MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Luxury values as drivers for affective commitment: The case of luxury car tribes

Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro1* and Hans Ruediger Kaufmann2

Abstract: Brand communities have been regarded as avenues where the relationship between consumers and a brand can flourish. The main aim of this research was to investigate if luxury values, that is, the individual, social and functional values and beliefs influence the affective commitment in the luxury car context. This study explores the effect of luxury values on luxury car affective commitment mediated by brand tribalism and brand reputation. The proposed model was tested through a survey on car brand communities (BMW, Mercedes and Audi). Findings reveal that brand tribalism is more important than brand reputation when developing brand relationship. Functional values are more effective to create brand reputation than to improve brand tribalism. Social values influence more on brand tribalism than on brand reputation. Individual values exercise a significant effect on brand tribalism.

Subjects: Economics; Finance; Business & Industry; Marketing; Relationship Marketing; Social Sciences

Keywords: luxury values; brand tribalism; brand reputation; affective commitment; luxury car brands

1. Introduction

During the last 20 years, the research stream on consumer–brand relationships has been attracting interest for researchers and brand managers (Loureiro, 2012, 2015) and gained increasing...
importance. The central goal is to understand the consumers' motivation towards the brands and the increasing role brands play in the consumers' lifestyle. According to Wood (2000), this implies brand management to be strategic and holistic, as this is conducive to longevity, that is, the marketing mix should operate in a way that supports the brand identity. Therefore, to do so in an effective and appropriate way, brand management has to understand the consumer, attract her/him, trigger the development, maintenance and continuous enhancement of brand relationships and, importantly, demonstrate credibility to be competitive in a turbulent market.

Our understanding of how consumers are connecting and relating with their preferred brand helps to create favourable experiences and leads to long-term relationships. Indeed, relationship marketing is the field of knowledge where the process of creating and maintaining the relationship between consumers and brands and the mechanism behind the multi-relationships in brand communities is studied (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Semenik, Allen, & O’Guinn, 2012; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

However, a gap was found in the literature, regarding the influence of luxury values on affective commitment. Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg (2006, p. 113) highlight that “a value can be defined as a belief about some desirable end-state that transcends specific situations and guides selection of behaviour”. Consumers who believe that luxury materials accrue power, position, status, prestige, unique characteristics and relationships with other consumers will have a positive attitude towards acquiring luxury brands (Rucker, Galinsky, & Dubois, 2011; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), such as cars. Actually, a luxury car may reflect the consumers’ lifestyle, passion in life and visibility among other elements in the community. Belief about a luxury brand may enhance the reputation of the brand, the consistency of its values and trustworthiness. In the end, the process of identification with a brand and the reputation of the same will influence the affective commitment to the brand.

The present study proposes a model tested in the automotive sector, in particular, the car brands’ communities: BMW, Audi and Mercedes (choosing only the more upscale car models) being the representatives of luxury segments according to European Commission (1999). A luxury car has a unique style, high quality and somehow gives pleasure to its owner, which is affordable only for the high-income group.

In this vein, the key objective of this paper was to explore the effect of luxury values on affective commitment, mediated by brand tribalism and brand reputation. Therefore, a model is tested using survey data from 201 responses by participants from car brand communities. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section provides a conceptualization of luxury values, luxury car brands and brand community. Thereafter, the background and hypotheses to be tested are presented. Moreover, the method is described and in the last two sections the major findings, conclusions and implications are presented.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses’ development

2.1. Consumer luxury values

In consumer marketing, brands often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings, and as such they can be critical to the success of organizations. These differentiating factors can effectively be the ones associated with luxury (Romaniuk, Sharp, & Ehrenberg, 2007). Thus, in order to achieve an understanding of the nature and drivers of consumer luxury values, a definition of luxury brands must underpin the research. However, as luxury is a subjective and multidimensional construct, defining luxury brands is not an easy task and must follow an integrative approach (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009).

Luxury brands are usually linked with brands of limited supply (exclusive distribution), high price, excellent quality, aesthetic beauty, rarity and exclusivity, as well as strong emotional and symbolic associations (Choo, Moon, Kim, & Yoon, 2012; Megehee & Spake, 2012). Chevalier and Massalovo
allude to a luxury brand as “one that is selective and exclusive, and which has an additional creative and emotional value for the consumer” (p. VIII). Therefore, luxury brands are related to objects of desire and provide extra pleasure enabling the satisfaction of both psychological, social and functional needs and values of their owners (Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Consequently, the strategic mission of luxury brands is built on the premise that they represent enough value to both the individual and significant others that exceed the high product price.

The customer value of a luxury brand has been conceptualized by previous studies (e.g. Choo et al., 2012; Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Li, 2009; Kaufmann, Vrontis, & Manakova, 2012; Smith & Colgate, 2007; Tynan, Mckechnie, & Chhuon, 2009; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; Wiedmann et al., 2009). The question of what effectively adds luxury value in the consumer’s perception was defined based on a hierarchical and multidimensional model that accommodates financial, functional, individual and social aspects (Wiedmann et al., 2009). The financial dimension of luxury value encompasses both monetary elements such as price and the trade-offs consumers sacrificed to benefit from the brand. As in the present study, only consumers pertaining to the high-income group that joined brand communities were targeted, the financial dimension was not considered. The functional dimension of luxury value refers to the core product benefits and utilities given by the brand. Thus, it includes usability, uniqueness, quality, reliability and durability values. The individual dimension addresses personal factors towards luxury consumption such as hedonism, materialism and self-identity. The social dimension focuses on the perceived utility consumers obtain owning brands acknowledged within their social groups such as conspicuousness and prestige.

2.2. Luxury car brands

An appropriate definition of luxury cars is needed for this study. It is important that the characteristics of luxury cars should fit the luxury values and the consumer perceptions. A luxury car brand provides desirable characteristics beyond strict functional “bare necessities”. A luxury car distinguishes by style, high quality, performance, as well as strong emotional and symbolic associations congregated to give comfort, reliability, pleasure and social status to the owner. Luxury cars are unique and distinctive within the market in terms of brand, price, and amount of extra accessories, engineering requirements, performance, technology and available options. Dubois and Patemault (1995) and Phau and Prendergast (2000) describe that luxury brands maintain their prestige by sustaining high levels of awareness and tightly controlled diffusion to enhance exclusivity and create differentiation.

In this vein, three brands (BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz) are chosen to be considered in this study due to the fact that they are the most representative to the E (executive cars), F (luxury cars) and S (sport coupes) car segments according to European Commission (1999). The boundaries between segments are blurred by factors other than the size or length of cars such as price, image and the amount of extra accessories.

2.3. Brand community

Brand communities have become an increasingly important phenomenon in contemporary marketing (e.g. McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Semenik et al., 2012) and are embedded into the context of marketing relationships. They were clearly stimulated by the emergence of Web 2.0 that provided an innovative technological toolset for the coalescence of communities around brands (Cova & White, 2010).

Consumers with similar norms, values and habits tend to conglomerate in groups called communities of consumption. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001, p. 412) defined brand community as “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand”. Stressing the relational aspect even more, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006, p. 45) hold that a brand community “is a friendship group of consumers with a shared enthusiasm for the brand and a well-developed social identity, whose members engage jointly in group actions to
accomplish collective goals and/or to express mutual sentiments and commitments”. Consumers can achieve social satisfaction when they create and maintain relationships and the brand takes advantage from their loyalty, advocacy and recommendations to other consumers (e.g. Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Fournier, 1998; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). In addition, brand communities can help in strengthening consumer–brand relationships (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001).

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) have proposed three main characteristics of brand communities: (i) consciousness of kind, (ii) sharing rituals and (iii) sense of moral responsibility with consciousness of kind meaning “the intrinsic connection that members feel towards one another, and the collective sense of difference from others not in the community”; the presence of shared rituals and traditions “perpetuate the community’s shared history, culture, and consciousness” and a sense of moral responsibility means “a felt of sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole, and to its individual members” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001, p. 413).

The car brand communities employed in the current study are online brand communities that get together in person from time to time, and the degree of affiliation with the community was decided on the extent to which respondents identified with community features (Hewer & Brownlie, 2007). Some people associate themselves with a particular car model in order to be able to join the community, although, they do not necessarily have to own the car, just need to identify with a specific car model. According to Zhou, Zhang, Su, and Zhou (2012) to have consumers committed to a brand inside the brand community, the consumer identification with the brand and the cultivation of the emotions or attachment inside the community are important.

2.4. Brand tribalism

Brand tribalism is a relatively new concept, introduced by Cova and Cova (2002) that identifies a community of self-selected individuals formed on the basis of an emotional attachment to a product or a brand. Brand tribalism is derived from the concept of brand community. Brand tribalism may be defined as a community or subculture of consumers formed through an emotional bond to a product or brand (Jurisic & Azevedo, 2011). Yet, brand tribalism, however, does not mean that a consumer needs to accept a formal membership of the group (Taute & Sierra, 2014). Actually, postmodern tribes (1) do not dominate consumers’ lives, (2) are playful rather than devoted, (3) are ephemeral and (4) are entrepreneurial (Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013). However, it is expected that exist “the common bond that tribe members share, the social structure or tribe members’ perceived sense of hierarchical relationships, a sense of community reflecting tribe members’ capacity to coexist in harmony, and defense of the tribe or tribal members’ emotionally charged” (Badrinarayanan, Sierra, & Taute, 2014, p. 854) in opposition to competing tribes or brands. According to Ruane and Wallace (2015), there is evidence that consumers may be more loyal to the tribe they belong to than the brand it represents and online tribes and communities show such claims (Sierra, Badrinarayanan, & Taute, 2016).

Veloutsou (2007) stresses that a tribal brand relationship has two dimensions: two-way communication and emotional exchange. Later, Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) developed a construct aggregating aspects of the consumers’ lifestyle, passion of life, social visibility, collective memory of the brand and acceptance of certain reference groups, which they called “brand tribalism”. Furthermore, they found that brand tribalism is an important predictor of the strength of brand relationships. In more detail, brand tribalism comprises five dimensions: fit lifestyle (the brand reflect the way consumer perceive his/her life); passion in life (the brand makes a contribution in life); reference group (achieve a sense of belonging by buying the same brand as friends buy); social visibility (people feel good about the brand and the brand is visible); and collective memory (collective memory among friends/community members to buy cars from the same brand).

Brand tribalism and communities around a brand allow customers to share experiences and influence other group members (Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007), revising the power of word-of-mouth communications (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). Consequently, we postulate that when consumers
of luxury brands identified themselves with the brands, feel pleasure acquiring and using the products, believe that the brand gives them prestige and perceive the usability and the uniqueness of such products (luxury values), then the same consumers will be more engaged in participating in communities of self-selected members emotionally attached to a brand (tribes). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed (see Figure 1):

\textbf{H1:} Luxury values, social (H1a), individual (H1b) and functional (H1c) ones, influence the brand tribalism.

\subsection*{2.5. Brand reputation}

Both, academics and practitioners alike consider that brands with good reputation are those of whom consumers believe that the brand’s claims and signals are accomplished. So, reputable brands are more able to attract customers or, at least, retain customers (e.g. Herbig & Milewicz, 1993; Loureiro & Kastenholz, 2011).

According to Adams (2016), consumer willingness to buy or recommend a product is driven mainly by their perceptions of the company and brand reputation and not by their perceptions of the products. Reputation plays a role as signal of the brand or the company’s key characteristics and as a source of competitive advantage (Hur, Kim, & Woo, 2014; Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012). However, the development of brand reputation implies more than merely meeting consumer expectations or keeping consumers satisfied. Rather, reputation is connected to long-lasting favourable relationships with stakeholders, particularly with consumers, and refers to how various audiences evaluate the brand (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993).

Reputation is one of the main associations with perceived quality of the products carrying the brand name. Consumers expect consistency in the perceived quality of the products over time (Milewicz & Herbig, 1994). Individual’s trust on brands that they perceive as credible and which have a sustainable image in their minds (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Thus, reputation should be managed throughout the lifetime of a brand and cannot be changed in the short run. de Chernatony (1999) and Kapferer (2008) point to the importance of the congruence between brand identity and the core value in order to create brand reputation (considering long-term reputation and sustainable image). Thereby, the way consumers (i) perceive the utility that individuals acquire from car products that are recognized within their own social group, (ii) are personally oriented towards luxury consumption and (iii) are aware of the core product benefits and basic utilities (Hennigs et al., 2012), should influence the perception about the reputation of a luxury brand. Based on the above discussions, a further hypothesis is proposed (see Figure 1):
H2: Luxury values, social (H1a), individual (H1b) and functional (H1c) ones, influence brand reputation.

2.6. Affective commitment
Developing and nurturing customer–brand relationships has become a central issue in both, marketing research and practice (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004) due to its strong influence on customer retention and profitability. Consumers develop relationships with brands based on their perceptions, experiences and behaviours. In this context, relationship marketing is a long-term process based on the concepts of connection and interaction between the active consumers and the brand. Hereby, a brand can be treated as an active contributing partner in a dyadic relationship that exists between the person and the brand (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). This view is supported by Schultz and Schultz (2004) sustaining that brand relationships could be viewed as a type of financial, physical or emotional bond that brings the brands and the customer together. Accordingly, the emotional exchange is recognized as an important measure of the strength of customers’ attachment to a brand (Aaker et al., 2004).

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) regard emotional exchange as a dimension of the brand relationship concept and analyse the influence of brand tribes and reputation on brand relationships. The product perceptions and its overall reputation could influence the consumer relationship quality (Stuart-Menteth, Wilson, & Baker, 2006). Furthermore, the role of luxury brands as relationship builders is now acknowledged (Cailleux, Mignot, & Kapferer, 2009) and the more positive the luxury car brand reputation the stronger the relationship with the brand, particularly the affective commitment, that is, the intention to desire to continue the relationship with the brand.

Consumer–brand relationships may be the result of imagination or actual participation in brand communities (Fournier, 1998). In-group relationships, the way members interact and communicate (Yang & Allenby, 2003), the passion for a brand and the collective memory will enhance the affective commitment towards a brand. Based on the reviewed research, the following hypotheses are proposed (see Figure 1):

H3: Brand tribalism has a positive impact on affective commitment.

H4: Brand reputation has a positive impact on affective commitment.

3. Method
In order to test the hypotheses, a questionnaire was created including the items of the constructs elicited by the literature review and a section for socio-demographic variables. The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into Portuguese. Back translation was then used to ensure that the questionnaire communicated similar information to all respondents (Sekaran, 1983).

Then the questionnaire (before launched) was pilot tested with the help of 10 individuals as managers and members of the car brand communities to ensure that the questions were well understood by the respondents and that there were no problems with the wording or measurement scales. Only a few adjustments were made. The members of the communities were invited to participate in an online survey.

The car brands considered in this study are BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz. The criteria for choosing such brands refer to the fact that the three brands are the most representative to the E, F and S car segments (luxury car segments) according to European Commission (1999) and according to ACAP (2015) are the most representative in Portugal, when consider the segments E, F and S. Several (12 online communities) brand communities of those brands were contacted in order to conduct an interview to explain the main purpose of the study and ask for permission to develop the study and collect data. Despite all the effort put into explaining the intention of the study, four did not want to participate. Eight online communities of the three brands (BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz) with
members from several countries, mainly from Portugal and United Kingdom (UK), accepted to participate in the study. People from UK always enjoy cars and certain car brands. In Portugal, we may see strong influence from UK due to the presence of English families mainly in Douro region (Port wine). The Portuguese contact with those families brings other traditions and tastes in addition to Port wine, such as some team sports or the interest for cars. The leaders of such communities allow the publication of the online survey. We do not offer any type of gift to entice study participation. The meetings with the leader of each community were the mechanism to motivate members’ participation. The leaders were enrolled in the process. These members do not wish to be identified.

We measured the constructs with multi-item scales. Luxury values are assessed using a scale presented by Wiedmann et al. (2009). Brand tribalism and brand reputation are measured based on Veloutsou and Moutinho’s (2009) work and, finally, affective commitment is adapted from Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006). All items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale.

A total of 316 fully completed and usable questionnaires (after excluding those with missing values, inconsistent responses or extreme multivariate outliers) were collected. Of the overall participants from 8 car brand communities, 82.4% are male what represent the proportionality of the total members of the communities contacted. Almost 80% (79.2%) range from 31 to 50 years of age, however, this is acceptable due to the type of product in question. The number of participants using each of the three brands is divided almost evenly (BMW-37.4%, Mercedes-Benz-31.7% and Audi-30.9%).

4. Results

The model proposed in the current study is complex and has formative constructs. In order to test the model, this study used the repeated indicators’ method (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003; Kleijnen, de Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2007), and the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach is employed to estimate structural paths coefficients, $R^2$, $Q^2$ and Bootstrap techniques.

The PLS model was analysed and interpreted in two stages. First, the adequacy of the measurements is assessed by evaluating the reliability of the individual measures and the discriminant validity of the constructs (Hulland, 1999). Then, the structural model was appraised. Item reliability was established by examining the loading of the measures on their corresponding construct. All items with loadings have values above 0.707, which indicates that more than 50% of the variance in the observed variable is explained by the construct (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Composite reliability was used to analyse the reliability of the constructs since it has been considered to be a more accurate measurement than Cronbach’s alpha (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 shows that all constructs are reliable since the composite reliability values exceeded the 0.7 threshold and even the strictest one of 0.8 (Nunnally, 1978).

At the second-order construct level, we have the parameter estimates of indicator weights, significance of weight and multicollinearity of indicators. Weight measures the contribution of each formative indicator to the variance of the latent variable (Roberts & Thatcher, 2009). A significance level of at least 0.05 suggests that an indicator is relevant to the construction of the formative index (functional value, individual value, brand tribalism and brand reputation), and, thus, demonstrates a sufficient level of validity. The recommended indicator weight is >0.2 (Chin, 1998). Table 1 shows that not all indicators have a positive beta weight above 0.2. Therefore, for functional values, both uniqueness and usability are significant and meaningful path coefficients. For individual values only hedonic is significant and meaningful, because the contribution of self-identity and materialistic to form individual values are less relevant compared with hedonic. In the case of tribalism, the reference group and fit lifestyle are significant and meaningful.

The degree of multicollinearity among the formative indicators should be assessed by variance inflation factor (VIF) (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). The VIF indicates how much an indicator’s variance is explained by the other indicators of the same construct. The common acceptable threshold for VIF
is below 3.33 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). Table 1 shows VIF values are <3.33 and so the results did not seem to pose a multicollinearity problem.

The measures demonstrated convergent validity as the average variance of manifest variables extracted by constructs (AVE) is at least 0.5, indicating that more variance was explained than unexplained in the variables associated with a given construct. The criterion used to assess discriminant validity was proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), suggesting that the square root of AVE should be higher than the correlation between the two constructs in the model. This criterion is met.

Regarding structural results (see Table 2), all path coefficients were found to be significant at the 0.001, 0.01 or 0.05 levels, except the causal order individual value -> b. reputation. Thereby, hypotheses H1, H3 and H4 are fully supported and H2 is partially supported by the sample. All values of $Q^2$ are positive, so the relations in the model have predictive relevance. The model also demonstrated

| Table 1. Measurement results |
|-------------------------------|
| Variables                      | Mean | Item loading | AVE  | Composite reliability | Cronbach alpha |
| Functionality-unique         | 4.6  | (0.844–0.899) | 0.770 | 0.930                 | 0.900          |
| Functionality-usability      | 4.4  | (0.938–0.958) | 0.904 | 0.966                 | 0.974          |
| Individual-hedonic value    | 4.3  | (0.809–0.928) | 0.756 | 0.969                 | 0.964          |
| Individual-materialistic     | 4.1  | (0.862–0.886) | 0.770 | 0.910                 | 0.851          |
| Individual-self-identity     | 4.1  | (0.927–0.929) | 0.861 | 0.925                 | 0.838          |
| Social value                 | 4.2  | (0.884–0.970) | 0.873 | 0.989                 | 0.988          |
| B. tribalism-lifestyle      | 4.7  | (0.744–0.883) | 0.701 | 0.903                 | 0.858          |
| B. tribalism-passion        | 4.5  | (0.940–0.947) | 0.891 | 0.942                 | 0.877          |
| B. tribalism-reference group| 4.2  | (0.906–0.976) | 0.903 | 0.974                 | 0.964          |
| B. tribalism-visibility     | 4.5  | (0.853–0.927) | 0.798 | 0.922                 | 0.973          |
| B. tribalism-collective memory| 4.4  | (0.952–0.954) | 0.908 | 0.952                 | 0.999          |
| B. reputation-long term reputation| 4.8  | (0.812–0.970) | 0.699 | 0.874                 | 0.785          |
| B. reputation-sustainable image| 4.7  | (0.919–0.923) | 0.849 | 0.918                 | 0.822          |
| Affective commitment        | 4.6  | (0.853–0.883) | 0.753 | 0.938                 | 0.918          |
| Second order formative construct | First-order constructs/dimensions | Weight | VIF |
| Functional                   | 0.613*** | 2.20       |
| Individual                   | 0.508*** | 1.18       |
| Hedonic value                | 0.766*** | 2.52       |
| Materialistic value          | 0.189**  | 1.78       |
| Self-identity value          | 0.125*   | 1.88       |
| B. tribalism                 | 0.215**  | 1.27       |
| Passion                      | 0.143*   | 2.02       |
| Reference group              | 0.332*** | 3.05       |
| Social visibility            | 0.195**  | 1.62       |
| Collective memory            | 0.145*   | 2.84       |
| B. reputation                | 0.602*** | 1.65       |
| Long term reputation         | 0.493*** | 1.71       |

Notes: AVE: average variance extracted; VIF: variance inflation factor.

*p < 0.05.

**p < 0.01.

***p < 0.001.
a good level of predictive power ($R^2$) as the modelled constructs explained 86.4% of the variance in affective commitment, 71.6% in brand reputation and 94.0% in brand tribalism. In fact, the good value of GoF (0.83) and the good level of predictive power ($R^2$) revealed a good overall fit of the structural model.

### 5. Conclusions and implications

The findings of the present study imply a number of theoretical and practical implications. This study attempts to explore the effect of luxury values on affective commitment, mediated by brand tribalism and brand reputation. The findings reveal that social values and functional values are important predictors of brand tribalism and brand reputation. However, functional values, usability and uniqueness of the luxury cars are more effective to create brand reputation than to enhance brand tribalism. Social values have more influence on brand tribalism than on brand reputation. Individual values have a significant effect on brand tribalism and this, in turn, has an important role on affective commitment. The three dimensions of individual values do not have the same strength. Hedonic values are the most impactful to build individual values. Moreover, consumers’ personal orientation on luxury consumption which addresses personal matters, such as materialism, hedonistic and self-identity, seems not be a key factor to improve the reputation of a luxury brand.

In line with Cova and Cova (2002), the current study proved that values act as drivers to develop an affective commitment. The community around a car brand depends on the values of their members. Values act as beliefs and knowledge and influence the way people relate to each other (Choo et al., 2012; Hennigs et al., 2012). These assumptions are also shown in the current study, pointing out the influence of individual, social values and functional values on creating and promoting brand reputation and enhancing brand tribalism.

The current study allows us to understand that luxury values do not act as a whole in developing affective relationships between brands and consumers. In accordance with the Veloutsou and Moutinho’s study (2009) for Coca-Cola and Pepsi brands (not luxury brands), in the luxury car community context, brand tribalism ($\beta = 0.815, p < 0.001$) is more important than brand reputation in the formation of affective commitment. Previous research has already expressed the role of reputation as a sign for consumers and a source of competitive advantage (Hur et al., 2014; Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012). However, brand tribalism seems to play a more important role than reputation to
strengthen consumer–brand relationships and maintain long-term relationships. A brand that achieves such affective commitment with consumers, will have a partner on its side (for good and bad times), someone who advocates in favour of the brand and more easily forgets the mistakes. The emotional bonds (Jurisic & Azevedo, 2011; Taute & Sierra, 2014) and the capabilities to exchange information and communication (Veloutsou, 2007) are the levers for the success of a brand within the tribes.

The findings reveal that the reference group is the most important dimension in formation of brand tribalism, meaning the importance of friends and other members to achieve a sense of belonging having the same car brand. Fit with lifestyle follows the reference group highlighting the importance of how the identity of the car brand fits the way consumers live, that is, the brand identity should be related to the way consumers perceive life. Zhou et al. (2012) point to the attachment (love for a brand) as the main factor to generate brand relationships, whilst here the belonging to the group and the fit to the lifestyle reveal to be even more significant than the passion in order to develop affective commitment to a brand. Finally, in accordance with Roper et al. (2013), luxury brands should be thought of social concepts, underlining the importance of the group to continue to buy luxury cars.

The findings have some managerial implications. Managers should be aware that the core benefits and basic utilities of a luxury car (such as uniqueness and usability) and the perceived utility individuals acquire by having a prestigious car brand, which is recognized within their own social group(s), contribute to positively reinforce brand reputation and may significantly affect the evaluation and the propensity to purchase or consume luxury car brands. Social aspects of displaying status, success, distinction and the human desire to impress other people can positively contribute to the emotional life of the consumer, brand liking and to have a sense of belonging by buying and using the same car brand as community friends. A collective memory of consumers in a luxury car brand community can reflect reference group cohesion, improve consumers’ lives and their sense of emotional authenticity, which, in turn, enhances the relationship consumer/consumer and brand/consumer.

6. Limitations and further research
Regarding limitations and future research avenues, some points should be attended. More data should be collected in other product categories of communities of luxury brands in order to generalize the scale to the luxury sector. A great proportion of the respondents are middle-age (31–50) male consumers, who might display different behaviour than older/younger or female consumers. Second, it will be important to analyse other luxury car brands and compare the findings.

Third, it would also be valuable to additionally explore the role of other factors as potential drivers to brand tribalism and brand relationships, as well as explore how consumers engaging in a brand community can influence the positive word-of-mouth and long-term relationship. Lastly, although the data were collected considering communities having mainly member from Portugal and United Kingdom, the geographic area was limited to Europe. Thereby, it would also be interesting to analyse the model in a cross-cultural perspective. For instance, the results may be different in brand communities with participants from Middle East or East of Asia.

Funding
The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details
Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro
E-mail: sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt
Hans Ruediger Kaufmann
E-mail: hans-ruediger.kaufmann@hdwm.org
1 Business Research Unit (BRU/UNIDE), Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Lisbon, Portugal.
2 University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim, Neckarauer Street 200, 68163 Mannheim, Germany.

Citation information
Cite this article as: Luxury values as drivers for affective commitment: The case of luxury car tribes, Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro & Hans Ruediger Kaufmann, Cogent Business & Management (2016), 3: 1171192.

References
Aaker, J. L., & Fournier, S. (1995). A brand as a character, a partner and a person: Three perspectives on the question of brand penalty. Advances in Consumer Research, 22, 391–395. Retrieved January 1, 2015, from http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?id=7775
Aaker, J. L., Fournier, S., & Brasel, B. (2004). When good brands do bad. Journal of Consumer Research, 31(1), 1–16. doi:10.1086/383419

ACAP-Associação Automóvel de Portugal (Association Automobile Portugal). (2015). Retrieved February 20, 2015, from www.acap.pt

Adams, S. (2016). The company with the best CSR reputations. in the world. Forbes. Retrieved March 2, 2016, from http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2015/09/17/the-companies-with-the-best-csr-reputations-in-the-world/#6f690cb762c

Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U., & Herrmann, A. (2005). The social influence of brand community: Evidence from European car clubs. Journal of Marketing, 69, 19–34. doi:10.1509/jmkg.69.3.19.66363

Badarinayanan, V., Sierra, J. J., & Taute, H. A. (2013). Antecedents and purchase consequences of customer participation in small group brand communities. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 23, 45–61. doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2006.01.005

Cailleux, H., Mignot, C., & Kapferer, J. (2009). Is CRM for luxury brands? Journal of Brand Management, 16, 406–412. doi:10.1057/bm.2008.50

Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1979). Reliability and validity assessment. London: Sage. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412989564

Chevalier, M., & Massolovo, G. (2008). Luxury brand management: A world of privilege. Singapore: Wiley.

Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. In G. A. Marcoulides (Ed.), Modern methods for business research (pp. 295–336). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. doi:10.1016/j.ssm.2008.12.010

Chin, W. W., Marcolin, B. L., & Newsted, P. R. (2003). A partial least squares approach to causal modeling. Journal of Marketing, 67(s1), 153–166. doi:10.2307/1551628

Choo, H. J., Moon, H., Kim, H., & Yoon, N. (2012). Luxury brand management: A world of privilege. Wiley.

Christodoulides, G., Michaelidou, N., & Li, C. H. (2009). Small group brand communities. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 26, 256–270. doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.06.002

Cova, B. (2002). Tribal marketing: The tribalisation of society and its impact on the conduct of marketing. Journal of Marketing Management, 18, 595–620. doi:10.1080/02672570903566276

Cova, B., & Covas, V. (2002). Tribal marketing: The tribalisation of society and its impact on the conduct of marketing. Journal of Marketing Management, 18, 595–620. doi:10.1080/02672570903566276

Cova, B., & White, T. (2010). Counter-brand and alter-brand communities: The impact of Web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches. Journal of Marketing Management, 26, 256–270. doi:10.1080/02672570903566276

De Chernatony, L. (1999). Brand management through narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation. Journal of Marketing Management, 15, 157–179. doi:10.1362/02672579978470432

Diamantopoulos, A., & Sigouw, J. (2006). Formatice versus reflective indicators in organizational measure development: A comparison and empirical illustration. British Journal of Management, 17, 263–282. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00500.x

Dubois, B., & Paternault, C. (1995). Observations: Understanding the world of international luxury brands: The dream formula. Journal of Advertising Research, 35, 69–76. Retrieved from http://www.journalofadvertisingresearch.com/articleCenter/default.aspx?id=6211&type=Article

Fornell, C., & Bookstein, F. L. (1982). A comparative analysis of two structural equation models: LISREL and PLS applied to market data. In C. Fornell (Ed.), A second generation of multivariate analysis (pp. 289–312). New York, NY: Praeger.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. Journal of Marketing Research, 18, 39–50. doi:10.2307/3151312

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. Journal of Consumer Research, 24, 343–353. doi:10.1086/209515

Gaulding, C., Shankar, A., & Canniford, J. (2013). Learning to be tribal: Facilitating the formation of consumer tribes. European Journal of Marketing, 47, 813–832. doi:10.1108/03090561311306886

Hennings, N., Wiedmann, K.-R., Klarmann, C., Streulich, S., Godøy, B., Pederzoli, D., Oh, H. (2012). What is the value of luxury? A cross-cultural consumer perspective. Psychology and Marketing, 29, 1018–1034. doi:10.1002/mar.20583

Herbig, P., & Milewicz, J. (1993). The relationship of reputation and credibility to brand success. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 10, 18–24. doi:10.1108/0735620931011000708

Hewer, P., & Brownlie, D. (2007). Cultures of consumption of car aficionados: Aesthetics and consumption communities. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 27, 106–119. doi:10.1108/0144330710741057

Hulland, J. (1999). Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. Strategic Management Journal, 20, 195–204. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199902)20:2<195:AID-SMJ13>3.0.CO;2-7

Hur, W.-M., Kim, H., & Woo, J. (2014). How CSR leads to corporate brand equity: Mediating mechanisms of corporate brand credibility and reputation. Journal of Business Ethics, 125, 75–86. doi:10.1007/s10551-013-1910-0

Johnson, M. D., Herrmann, A., & Huber, F. (2006). The evolution of loyalty intentions. Journal of Marketing, 70, 122–132. doi:10.1509/jmkg.70.2.122

Jurisic, B., & Azevedo, A. (2011). Building customer-brand relationship theory in the mobile communications market: The role of brand tribalism and brand reputation. Journal of Brand Management, 18, 349–366. doi:10.1057/bm.2010.37

Kapferer, J.-N. (2008). The new strategic brand management—Creating and sustaining brand equity long term (4th ed.). London: Kogan Page.

Kaufmann, H. R., Vrontis, D., & Manakova, Y. (2012). Consumer-brand relationship theory in consumer research. European Journal of Marketing, 46, 265–280. doi:10.1108/03090561211230363

Kaufmann, H. R., Varotsis, D., & Manakova, Y. (2012). Perception of luxury: Idiosyncratic Russian consumer culture and identity. European Journal Cross Cultural Competence and Management, 2, 209–235. doi:10.1504/EJCCM.2012.052594

Kleinjens, M., de Ruyter, K., & Wetzel, M. (2007). An assessment of value creation in mobile service delivery and the moderating role of time consciousness. Journal of Retailing, 83, 33–46. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2006.10.004

Loureiro, S. M. C. (2012). Consumer-brand relationship: Foundation and state of art. In H. R. Kaufmann & M. F. A. A. K. Panni (Eds.), Customer-centric marketing strategies: Tools for building organizational illusional performance (Chapter 20, pp. 413–434). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-6666-2524-2.ch020

Loureiro, S. M. C. (2015). Loving and hating brands: Multiple relationships between consumers and brands. In H. R., 2016.
Kauffmann (Ed.), Handbook of research on managing and influencing consumer behavior (Chapter 18, pp. 417–438). A multidisciplinary effort. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Loureiro, S. M. C., & Kastenholz, E. (2011). Corporate reputation, satisfaction, delight, and loyalty towards rural lodging units in Portugal. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 30, 575–583. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.10.007

McAlexander, J., Schouten, J., & Koenig, H. (2002). Building brand community. Journal of Marketing, 66, 38–54. doi:10.1509/jmkg.66.1.38.18451.

Meghee, C. M., & Spake, D. F. (2012). Consumer enactments of archetypes using luxury brands. Journal of Business Research, 65, 1434–1442. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.009

Melo, T., & Gordo-Morgado, A. (2012). Corporate reputation: A combination of social responsibility and industry. Corporate social responsibility and environmental management, 19, 11–31. doi:10.1002/csr.260

Milewicz, J., & Herbig, P. (1994). Evaluating the brand extension decision using a model of reputation building. Journal of Product and Brand Management, 3, 39–47. doi:10.1108/10610429410053077

Muniz, A., & O’Guinn, T. (2001). Brand community. Journal of Consumer Research, 27, 412–422. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from http://research3.bus.wisc.edu/file.php/157/papers/om_brand_community.pdf

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Pawle, J., & Cooper, P. (2006). Measuring emotion—Lovemarks, the future beyond brands. Journal of Advertising Research, 46, 38–48. doi:10.2501/jmar.2006.46.2.38

Phau, I., & Prendergast, G. (2000). Consuming luxury brands: The relevance of the ‘Rarity Principle’. Journal of Brand Management, 8, 22–138. doi:10.1057/palgrave. bm.2540013

Roberts, N., & Thatcher, J. (2009). Conceptualizing and testing formative constructs. ACM SIGMIS Database, 40, 9–39. doi:10.1145/1592401.1592405

Romaniuk, J., Shap, B., & Ehrenberg, A. (2007). Evidence concerning the importance of perceived brand differentiation. Australasian Marketing Journal, 15, 42–54. doi:10.1016/S1441-3582(07)00243-3

Roper, S., Caruana, R., Medway, D., & Murphy, P. (2013). Constructing luxury brands: Exploring the role of consumer discourse. European Journal of Marketing, 47, 375–400. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561311297382

Ruane, L., & Wallace, E. (2015). Brand tribalism and self-expressive brands: Social influences and brand outcomes. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 24, 333–348. doi:10.1111/jpbm.2015.901

Rucker, D. D., Galinsky, A. D., & Dubois, D. (2011). Power and consumer behavior: How power shapes who and what consumers value. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 22, 352–368. doi:10.1016/j.jcps.2011.06.001

Schultz, D. E., & Schultz, H. F. (2004). Brand babble: Sense and nonsense about branding. Mason, OH: Thomson/ South-Western.

Sekaran, U. (1983). Methodological and theoretical issues and advancements in cross-cultural research. Journal of International Business Studies, 14, 61–73. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490519

Semenik, R. J., Allen, C. T., & O’Guinn, T. C. (2012). Advertising and promotions. An integrated brand approach. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage.

Sierra, J. J., Badrinarayanan, V. A., & Taute, H. A. (2016). Explaining behavior in brand communities: A sequential model of attachment, tribalism, and self-esteem. Computers in Human Behavior, 55, 626–632. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.009

Smith, J. B., & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: A practical framework. The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 15, 7–23. doi:10.2753/MTPT1069-6679150101

Solomon, M., Barnossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K. (2006). Consumer behaviour: A European perspective (3rd ed.). Edinburg, TX: Prentice Hall.

Stokburger-Sauer, N. (2010). Brand community: Drivers and outcomes. Psychology and Marketing, 27, 347–368. doi:10.1002/mar.20335

Stuart-Menteth, H., Wilson, H., & Baker, S. (2006). Escaping the channel silo: Researching the new consumer. International Journal of Market Research, 48, 415–437. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from http://www.warc.com/Pages/Search/WordSearch.aspx?q=AID:82404&Filter=ALL%20OF%20WARC

Swaminathan, V., Page, K. L., & Gürian-Canitil, Z. (2007). “My” brand or “our” brand: The effects of brand relationship dimensions and self-construct on brand evaluations. Journal of Consumer Research, 34, 248–259. doi:10.1086/518530

Taute, H. A., & Sierra, J. (2014). Brand tribalism: An anthropological perspective. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 23, 2–15. doi:10.1108/JPBM-06-2013-0340

Tynan, C., Mckechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2009). Co-creating value for luxury brands. Journal of Business Research, 63, 1156–1163. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.10.012

Veloutsou, C. (2007). Identifying the dimensions of the product-brand and consumer relationship. Marketing Management, 23, 7–26. doi:10.1362/026725707X177892

Veloutsou, C., & Moutinho, L. (2009). Brand relationships through brand reputation and brand tribalism. Journal of Business Research, 62, 314–322. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.05.010

Vigneron, F., & Johnson, L. W. (1999). A review and a conceptual framework of prestige-seeking consumer behaviour. Academy of Marketing Science Review, 3(1), 1–17, Retrieved January 1, 2013, from http://www.amsreview.org/articles/vigneron01-1999.pdf

Wiedmann, K. F., Hennig, N., & Siebels, A. (2009). Value-based segmentation of luxury consumption behavior. Psychology & Marketing, 26, 625–651. doi:10.1002/mar.20292

Wood, L. (2000). Brands and brand equity: Definition and management. Management Decision, 38, 662–669. doi:10.1108/002517400100379100

Yong, S., & Allenby, G. M. (2003). Modeling interdependent consumer preferences. Journal of Marketing Research, 40, 282–294. doi:10.1509/jmkr.40.3.282.19240

Zarantonello, L., & Schmitt, B. H. (2010). Using the brand experience scale to profile consumers and predict consumer behaviour. Journal of Brand Management, 17, 532–540. doi:10.1057/jbm.2010.4

Zhou, Z., Zhang, Q., Su, C., & Zhou, N. (2012). How do brand communities generate brand relationships? Intermediate mechanisms. Journal of Business Research, 65, 890–895. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.009
