 3: Invariance Model Comparison of the Cross-Cultural Invariance

Model	Chi-Square	d.f.	Chi-Square Difference (d.f. Difference)	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA
Configural invariance (Model 1)	274.51	96	NA	.91	.93	.077
Metric invariance (Model 2)	292.20	108	17.69 (12) [n.s.]	.92	.93	.074

Note: NA = Not applicable, [n.s.] = $p > .1$

3.3.3 Study 6

Participants and procedure. The aim of this study was fourfold: First, it further examined the robustness and stability of the BH scale over different respondents and brands. Second, in order to be able to function as an autonomous brand goal or, rather, the highest brand goal, brand happiness must be somewhat related to, but conceptually and empirically different from, other constructs (precondition). In this respect, the discriminant validity of the BH scale needed to be validated. Third, this study aimed to assess the predictive validity of the BH scale by showing that brand happiness is behaviorally relevant and predicts three key outcome variables – purchase intention, price premium, and word-of-mouth. That brand happiness can be regarded as the highest brand goal or rather the "holy grail" of marketing requires that this construct is capable of superior performance. The fourth aim of study 5 therefore was to provide empirical evidence that brand happiness has a superior capacity to influence consumer brand behavior compared to its related affective-relational constructs (main condition).

In total, 407 undergraduate students participated in the 1x3 between-subject design (68% female, mean age = 27). It is possible that the brands, which were selected from a pretest and used in studies 3, 4 and 5, did not accurately reflect consumers' feelings of happiness towards a brand. To account for this fact and consciously create variance in the BH scale in order to be able to investigate brand happiness in relation to other constructs (*Thomson et al.* 2005), approximately one third of the respondents were instructed to name one brand that makes them "strongly", "moderately" or "weakly" happy and to evaluate the BH scale with regard to this brand. Besides the BH scale and some demographic variables, participants completed four related affective-relational scales, four relat-

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5 For the sake of brevity, we do not report these results.

ed cognitive-evaluative scales, and three behavioral scales arranged in a random order. For these constructs, we predominantly applied established measures.

Measurements.[6] For the affective-relational constructs, we used the following scales: *Thomson et al.'s* (2005) emotional brand attachment scale ("affectionate", "friendly", "loved", "peaceful", "passionate", "delighted", "captivated", "connected", "bonded", "attached"); *Carroll* and *Ahuvia's* (2006) brand love scale ("This is a wonderful brand", "This brand makes me feel good", "This brand is totally awesome", "This brand makes me very happy", "I love this brand!", "This brand is a pure delight", and "I am passionate about this brand"); *Oliver et al.'s* (1997) customer delight scale ("contented", "happy", "cheerful", "pleased", "enthused", "stimulated", and "elated"); and a self-developed brand relationship quality scale ("I have a close connection to this brand", "I have a good relationship with this brand", and "I'm very attached to this brand").

In addition, participants reported on the following four cognitive-evaluative constructs: *Brakus et al.'s* (2009) brand attitude scale ("good/bad", "do not like/like very much", and "not attractive/very attractive"); *Zaichkowsky's* (1994) brand involvement scale ("important/unimportant", "boring/interesting", "relevant/irrelevant", "exciting/unexciting", "means nothing/means a lot to me", "appealing/unappealing", "involving/uninvolving"); *Brakus et al.'s* (2009) brand experience scale ("This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses", "I find this brand interesting in a sensory way", "This brand does not appeal to my senses", "This brand induces feelings and sentiments", "This brand is an emotional brand", "I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand", "I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand", "This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving"); and a brand satisfaction scale adapted from *Homburg et al.* (2005) ("All in all, I am satisfied with this brand", "This brand meets my expectations", "This brand compares to an ideal brand").

We aligned our behavior measures on established scales and adapted them appropriately to our research context. For purchase intention, we applied the scale from *Dodds et al.* (1991) ("The likelihood that I will purchase this brand is very high", "The probability that I will consider buying this brand is very high", "My willingness to buy this brand is very high"); for price premium we applied the scale from *Evanschitzky et al.* (2012) ("I am willing to pay a higher price for this brand than for other brands", "The price of this brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would switch to another brand", "I am willing to pay a lot more for this brand"); and for word-of-mouth we applied the scale from *Brady et al.* (2012) ("I will talk positively about this brand to others (e.g., family, friends, other persons", "I will recommend this brand to others (e.g., family, friends, other persons)", "I will say good things about this brand to others (e.g., family, friends, other persons)").

Finally, measures for age, gender, and mood were included to control for their possible influence on the brand happiness scores.

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6 Due to low factor loadings, we eliminated some of the items; brand love: "I have neutral feelings about this brand", "I have no particular feelings about this brand", and "I'm very attached to this brand"; customer delight: "astonished", "surprised", and "excited"; brand attitude: "fascinating/mundane", "not needed/needed", and "worthless/valuable"; brand experience: "I do not have strong emotions for this brand", "This brand does not make me think", "This brand is not action-oriented", and "This brand results in bodily experiences".

Control variables and manipulation check. A series of ANOVAs were run on gender, age, and mood, in order to control whether they affect the reported brand happiness scores. Similar to other studies on age and gender differences regarding happiness (e.g., *Frijters/Beatton* 2012; *Mogilner et al.* 2012), the reported brand happiness score is affected by gender (F[406, 3.09], p < .05) and age (F[406, 1.34], p < .1). In contrast, no mood effects were found for overall brand happiness (F[406, 1.32], p > .01) and its dimensions: joy (F[406, 1,09], p > .01), vigor (F[406, 1.51], p > .01), pride (F[406, .92], p > .01), and serenity (F[406, 1.23], p > .01).

In addition to these control variables, a manipulation check question was included in the questionnaire ("How happy does the [brand] make you?") to test whether respondents reply to a brand that makes them "strongly", "moderately" or "weakly" happy. The results revealed that respondents in the strong condition assessed the brand as a "strongly happy brand" (M_{strong} = 6.48), respondents in the moderate condition assessed it as a "moderately happy brand" ($M_{moderate}$ = 3.37) and respondents in the weak condition assessed it as a "weakly happy brand" (M_{weak} = 2.94). The differences between the means were significant (p < .05). Similarly, on the brand happiness level, the results provide evidence that participants reported a higher experience of happiness induced by a "strongly happy brand" (M_{strong} = 4.45) compared to a "moderately happy brand" ($M_{moderate}$ = 4.15, p < .1), and a "weakly happy brand" (M_{weak} = 1.88, p < .01). In summary, the manipulation check was successful and sufficient variance was created in the brand happiness construct.

Validation of the scale structure. To further validate the structure of the BH scale, its stability and robustness across a different set of brands, we carried out the same set of CFA's as in study 4. Here again, the four-factor model with correlated factors exhibits the best fit: $\chi^2(48)$ = 236.88, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .92, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .95, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .098.

Discriminant validity. For further analyses (discriminant and predictive validity), composite scores were generated for the dimensions of brand happiness (joy, vigor, pride, serenity), as recommended in the literature (e.g., *Brakus et al.* 2009; *Thomson et al.* 2005). Discriminant validity was assessed using the conservative Fornell-Larcker criterion

Table 4: Assessment of Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker-Criterion)

		Emotional Brand Attachment			BL	CD	BRQ	Brand Experience				BS	BA	BI
		CO	PA	AF				BEH	IN	SE	AE			
Joy	.80	.44	.62	.60	.68	.82	.49	.04	.07	.17	.14	.61	.61	.49
Vigor	.70	.39	.49	.42	.37	.54	.33	.13	.07	.07	.14	.32	.30	.27
Pride	.64	.53	.56	.54	.54	.57	.46	.08	.12	.07	.13	.43	.42	.42
Serenity	.63	.29	.30	.44	.29	.40	.23	.02	.05	.05	.04	.30	.33	.23

Note: CO = connection, PA = passion, AF = affection, BL = brand love, CD = customer delight, BRQ = brand relationship quality, BEH = behavioral, IN = intellectual, SE = sensory, AE = affective, BS = brand satisfaction, BA = brand attitude, BI = brand involvement. The bold numbers denote the AVE's.

(*Fornell/Larcker* 1981). As recommended for this criterion, in most of the cases the AVE exceeds the shared variance between any two constructs (i.e., their squared correlations; see *Table 4*). Owing to the similar measurement of brand happiness and customer delight, only the joy dimension of brand happiness cannot be sufficiently discriminated from customer delight. Nevertheless, a chi-square difference test justifies the conclusion that both constructs exhibit properties of discriminant validity ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 191.51, Δd.f. = 1; p < .01). Based on these results, it can be presumed that, although brand happiness is to some extent related to the constructs under examination, especially to the affective-relational constructs, it is, nevertheless, sufficiently different from them. Thus, brand happiness can be regarded as an autonomous construct, which is the precondition we posited for a construct to qualify as the highest brand goal.

Predictive validity of the BH scale. Previously, we assumed that one important characteristic of brand happiness is its strong tendency to elicit action. We empirically tested this assumption by assessing the predictive validity of the BH scale. In support of adequate predictive validity, the results of the constructed structural model disclosed that brand happiness meaningfully predicts brand behavior (purchase intention, price premium, and word-of-mouth; see *Table 5*). Therefore, the precondition necessary for the subsequent empirical test is satisfied.

Dominant predictive validity of the BH scale. Brand happiness is not the only important predictor of brand behavior, because its related affective-relational constructs of emotional brand attachment, brand love, customer delight, and brand relationship quality similarly predict brand behavior (e.g., purchase intention, word-of-mouth, brand loyalty, and willingness to pay a price premium; *Batra et al.* 2012; *Nyffenegger et al.* 2014; *Oliver et al.* 1997; *Thomson et al.* 2005).[7] As outlined previously, because the desire to be happy is assumed to be a more compelling urge of consumers than the desire to be delighted, loved, attached, or related to brands, brand happiness might have a stronger capacity to elicit action, and might therefore be of greater relevance for brand behavior than its related affective-relational constructs. The superior capacity of brand happiness to impact brand behavior is the main condition that the brand happiness construct has to fulfill in order to be positioned at the top of the brand goal hierarchy.

To test this criterion of the superior relevance of brand happiness as a predictor of brand behavior empirically, the predictive value of the BH scale over the related affective-relational constructs was evaluated by applying a procedure similar to the one proposed by *Romani et al.* (2012). The influence of the five affective-relational constructs on brand behavior was assessed in separate structural equation analyses for each scale. The resulting path coefficients, R^2, and fit statistics of the different structural models are given in *Table 5*. It is worth noting that direct comparisons of the statistics of the five predictive models are permissible, because the models consist of the same number of variables (*Batra et al.* 2012). The effects of brand happiness on purchase intention, price premium, and word-of-mouth are similar to those of its related affective-relational constructs. Nevertheless, compared to these other affective-relational constructs, brand happiness is shown to have a

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7 Because the cognitive-evaluative constructs show few similarities with brand happiness regarding their behavioral impact, we refrain from including these constructs in the analysis assessing superior predictive validity.

stronger influence on purchase intention (with the exception of brand love, which features the same value of .86), price premium, and word-of-mouth (with the exception of brand love, which features the same value of .81). Moreover, brand happiness accounts for a greater part of the variance for purchase intention (with the exception of brand love, which features the same R^2 of .74), price premium, and word-of-mouth (with the exception of brand love, which features the same R^2 of .66).

With regard to the model fit, it can be stated that the predictive validity of the model of brand happiness is significantly better than that of most other models. Except for emotional brand attachment, no significant predominance is evident: although the model fit of emotional brand attachment is slightly less satisfactory than that of brand happiness. All in all, these results indicate that the predictive validity of the brand happiness construct is superior to that of emotional brand attachment, brand love, customer delight, and brand relationship quality. These findings therefore support the main condition of the dominant behavioral relevance of brand happiness by evidencing its superior capacity to impact brand behavior compared to other brand constructs, thereby further supporting it as a candidate for the highest brand goal, the 'holy grail' of marketing.

Table 5: Results of the Predictive Validity Evaluations

		Impact	Path	R2	Model Fit	Chi-Square
Brand Happiness	➜	Purchase Intention	.86***	.74	CFI = .97	$\chi^2 = 262.23$ d.f. = 62
		Price Premium	.82***	.67	NNFI = .96	
		WOM	.81***	.66	RMSEA = .089	
Brand Attachment	➜	Purchase Intention	.81***	.66	CFI = .96	$\chi^2 = 279.842^a$ d.f. = 51
		Price Premium	.78***	.61	NNFI = .95	
		WOM	.80***	.64	RMSEA = .105	
Brand Love	➜	Purchase Intention	.86***	.74	CFI = .96	$\chi^2 = 339.261^b$ d.f. = 74
		Price Premium	.80***	.65	NNFI = .95	
		WOM	.81***	.66	RMSEA = .094	
Customer Delight	➜	Purchase Intention	.83***	.68	CFI = .96	$\chi^2 = 419.594^b$ d.f. = 101
		Price Premium	.75***	.55	NNFI = .95	
		WOM	.75***	.55	RMSEA = .088	
Brand Relationship Quality	➜	Purchase Intention	.77***	.59	CFI = .95	$\chi^2 = 366.85^b$ d.f. = 51
		Price Premium	.72***	.51	NNFI = .93	
		WOM	.77***	.59	RMSEA = .124	

Notes: *** = p < .01.
[a] No significant difference to the predictive model of brand happiness.
[b] Significant difference to the predictive model of brand happiness.

3.3.4 Conclusion

Brand happiness has emerged from this paper's scale development process as a 12-item scale, comprising four dimensions: joy, vigor, pride, and serenity. The conducted analyses demonstrate that this scale provides good validity and reliability. Moreover, the BH scale is stable across different samples, brands (elicited by participants and selected from a

pretest), and cultures; is related to, but nevertheless distinctly different from related constructs; and significantly predicts brand behavior. These results significantly contribute to the discussion of our overall target, the accentuation of brand happiness as the highest brand goal or, rather, the "holy grail" of marketing. We will outline this discussion in the next section.

4. General Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Summary and Discussion

We have demonstrated that brand happiness occupies an increasingly important role in marketing and consumer research. Because people regard happiness as one of life's highest and most desirable goals, they are also passionate in their quest of achieve it (e.g., *Kesebir/Diener* 2008; *Pavot/Diener* 2013). People therefore constantly strive to be happy and invest considerable effort in their attempts to achieve happiness and maintain it. Brands have emerged as an efficient way to satisfy the innate human desire to be happy (e.g., *Bettingen/Luedicke* 2009). These facts motivated us to ponder whether the importance of making consumers happy is underestimated as a brand goal, and whether it should be revaluated as the ultimate brand goal, the "holy grail" of marketing. To address this question conceptually and empirically, we extensively explored the new construct of brand happiness and evaluated its added value to marketing research and practice. In doing this, we contribute to the corpus of literature in marketing and consumer research in substantial conceptual, empirical, and managerial ways.

Conceptual contributions. We provided a qualitative approach to brand happiness by defining it and deriving its central characteristics. The outlined characteristics of brand happiness, namely its situation-specificity and behavioral power, led us to consider that brand happiness might constitute the marketer's highest brand goal. Because happiness is defined as one of the highest goals that humans seek to achieve in life, marketers are well advised to make their consumers happy and to position brand happiness at the apex of the brand goal hierarchy, as the highest brand goal. Brand happiness therefore had to comply with the precondition which requires that it has to be an autonomous brand goal. In this respect, we show that brand happiness is conceptually different from related affective-relational as well as cognitive-evaluative constructs in that it is an affective and short-term state, which has different brand contact points as its object or referent, varies in intensity, and is multi-dimensional – these being characteristics that no other construct features in this form. Moreover, we propose a main condition that would further qualify the preeminence of brand happiness as being the most important brand goal. Accordingly, the brand happiness construct presents greater success potential than other brand goals.

Empirical contributions. We also provide a quantitative approach to brand happiness as the "holy grail" of marketing by developing and validating a scale to measure the brand happiness construct. Our empirical investigations identified brand happiness to be a four-dimensional construct with correlated factors that capture the feeling of happiness towards a brand. The scale we developed consists of 12 emotion items, three for each of the four dimensions labeled joy, vigor, pride, and serenity. We show that these four emotions, which have been analyzed in previous studies as separate constructs, can be integrated into

the broader construct of brand happiness. This is superior to the individual study of these emotions, because their integrated examination allows a more comprehensive and structured analysis of brand emotions and brand happiness (*Batra et al.* 2012).

We subjected the BH scale to various reliability and validity tests. Results suggested that the BH scale exhibits good and stable psychometric properties. This is demonstrated by showing that the BH scale is robust over time, across brands, samples and cultures and is related to, but empirically distinct from affective-relational and cognitive-evaluative constructs. The last result provided empirical evidence that brand happiness is an autonomous brand goal and thus fully satisfies the precondition. Moreover, it has been shown that brand happiness predicts brand behavior (purchase intention, price premium, and word-of-mouth) and exhibits a stronger predictive power than any other important related affective-relational construct. This empirically supports the main condition. Consequently, the two conditions have been successfully demonstrated, so that brand happiness can and should be regarded by marketers as their highest brand goal, the "holy grail" of marketing.

Finally, our pioneering results provide room for significant managerial contributions. Moreover, since the brand happiness concept as the "holy grail" of marketing is a 'brand-new' concept, major research gaps exist that offer promising directions for further research.

4.2 Managerial Contributions

The capacity to provide consumers with ways to fulfill their ultimate emotional need, their desire for happiness, is the most important capacity that a brand can have. Thus, the creation of happy moments for consumers is a brand goal that has to be positioned at the top of a brand goal hierarchy. Consequently, brand happiness is the highest brand goal, the crown of the brand goal hierarchy that marketers can and should strive to achieve with their branding activities. However, only a few marketers are privileged to fully achieve this. Brand happiness therefore offers marketers a promising peerless competitive advantage. In this paper, brand happiness has been shown to be the most important autonomous brand goal on the basis of its capacity to influence managerially relevant outcomes (purchase intention, price premium, word-of-mouth), and especially its capacity to predict these outcomes better than any of the other studied affective-relational constructs (customer delight, emotional brand attachment, brand love, and brand relationship quality).

To fully exploit the potential of brand happiness, marketers should undertake actions to influence brand happiness. An understanding of brand happiness and its dimensions will help marketers to build and enhance the consumer's experience of brand happiness. Consequently, the happiness construct and its dimensions could function as strategic design elements of various brand contact points or happiness-enhancing activities (e.g., brand promises, slogans, experiences, or commercials). For example, communication is an effective happiness-enhancing strategy, because using happiness as a component in an advertising campaign can have a contagious effect and consequently enhance consumers' brand evaluations and behaviors (e.g., *Goldberg/Gorn* 1987; *Labroo/Rucker* 2010). One such strategy might be to use commercials and/or the general setting of ads which present brand happiness or which specifically display an interaction of its four dimensions, joy, vigor, pride, and serenity. For instance, joy, vigor, and pride can be displayed by showing

celebrating, laughing people who are proud to be in contact with a brand (e.g., by purchasing, consuming, or owning it) in a printed or TV ad which has a lively, action-packed setting. Nevertheless, to implement serenity, the setting of the ad also has to be self-contained and thereby exude harmony and balance. Stylistic elements could be surroundings such as the storyline, as well as the visual and acoustic effects. This idea can also be transferred to product design (e.g., the use of cheerful colors, vivid shapes, and happy illustrations) or experience strategies. Brands then have to be designed to be multi-sensory, so that they provide consumers with various brand experiences and intense emotional moments full of happiness (and/or joy, vigor, pride, and serenity). Strategies, such as these, have the capacity to become indispensable tools for inducing brand happiness.

However, before starting the process of planning and implementing happiness-enhancing strategies, marketers must bear in mind the idea of the brand goal hierarchy that we proposed. This hierarchy implies that the brand goals that are subordinate to brand happiness need to be approached first. More specifically, the hierarchical structure could be ordered so that the cognitive-evaluative brand goals must be realized first, followed by the affective-relational brand goals. Hence, marketers need to involve their consumers in the brand, provide them with positive brand experiences, create and enhance their positive attitudes towards the brand, and satisfy them (cognitive-evaluative goals), before they operate on the next higher level where they delight their customers, emotionally attach them with the brand, and build strong and loving relationships between them and the brand (affective-relational goals). Only when these steps have been sufficiently achieved and the consumer has a positive emotional tenor towards the brand, will the conditions be in place for the attainment of brand happiness. This suggests a rational-emotional space in which the brand has to operate, has to be positioned, and has to evolve continually.

In addition, researchers and practitioners have to adopt the BH scale as a new upstream success metric and link them to projected and actual purchase data. In this respect, they could also employ the BH scale to rank their individual brands according to each brand's happiness-inducing potential and the corresponding behavioral influence that each has from the company's and the customer's point of view. On this basis, it is possible to identify 'happy brands' as benchmarks, and use them for brand comparisons across product categories and competing brands. The corresponding results might then provide starting points for improvements and new ways to make consumers feel (more) happy.

4.3 Directions for Future Research

As we have shown, brand happiness is a promising incipient field of research. Although our findings have helped to clarify the understanding of brand happiness with regard to its conceptual, empirical and managerial function, a rich field of research lies ahead in further demonstrating its role as the highest brand goal.

In this paper, the idea of a brand goal hierarchy was conceptually launched and the positioning of brand happiness at its apex, as the "holy grail" or crown of marketing, was conceptually and empirically founded. However, this is just a first step that should provide new impulses and inspiration for further conceptual, empirical, and theoretical work on this subject. For instance, the stability and consistency of the two requirements which we set as premises for a concept to be positioned as the highest brand goal need to be extended and further validated. Moreover, other brand goals which possibly also qualify as candidates for the position of highest brand goal should be discussed and analyzed empirical-

ly in order to stabilize our finding that brand happiness is the highest brand goal. Here, it is important to identify the brand goals that are subordinate to brand happiness, to determine the relationships between them, and to examine their influence on brand happiness.

We deliberately developed the BH scale on an aggregate level, and, therefore, did not derive the consumers' experience of brand happiness from specific brand contact points. In view of this, the next step would be to examine the impact that different brand contact points and marketing activities have on the consumer's experience of brand happiness. Moreover, in order to be able to derive brand happiness strategies (ways to manage and enhance the level of brand happiness), it is important to fully understand the factors that might be effective in influencing brand happiness. Because the appraisal theories hold the view that appraisals function as antecedents of emotions, approaches could draw on appraisal theories to investigate the causes of brand happiness. Besides this, the appraisal theories also state that behavioral reactions are the result of experienced emotions (e.g., *Frijda* 1987). This approach can therefore also provide a theoretical foundation for the identification of and the hypotheses development for the consequences of brand happiness (e.g., purchase intention).

An examination of the influence of different brand types on brand happiness also offers a starting point for further research. For instance, derived from *Nicolao et al.* (2009) finding that experiential purchases are more likely to induce higher levels of happiness than material purchases, it is supposable that hedonic brands also have this advantage over utilitarian brands. Moreover, an analysis of the influence of different types of brand-related consumption (e.g., conspicuous versus inconspicuous) on different forms of brand happiness (e.g., high and low expressive brand happiness) would be an interesting undertaking for future research.

As we have shown, brand happiness is defined as a short-term and situation-specific emotional experience. Therefore, brand happiness increases when the consumer is exposed to a brand-related stimulus and then returns to a baseline level. Additional research might explain and measure this hedonic decline and identify appropriate strategies to countervail it and the corresponding affective habituation. This entails that the subsequently introduced happiness-enhancing stimulus must be much more effective in order to be able to evoke the same level of brand happiness (hedonic treadmill).

Irrespective of the short-term, fleeting character of brand happiness, the long-run effect of brand happiness on life satisfaction should be investigated. To test the possible long-term effects of brand happiness, longitudinal studies can be designed.

4.4 Conclusion

Brand happiness is the "holy grail" of marketing! Although we were successful in providing conceptual and empirical support for this provocative statement, we are only beginning to understand the role of brand happiness in marketing. However, it is worth noting that this claim must be regarded as being conditioned on two criteria: that brand happiness is an autonomous construct and that it has a superior capacity to successfully impact brand behavior. In view of these two conditions, the statement needs to be relativized somewhat. Hence, what we found is that brand happiness is an autonomous brand goal that exerts a superior impact on brand behavior compared to other important brand goals. The confirmation of these two conditions being met for the brand happiness construct allowed us to reason that we had discovered a new and important brand goal con-

struct, which has the potential capacity to be the highest brand goal, the "holy grail" of marketing. Overall, our results suggest that making consumers happy is a worthwhile strategic objective. Therefore, it is highly recommended that practitioners concentrate their resources on branding activities that are able to develop brands and create brand experiences that make consumers happy.

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