Should I consume them? Dis-identifying the self with dissociative and in-”affective” brands for youth drinking behaviors
Faheem Ahmed

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**SHOULD I CONSUME THEM?**

Dis-Identifying the Self with Dissociative and In-“Affective” Brands for Youth Drinking Behaviors

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Previously, research has shown that negative affect and identity divergence can be used as signals for identity. This research intends to employ affective advertising and the act of dissociating from a brand’s social groups as antecedents for possible identity markers that consumers propagate to the social environment. The signaling of social identities is seen as a way through which consumers signal their usage, interaction and relation with brands to the society. The current research applies this behavior within an anti-consumption context, where consumers avoid certain brands and their reference groups to experience greater positive affect and avoid signaling a negative identity. The role of psychological and sociological variables is also assessed through the lens of regulatory focus, self-construal, norms and well-being. The intended research model tests the application of these concepts within the domain of health marketing and alcohol consumption by youngsters.

KEYWORDS: Relational marketing; social identity; anti-consumption; health marketing; affect; disidentification; persuasion

RESUME (in French)

Auparavant, la recherche a montré que les effets négatifs et la divergence d'identité peuvent être utilisés comme signaux d'identité. Cette recherche vise à utiliser la publicité affective et l’acte de se dissocier des groupes sociaux d’une marque comme antécédents pour les marqueurs d’identité possibles que les consommateurs propagent au milieu social. La signalisation des identités sociales est perçue comme un moyen par lequel les consommateurs signalent leur utilisation, leur interaction et leur relation avec les marques à la société. La recherche actuelle applique ce comportement dans un contexte anti-consommation, où les consommateurs évitent que certaines marques et leurs groupes de référence subissent des effets positifs plus importants et évitent de signaler une identité négative. Le rôle des variables psychologiques et sociologiques est également évalué à l’aide de l’accent réglementaire, de l’auto-interprétation, des normes et du bien-être. Le modèle de recherche prévu teste l’application de ces concepts dans le domaine de la commercialisation de la santé et de la consommation d’alcool chez les jeunes.

MOTS-CLES : Marketing relationnel; Identité sociale; Anti-consommation; Marketing sur la santé; affecter; La désidentification; persuasion
INTRODUCTION

All individuals, in essence, have some needs which have to be fulfilled satisfactorily on a day-to-day or regular basis. Human beings are active or passive in the fulfillment of not just basic biological needs, but also in satisfaction of personal characteristic traits and needs. Some of these needs may be considered trivial but are important for primal survival such as hunger, thirst, shelter, warmth. But there are also some other needs besides these which are equally important but are not considered at times so pertinent because of their residence in the mental part of our bodies rather than in the physical domain. The fulfillment of these needs leads to better well-being and satisfaction with life (Chen et al., 2014; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Richard M. Ryan & Edward L. Deci, 2000). In this research, we will explore in greater detail two psychological needs of the human mind and how their fulfillment influences our actions within the social atmosphere.

A significant number of works have been conducted detailing the division of affect and cognition in our minds. Prior research has shown the different paths that individuals choose in their minds to process the information presented to them (Chaiken, 1980; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and how it influences their attitude to that information. The human mind has been shown to encapsulate distinct systems of information processing (Zajonc, 1980), which differentially impact how we interpret information (Kahneman, 2003, 2011). For instance, upon seeing a table we can observe the length of its legs or we can also appreciate the fine quality of wood used to make it.

There exist countless works on the meaning of “affect” and how it influences consumer behavior (see Table 1 for some definitions of affective concepts in marketing literature) (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999; Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000; Cohen & Andrade, 2004; Cohen, Pham, & Andrade, 2008; Russell & Carroll, 1999). In this research, we are concerned more with the motivation to experience affect by an individual, and how it consequently influences behaviors (Maio & Esses, 2001). It has been shown that this affective orientation differs for each individual (Maio & Esses, 2001) and has an impact on information receptivity, recognition, and attitudes (Haddock, Maio, Arnold, & Huskinson, 2008). The current research aims to employ these individual-level differences to enhance the accessibility of information and subsequent behaviors concerning health marketing.

Individuals are also shaped by the way they construe the social ecosystem around them. These perceptions of the external environment can be formed by the people in our lives and through our association with them. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979),
individuals categorize all those around them in to certain groups based on social identity markers. They then strive to identify with certain groups and dis-identify with certain others, which allows a comparison between member groups and out-groups (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Moschis, 1976; Taylor, Wayment, & Carrillo, 1996). This act instills a sense of pride and self-esteem in the person (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986; Tajfel, 1979), allowing him/her to reject and put some distance with the groups that he/she does not wish to be associated with socially (Knowles & Gardner, 2008; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007).

Brands also influence our understanding of the ecosystem and the social environment, by allowing us to evolve and reshape ourselves. The consumption and usage of brands is similar to how we interact with the social environment, as brands also arouse a sense of connection similar to feeling association with persons (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Brand help in the process of identity construction because of their symbolic nature (Levy, 1959, 1985); they facilitate the process of meaning transfer (G. McCracken, 1993; G. D. McCracken, 1990) and are imbued with identity relevant cues (R. Belk, 1988; Holt, 1995). Being attached to brands also allows the formation of both positive and negative associations (D. A. Aaker, 2012; J. Aaker, 1997), which make our identity constructions and signaling more clear.

The social perceptions of our interactions with brands have a significant impact on our actions, choices, attitudes, and behavior. Our social identity and the way we process information influences the products that we purchase and the brands we consume (Childers & Rao, 1992; McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010; Westbrook, 1987). Consumers form relationships with brands in the same way that they interact and associate with individuals in their daily lives (Fournier, 1994, 1998). This also involves identifying which brands fit well with the personality of the individual, and would help in promoting and developing the self (Baumeister, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). This is akin to people preferring to be in a relation with persons who help them grow and explore themselves, and are similar to them in some ways (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979).

In a consumer-brand relation, individuals strive not just to maintain relations with brands which promote the self-concept but also avoiding brands which signal a negative identity to others (Berger & Heath, 2008; Ogilvie, 1987; White & Dahl, 2007). There exists substantial research on how consumers associate and relate with a brand and its reference groups (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Fournier, 1998; Muniz & O’guinn, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), however very little research exists on how individuals dissociate and dis-identify with brands. Upon finding out that a brand is hurtful for the self-image and the identity signaled to others, consumers would wish to actively
avoid association with the brand and its reference groups (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Hogg, Banister, & Stephenson, 2009; White & Dahl, 2007).

Since the focus of this research is on individuals’ behaviors and social intentions, it is necessary to also consider some constructs which help in identifying the individual level preferences for mental processing of actions. We will consider the different ways in which people regulate their decisions, and their salient mental frameworks to approach or avoid decisions. We would also differentiate between individuals who have a more individualistic mindset versus those who rely more on others around them. As the research is based on health marketing and the social environment, we will also galvanize some concepts to assess the acceptability of one’s actions by the environment along with their general level of contentment with life.

The current research lies within the context of public health communications and alcohol consumption by youngsters. These individuals are constantly perturbed by their public appearance, social approval, forming good identities and neglecting negative self-associations (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996). They conduct all this through their individual actions, choices, and behaviors. A lot of times these individuals indulge in risky health behaviors such as excessive alcohol consumption and this research aims to focus on their affective experiences and identity constructions to curb this behavior. These individuals indulge in such behaviors as a result of peer pressure (Rose, Bearden, & Teel, 1992; Zhang & Shrum, 2009) and to gain social approval (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996), both of which are important for these youngsters (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Childers & Rao, 1992; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007)

The youth segment is the most vulnerable to alcohol consumption at an early age (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2015, 2017), and continued consumption has led to 3.3 million deaths each year (World Health Organization, 2014). They are the highest consumers of beer (which is the focus of this research), indulge mostly in social consumption of alcohol and become lifetime consumers once they start drinking at an early age (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2017). Alcohol consumption is one of the three major public health concerns globally, leading to innumerable diseases and health risks including liver disease, cancer, heart disease, unsafe sex, premature death and child disease (World Health Organization, 2012). This habit not only directly influences the persons involved but also has indirect repercussions for the people around them (social and domestic violence), the state and law (legislation, healthcare, unemployment, crime rates) and influences others to follow suit (group pressures and impulsive consumption).
This research proposes the application of identity constructions and affective advertising based on positive affect in a unique way to influence youngsters against their alcohol consumption. Previous works on health advertising and anti-consumption of alcohol have employed negative emotions (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Duhachek, Agrawal, & Han, 2012; Han, Duhachek, & Agrawal, 2016; Morales, Wu, & Fitzsimons, 2012). However, it has been shown that informational campaigns or those focusing on risk assessments do not significantly impact future behaviors (Milne, Sheeran, & Orbell, 2000). There exist some works proving that using social marketing and identity divergence cues within health marketing can influence consumers towards healthier consumption decisions (Berger & Rand, 2008; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Shiu, Hassan, & Walsh, 2009). Within the current work, advising people to avoid negative identity associations and brands with negative symbolic cues would enable them to make better decisions for their health and alcohol consumption. We intend to show that people have a greater inclination to indulge in actions that promote a positive social identity and avoid the actions that signal negative identities, and this effect is further resonated with a high motivation for experiencing affect. These actions would include the consumption of brands and the association/dissociation with a brand’s reference groups.

The findings of this research will be impactful for multiple stakeholders. First, it is of interest for governments and policyholders to find out more effective ways of ensuring the health and well-being of the public. Through this research, they would be able to identify the ways through which they can influence the youth against excessive alcohol consumption and indulging in risky, addictive behaviors. Second, this research contributes to a growing body of works on public health awareness, risks of alcohol consumption and ensuring safety. Researchers across different disciplines are committing themselves greatly to resolve issues which affect humanity and lead to greater well-being. Third, this work will also develop research in marketing specifically within health domains, to consider the constructs of identity and positive affect in health marketing research. Recently, authors have started considering the impact of identity divergence and disidentification within consumption contexts and health marketing (Berger & Heath, 2007; Berger & Rand, 2008; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007; Wolter, Brach, Cronin, & Bonn, 2016). Hence, this work aims to contribute to existing research in health and marketing, pave the way for new research avenues and contribute to a globally growing health concern.
PART 1 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the first part of this thesis, we will aim to explore in detail the origins and research underpinnings of the concepts as discussed in the Introduction. This portion of the thesis has been divided into three chapters: Chapter 1: Antecedents Of Identification will discuss the two needs of identification and explain their significance within identity, affect and branding literature; Chapter 2: Consumers And Their Brands will switch to the relations that people form with brands and Chapter 3: Impact Of Consumer and Social Psychology will discuss its impact on an individual’s actions within the social environment.

CHAPTER 1: ANTECEDENTS OF IDENTIFICATION

This research identifies two basic needs which have not been considered as extensively as certain others. These include the need to experience affect and that of forming social reference groups. Prior research has looked at how information is processed in the human mind (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), the two systems of processing in the human mind (Zajonc, 1980) and which processing style is preferred more often by people (Kahneman, 2003, 2011). However, there is a lack of research on how and why people feel motivated to experience affect in their life and across various situations. The second need, i.e. the formation of reference groups, has been mostly looked at from a positive standpoint. Authors, psychologists, and marketing scholars have considered the dynamics of group formation (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel, 1984) and how individuals try to associate with social groups which impart a positive identity for the individual, resulting in higher self-esteem (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986; Tajfel, 1979). Although there exists some research on social rejection (Knowles & Gardner, 2008) and dissociative reference groups (White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007), there exists insufficient research on how the need for affect and dissociation from reference groups jointly contribute to a sense of dis-identification.

Similar to forming connections and identifying with people, brands also arouse a sense of connection for their users. This is because of their symbolic nature (Levy, 1959) and how they transfer meaning to the lives of consumers (G. McCracken, 1993; G. D. McCracken, 1990). Brands are also considered as possessions and because of this, a part of the identity is projected on to them (R. Belk, 1988; Holt, 1995, 1997). Being attached to brands allows individuals to form positive associations with the brand (D. A. Aaker, 2012; J. Aaker, 1997) and it adds meaning to their lives (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005).
In the following sections, we will look in greater detail how the two individual needs act in the minds of individuals, and how they affect behavior and social responses. This will be followed by literature on how people form connections with brands, identical to social reference groups.

A. Need for Affect

A.1 Two systems of processing and persuasion

The concept of distinct systems of processing within the human mind has been explored since a long time within the domains of marketing, psychology, economics, and sociology. Zajonc (1980) identified two distinct processing systems in the human mind. The first being emotional processes which can be more impulsive and dominant, while cognitive processes are detailed and time-consuming. This work of literature, which has been termed as “dual-process theory”, underlines the existence of two distinct processing modes, which can act independently or simultaneously. Epstein (1998) suggested that people possess two systems to process information: one for affective experiences and another for reasoning and analytical processes.

The conceptualization of two systems within the human mind, which Kahneman (2011) named as System 1 and System 2, has been employed in psychology, economics, marketing, and communications literature. System 1 is defined as being more influential in thought processes, while System 2 is more straining. System 1 (also called “intuition”) is fast and instinctive with emotional bonds also arising from the process, is based more on habits and past experience, and is difficult to change. System 2 (also called “reasoning”) is slower and time-consuming, and comes into play only when the brain perceives that conscious judgments or attitudes need to be performed (Kahneman, 2003, 2011).

A.2 Affect and cognition

The term “affect” has been used to refer to an evaluative aspect referring to an internal feeling state. There exists a tripartite discrimination for attitudes: namely cognitive, affective and conative (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In the affect literature, multiple authors have tried to differentiate between varying conceptualizations of affect, emotion, mood, feeling (see Table 1). In this paper, the term “affect” will be used to describe an internal feeling state consistent with works by multiple authors (Cohen et al., 2008; Russell & Carroll, 1999) and in response to an evoked feeling state different from cognitive states (Cohen et al., 2008). Consumer research on affect has dealt with the study of mood and indulging in tasks with the motivation of mood maintenance (Andrade & Cohen, 2007; Barone et al., 2000; Cohen & Andrade, 2004).
There also exists research on the intermingling of affect and cognitions. Cognitive tasks can follow from certain emotions such as the realization that success or failure for a task (such as a project) should be attributed to a specific person. On the other hand, cognitive tasks can also precede certain emotions, such as feeling frustration or joy on the personal ability to solve a complex mathematical problem (Damasio, 1994; Forgas, 1995).

Table 1: Defining Concepts in Affect Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>A set of mental processes including emotions, mood, and attitude</td>
<td>(Bagozzi et al., 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>a mental state of readiness that arises (intentionally towards an object or person) from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts, is accompanied by psychological process and often expressed physically and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion</td>
<td>(Bagozzi et al., 1999; Lazarus, 1991; Oatley, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>more long-lasting and lower in intensity than an emotion, usually unintentional and global</td>
<td>(Frijda, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>evaluative judgments (good-bad reaction) towards a person or object rather than emotional states</td>
<td>(Bagozzi et al., 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Experienced as a result of certain emotion types, are unique and consciously experienced</td>
<td>(Ekman, 1992, 2007; Izard, 1992)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every individual in his/her own capacity wishes for the need to experience affect. Past research on examining individual differences in affect has focused on emotional ability and style (Maio & Esses, 2001). Emotional ability includes the skills through which people perceive, regulate, discriminate and experience emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). These can be measured through a host of concepts, including the Affective Orientation Scale, which underlies the proclivity of individuals to “listen” to their emotions and affect as opposed to logic and reasoning, while processing information (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1990). Another construct that has been used to explain the ability to process emotions is emotional intelligence, defined as the “the capacity to recognize the feelings of the self and others,
motivating and managing for ourselves and our relationships” (Goleman, 1998). Emotional style includes the tendency to experience and express or repress emotions. Much of this work has been focused on distinguishing between positive and negative affect through the Positive And Negative Affect Scales (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) or the tendency to experience emotions with greater intensity, i.e. the Affect Intensity Measure (Larsen & Diener, 1987).

Based on the perceptions of affect, this influences how people perceive situations and make social judgment decisions. Particularly, the current state of affect for an individual influences his/her judgments about a target, and these perceptions will be in line with the current affective state. The affect-congruency effects as highlighted by the affect infusion model (Forgas, 1995) has implications in multiple evaluative situations including products (Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993), advertisements (Gardner & Wilhelm Jr, 1987; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Murry & Dacin, 1996), political candidates (Isbell & Wyer Jr, 1999), consumption decisions (Pham, 1998) and brand extensions (Barone et al., 2000; Yeung & Wyer Jr, 2005).

Due to the increasing complexity of measuring concrete emotions and a burgeoning usage of negative emotions (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Izard, 1992), this research adopts an overall measure of affect rather than opting for discrete emotions. Past authors have proven that affect is an omnipresent part of us, however, there exists little research on the individual differences between the motivation to experience affect, defined as the “need for affect” (Maio & Esses, 2001).

A.3 The Need for Affect construct

There exists some research on the pursuit and desirability of affect and emotions by individuals (Haddock et al., 2008; Maio & Esses, 2001; Sojka & Giese, 1997). The need for affect is defined as an ongoing individual motivation to seek out instances and events that are emotion inducing. The conceptualization includes the desire to experience emotions and a belief that emotions are useful for shaping judgment and behavior (Maio & Esses, 2001). The concept includes two distinct features which should make it distinguishable from other similar concepts. First, the desire and pursuit of affective experiences vary for everyone, depending on the intensity, quality, stability, specificity, clarity, and valence of the affect. According to this, even though the pursuit of certain affective states (good mood, positive emotions) may be more than others (bad mood, negative emotions) for all individuals, there would still be individual level differences in the pursuit of these states. This can help to explain the situations in which people sometimes prefer to indulge in negative feelings or emotions instead of pursuing a positive affective state (Andrade & Cohen, 2007; Cohen & Andrade, 2004; Dunn & Hoegg, 2014). Second, the construct contains both an approach and an avoidance component in it, which
according to some scholarly research specifically in social psychology, is needed to formulate a holistic understanding of individuals (E. T. Higgins, 1997). With this, the concept comes close to an “attitude toward emotions” itself (Maio & Esses, 2001).

It is essential to distinguish between an approach and avoidance motivation for affect, as both approaches have been found to have similar but distinct effects on the same concepts. Research on regulatory focus has studied the impact of an approach and avoidance framework in the cognitive thought processes of individuals (E. T. Higgins, 1997). Further, an approach and avoidance framework has been proven to be observed distinctly in health studies focusing on subjective well-being (Elliot, Sheldon, & Church, 1997) and intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Further, neurophysicists have discriminated between approach and avoidance motivations (J. Gray, 1972; J. A. Gray, 1990), and discovered the impact of approach and avoidance motivations on positive and negative affect respectively (Davidson, 1998; Heubeck, Wilkinson, & Cologon, 1998; Lang, 1995).

Although the original conceptualization of need for affect by Maio and Esses (2001) uses emotion and affect interchangeably, this research will refer to affect because of its broader conceptualization in terms of psychological processes. In line with Maio and Esses (2001), this research proposes that the need for affect is a core concept for individuals and its pursuit results in positive consequences for humans. As individuals and consumers, there would be a greater tendency to approach affect because (1) experiencing affect is somewhat intrinsically satisfying (Maio & Esses, 2001), and (2) experiencing affect helps to guide behavior and judgments (Schwarz, 1990).
B. **Dissociative Reference Groups**

Past research has highlighted that membership to various reference groups can influence intentions, attitudes, and behavior (Tajfel, 1979, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to social identity theorists, the formation of social groups is inevitable for humans. All human beings have individual and societal needs for order, structure, simplification in their life and this is fulfilled through the presence of social groups (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). Consumers also do not wish to be associated with reference groups that conflict with their identity and gender (Brough, Wilkie, Ma, Isaac, & Gal, 2016; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). Members belonging to the same reference group have an impact on message persuasion (Haslam, McGarty, & Turner, 1996; McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson, & Turner, 1994), evaluation of products and advertisements (Whittler & Spira, 2002), product and brand choice (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; C Whan Park & Lessig, 1977), and purchase decisions (Moschis, 1976). The ways through which people associate and dissociate with different social groups provides a way to establish the possible selves they want for themselves (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the undesired selves that they do not wish to be associated with or be perceived as (Ogilvie, 1987).

**B.1 Social Identity Theory**

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), the sense of belonging to a group is an integral concept for all humans, as it lends a sense of pride and self-esteem to the individual and a sense of belonging to the world through the process of identification. The process of social identification comprises a set of mental processes which continue throughout life whenever some individual wishes to identify himself/herself as a member of a community (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This process primarily involves three steps: (1) social categorization, (2) social identification and (3) social comparison (see Figure 1). In the first step, the individual tries to categorize people around him/her into multiple identifying groups such as Christian, Muslim, French, European, Asian, Pakistani etc. For the second step, the individual tries to identify with one or more of these groups by assessing the norms and attitudes of the group as being compatible with the self. Lastly, the individual tries to compare their self as a part of the identified group (e.g. European) to be better than members of other competing groups (e.g. non-Europeans), which results in improving the self-esteem for the individual (Tajfel, 1979, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

*Figure 1: Social Identity Theory (A Graphical Review)*
During the process of forming a coherent identity, there are several possible selves that the individual wishes to achieve and one of these also includes the “undesired self” or the self that we wish to avoid (Ogilvie, 1987). Individuals are more often than not inclined to distance themselves from their “undesired selves”, which instills in them a feeling of satisfaction with life (Ogilvie, 1987; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). Being farther from undesired and unwanted circumstances makes them feel closer to their ideal selves. Consumers often indulge in actions or choices to divulge their selves from the identities that they do not wish to signal to others through their lifestyle choices and consumption decisions (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Englis & Solomon, 1995). Consumers also purchase and consume products through which they wish to construct and express their desired identities (R. Belk, 1988; Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005). When facing a potential risk of confused identity signaling, people resort to distancing and anti-contamination behaviors (Avery, 2012; White & Dahl, 2006) and even extreme reactions at times such as harassment (Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001).

### B.2 Brands and reference groups
Consumer research on reference groups has shown that there exists a link between brand usage and group membership (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Childers & Rao, 1992; Moschis, 1985). Here, reference groups can be classified as groups that are integral to the consumer’s identity construction and used by him/her as a benchmark for behavior (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Prior classifications of reference groups have used two standards for group associations, member group, and aspirational group. A member group is one in which the person currently belongs and aspiration group is one in which the individual would like to be (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Recently, consumer research has also looked at reference group memberships in light of conformity and social comparison theory (Folkes & Kiesler, 1991). According to this view, consumers use other persons to build their beliefs about the world, reaching an assessment of skills and views based on similar individuals. Research has identified three kinds of influences through reference groups and their members: utilitarian, informational and value-expressive (C Whan Park & Lessig, 1977).

People are often motivated to form a positive view of themselves and in front of others. This stems from a drive to maintain a positive social identity and avoid a negative social identity (White & Dahl, 2007). Consumers use a variety of tactics and strategies to attain their desired social identities such as avoiding association with products connoting a negative social identity (Tepper, 1994; White & Argo, 2009; White & Dahl, 2006), decreasing association with groups implying negative associations for their selves (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish, & Hodge, 1996) and evaluating in-groups in a more positive light (Brewer, 1979; Jackson et al., 1996).

Consumer research to date has mostly considered the ways through which people identify and associate with reference groups (Hogg et al., 2009; White & Dahl, 2006). There exists substantial research on the process of identifying with a group (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), brand communities (Muniz & O’guinn, 2001), brand publics (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016), as well as how people develop meaning (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005) and relationships (Fournier, 1998) arising from these associations. However, comparatively little research has been done within the domain of anti-consumption and how individuals dissociate with social groups (White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). The current research wishes to contribute to the recently explored phenomenon of “dissociative reference groups”, i.e. a group that the individual wishes to avoid being associated with and actively strives to stay away from it (Englis & Solomon, 1995; White & Dahl, 2007).

Dissociative reference groups give scholars a reference point to gauge consumers’ navigational and choice patterns. Past researchers have proven that individuals are motivated to attain a positive social
identity and use strategies to evaluate their in-groups more positively and decrease their association with groups conferring negative connotations for the self (Jackson et al., 1996; White & Dahl, 2006). Individuals display feelings of indifference and even hostility to avoid being associated with such groups (Hogg et al., 2009). Avoidance groups thus act as a manifestation of negative anchors for persons (Englis & Solomon, 1995) to avoid signaling their undesired selves to others (Ogilvie, 1987). In a consumption context, consumers will avoid products that confer a negative symbolic implication (E. N. Banister & Hogg, 2004; Hamer, 2001; Lowrey, Englis, Shavitt, & Solomon, 2001; Tepper, 1994) and exhibit aversive lifestyles (White & Argo, 2009; White & Dahl, 2006).

There are three distinctive features which are involved when an individual wishes to dissociate with a reference group (White & Dahl, 2006). First, the desire to avoid a specific reference group should be purely motivational, and will be greater than other out-groups that the person is merely not a part of. For instance, if Tom believes he is a workaholic, he might consider sporty and partygoing persons to be an out-group but he would not want to willingly stay away from them. Whereas, he would want to actively avoid being associated with slackers and procrastinators so people do not perceive that he is not a workaholic. Second, the act of dissociating from a group is more consciously considered when the actions involve public rather than private acts and conspicuous consumption (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Bourne, 1957; Childers & Rao, 1992; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; White & Dahl, 2006). If a person does not want to be perceived as an alcoholic, he would not consume at all or consume in small quantities in public. But it is possible that the person might consume in greater quantities by himself or in a closed group of friends. Lastly, since the concept involves social identity, dissociating from a reference group also involves concerns regarding self-presentation (Goffman, 1978; Schlenker, 1980). Research has proven also that persons concerned more about self-presentation goals consciously try to avoid adverse outcomes (Wooten & Reed, 2000).

**B.3 Symbolic interaction and social divergence**

The principles of self-reflexivity (from symbolic interaction) and self-accentuation (from social identity theory) are two concepts which are necessary to understand the links that people form with each other. Demystifying the inter-relationships between individuals and groups will also help to clarify the relationships between individuals and brands (Hogg et al., 2009). Self-reflexivity is the ability to “take the perspective of others in relation to the self and social systems” (Dittmar, 1992; Hogg et al., 2009; Mead, 1934). The principle of accentuation helps us better understand how individuals classify themselves with respect to in-groups and out-groups (Abrams & Hogg, 2006; Tajfel, 1981). Based on these two principles,
we can understand how people see themselves in light of the others (reference groups) around them and how they classify themselves as either a part of these groups or wanting to be away from these groups (dissociative reference groups). These principles are applicable not only in the context of social groups but also in how people consume and interact with brands on a daily basis.

The motivation to signal the right identity to others has been seen to influence a person’s social reference groups (White & Dahl, 2006), their product usage (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008) and health behaviors (Berger & Rand, 2008). There are numerous examples of men not wanting to be perceived as having womanly tastes and preferences, kids striving to distinguish themselves from their parents, and undergraduates not wishing to be perceived as graduate students (Berger & Heath, 2007; Berger & Rand, 2008; White & Dahl, 2007).

Generally, all individuals have a need to be unique from others and distinguish their identity (Ariely & Levav, 2000; Brewer, 1991). For some individuals, the need for uniqueness is higher than others and they express it through product and brand selection, as well as specific behaviors (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001; Tian & McKenzie, 2001). The need for uniqueness may also instigate individuals to put greater distance between themselves and the social groups with whom they do not wish to be associated with.

People consume brands and products that are in line with their desired identities (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986). They consume and associate with brands not just because of the product attributes but for what the brands symbolize (Levy, 1959). These brands, which are imparted a part of the identity considering that the consumers consider them as possessions (R. Belk, 1988), allow consumers to construct their desired identities based on consumption decisions (Berger & Heath, 2007; Robert E Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993). At the same time, brands also allow them to avoid signaling undesired selves through these behaviors (Ogilvie, 1987; White & Dahl, 2006). A consumer’s preference for a brand communicates the willingness to associate with other consumers of the brand and be considered a part of that community (G. McCracken, 1989; Muniz & O’guinn, 2001). However, if a lot of people start consuming that brand or if the brand starts to be associated with negative connotations, then the individuals would become cautious in fear of being associated with the brand and sending the wrong identity signals (Berger & Heath, 2007; Shukla, Banerjee, & Singh, 2016).

There exist a variety of significant as well as trivial behaviors through which people intend to diverge and differentiate themselves. These include personal taste in music and favorite artists, hairstyle, cars, favorite TV shows and sunglasses (Berger & Heath, 2007). For instance, some people might listen to the rock band Metallica just to differentiate themselves from other listeners of mainstream artists. For some
individuals, purchasing a Ferrari could imply signaling to others that they are fashionable, exclusive, and adventurous; not a geek or a person who prefers to own a cozy, homely car.

B.4 Identity signaling and health

Prior research in health marketing has used risk perceptions (R. W. Rogers, 1983; Weinstein, 1993), and negative emotions of fear, disgust, shame, and guilt (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Morales et al., 2012) to persuade consumers towards healthy behaviors. Fear models such as the Parallel Process Model (Leventhal, 1970) and Extended Parallel Process Model (Witte, 1992) have been used vastly used in line with Protection Motivation Theory (R. W. Rogers, 1983) to show how individuals process and change their behavior when faced with risky choices. These risk appraisals and evaluations are carried out as a result of exposure to experimental manipulations instigating healthy behavior change, such as anti-smoking and curbing alcohol consumption. Even though more and more ad campaigns are focusing on informing people about the risk perceptions of smoking, AIDS and alcohol consumption (Duhachek et al., 2012; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Rose et al., 1992; Zhang & Shrum, 2009; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007), to date many people still continue to engage in such behaviors regardless of being informed of the risks involved (Berger & Rand, 2008; Milne et al., 2000).

Besides fear and risk evaluations, this research posits that identity signaling and group associations can also be a strong galvanizing force to shift people away from adverse health choices. The choices that people make can be construed as signals of identity, the desired self, preferred social groups and associations (R. Belk, 1988; Berger & Heath, 2007; Berger & Rand, 2008; H. Markus & Nurius, 1986). Concerns regarding symbolism also have an important impact on an individual’s decision making (Levy, 1959). People at times engage in risky health behaviors, such as avoiding contraceptives, binge drinking and chain smoking, to signal to others that they are daring, cool, risky (Berger & Rand, 2008). This shows that the individual decision to indulge in an unhealthy behavior involves not just a perception of risk and fear evaluation, but also the identity that individuals wish to signal to others through such actions.

In the context of health communications, associating a risky health behavior such as alcohol consumption with identities that individuals wish to avoid signaling to others can result in improved persuasion and public health (Berger & Rand, 2008). The groups that people wish to be identified with can influence their choices and actions (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Individuals prefer to emulate the actions of their aspiration groups and be a part of such groups (Englis & Solomon, 1995). Similarly, they also avoid behaviors and brands linked with groups that they do not wish to be a part of (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). Once a person has formed identity
perceptions about a group, it is not impossible to change these perceptions again as they are malleable based on self-perceptions (J. Aaker, 1999; Berger & Rand, 2008). The perceptions of behavior and actions can vary depending on the individuals that are participating in those behaviors. For example, people who used to purchase the iPhone because of its luxury appeal and exclusivity may not be as enthusiastic to buy it further because of its normative purchase behavior, bandwagon consumption and masstige status (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Shukla et al., 2016). Similarly, the meaning and identity association of excessive drinking can be changed through successful and effective advertising aimed at dissociative reference groups arising from such consumption (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008; Holt, 1997).
C. SELF-BRAND CONNECTION

C.1 Brand associations and the self

Besides forming associations with reference groups, consumers form positive associations with brands which are an important contributor to brand equity (D. A. Aaker, 1992; K. L. Keller, 1993). These brand associations include mental imagery and psychological benefits for the consumers (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). User imagery includes reference groups which use the brand and can be thought of as its regular, mainstream users. Psychological benefits derived from brand associations include social approval, self-esteem, and self-presentation. Both user imagery and psychological benefits are important for consumers because of their role in identity construction (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

It is generally accepted in marketing research that brands have a symbolic meaning for their consumers as they deliver values, cultural references and promises (Ambroise & Valette-Florence, 2010; R. Belk, 1988; R. W. Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; G. McCracken, 1989, 1993). The brand allows consumers to assert their identity and social memberships (Ambroise & Valette-Florence, 2010; N. Klein, 2001). Through the consumption of brands, people are able to construct their identity and self-concept (Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Robert E Kleine et al., 1993; Richins, 1994). A congruity between brand and self-image leads to positive product evaluations (Graeff, 1996; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982), promotions effectiveness (Close, Krishen, & Latour, 2009) and brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006).

Because of their symbolic meaning and the ability to form associations, brands allow consumers to actively form their self-concept and self-identity, and assert their individuality (Ball & Tasaki, 1992; R. Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998; Richins, 1994). The continued use of brands allows consumers to express different aspects of their selves (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Levy, 1959; Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2012). Besides the self, brands also allow consumers to reinforce their social connections with family, friends, culture, the community, and society (Reingen, Foster, Brown, & Seidman, 1984; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Researchers have also found brand signaling behavior in public consumption, wherein individuals with anxious attachment issues link themselves with brands having favorable personality characteristics to manage their public impressions (Swaminathan, Stilley, & Ahluwalia, 2009). In a way, brands can allow consumers to have stronger mental representations of their selves through their brand associations (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The brand not just helps in expressing the self, but goes even further by allowing its consumers to create and build their self-identities through connections between the brand and the self (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; G. McCracken, 1989).
Connecting the brand with the self

In the preceding discussion, we have seen that people consume brands which act as cues in the process of identity construction and defining the self-concept. According to G. D. McCracken (1990), meaning transfer originates in the cultural world and moves into a brand through advertising, word of mouth, reference groups. This meaning then transfers to the consumers through the associations that they hold for the brand and its reference groups (Muniz & O’guinn, 2001). Hence, the final meaning and value of the brand relies on the extent to which consumers incorporate the brand into their self-concept, allowing consumers to express their self in a better way and helping to form their self-identities (Escalas, 1996; Escalas & Bettman, 2000; G. McCracken, 1989). This final value and meaning of a brand for the consumer has been defined as “self-brand connection” (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005).

In terms of self-construction, consumers distinguish their brand associations between those arising from in-groups (your own group) versus those arising from out-groups (groups that you do not belong to). In this way, it is more likely that consumers would accept the meanings from brands which are in line with their in-groups and reject the meanings arising from out-groups. Through this process, the formation of connections with brands becomes more meaningful as it becomes in line with your self-concept, self-identity, and reference groups (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005).

As consumers identify more with reference groups, their meaning transfer and appropriation of brands to in-groups or out-groups become stronger (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). For instance, if I consider myself to be intelligent and I see all intelligent people around me using iPhones, I would strive to own and use an iPhone to be identified as an intelligent person. On the other hand, consumers would avoid associations with brands that are used by groups that they would not wish to be considered a part of. For instance, if I see alcoholics wearing baggy trousers and sporty hoodies and I do not wish to be considered an alcoholic, then I would also avoid this apparel. The strength of avoidance would also vary for public versus private consumption based on self-construal (White & Dahl, 2007). In this, the brand becomes meaningful by avoiding the out-group symbolism which also facilitates in identity formation.

A way for consumers to maintain positive identities is through avoiding self-brand connections with brands associated with out-groups (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007). Consumers often indulge in actions to differentiate and distinguish themselves from others (Berger & Heath, 2007). One way to do this is through creating a distinction between in-groups and out-groups, and their respective behaviors (Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998).
C.3 Anti-consumption

To have a fully comprehensive view of the linkages that consumers have with brands, it is imperative to consider not just how consumers form connections with brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005) but to also take into account how they reject brands. Rejection is a crucial issue within anti-consumption literature (M. S. W. Lee, Fernandez, & Hyman, 2009; M. S. W. Lee, J. Motion, & D. Conroy, 2009) and comes within the domain of symbolic consumption. According to Bourdieu (1984), it is necessary to understand the role of distastes to be able to appreciate tastes. This argument is further endorsed by considering that “without a tangible, undesired self, the real world would lose its navigational value” (Ogilvie, 1987). Even with the propagation of undesired selves and distastes, there exist very few works on these themes within consumer research (Hogg et al., 2009).

Previous marketing research has argued the notion of a singular self in favor of multiple selves (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Robert E Kleine et al., 1993). This comprises the possible self which includes what an individual desires to be and the ideal version of the self (Landon, 1974; H. Markus & Nurius, 1986). It also includes within it an undesired self, which an individual does not aspire to be and tries to actively avoid (Berger & Heath, 2008; Ogilvie, 1987; White, Argo, & Sengupta, 2012). Based on these varying and vast streams of research, Hogg et al. (2009) devised an extended map of the current research conducted on consumption and anti-consumption (see Figure 2).
Figure 2: Integrative map of symbolic consumption

The model shows consumers’ interaction with brands at three tiers: social, marketing and individual. The framework encompasses a range of possible selves and their inter-relationships with groups. These include possible selves imbued with positive symbolic meanings (G. D. McCracken, 1990) and the multiple selves (Robert E Kleine et al., 1993). It also includes negative selves which impart negative symbolic meanings through the undesired self (Ogilvie, 1987) and avoidance groups (Englis & Solomon, 1995). Here, social environment refers to symbolic interaction with brands, associating with social reference groups and the influence across generations fostered through parents, peers and the media (Hogg et al., 2009). The individual environment includes various memories formed since the time of gaining consciousness and how they lead to the formation of possible selves, disposing old identities and forming newer ones (Robert E. Kleine & Kleine, 2000). The marketing environment is driven mostly by advertisers and media competing for positive consumer patronage and word of mouth (Hogg et al., 2009). The model also captures a dynamic interaction between the micro and macro environments, suggesting that the market and individual level beliefs constantly evolve (Hogg et al., 2009).
CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, we have considered how mental processes work for individuals and their social actions. We saw the role that affect plays in our life and our decisions. We have also observed that this role varies for each individual based on their motivation to feel affect. The need for affect construct has been selected because of its ability to encapsulate the motivation to experience affect. This is important because the aim of this research is to use affective processes and influence young adults to limit or stop excessive alcohol consumption.

Furthermore, we have also learned the formation of social identity, and its evolution in a multi-step process. The identities that we form for ourselves effect the way that we wish to be perceived in life and amongst others (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986; H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These identity constructions lead to both positive and negative actions. The positive actions are done to promote the actual self towards an ideal self, while inhibitive actions are done to distance the self from undesired projections. Research has also shown that these constructions of a positive and undesired self can change over time (J. Aaker, 1999). Within the current research context, even if the youth segment perceives that alcohol consumption is good for their identity, they can be made to believe that it goes against their self-concept because alcohol consumers belong to a group that they would wish to dissociate with (dissociative reference groups). These youngsters are concerned more about their social appearance, social identity and social approval (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996), and research in health marketing has proven that adolescents take actions to avoid signaling an identity that they do not wish to be associated with (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Berger & Rand, 2008).

This brings us to the third part of this chapter, which looked at the process of linking the brand with the self through associations and perceptions that people form of brands, and how it leads to self-brand connections. Since the domain of this research is within anti-consumption, it was imperative to consider how people strive to weaken and reduce this connection with brands. Once people realize that a brand is linked to dissociative reference groups, they will show weak self-brand connections to put some distance between them and the perceived out-groups. We will look in greater at how they do this in Section 0 of Chapter 2: Consumers And Their Brands.
CHAPTER 2: CONSUMERS AND THEIR BRANDS

The first chapter of this thesis discussed how social perceptions and affective perceptions influence our social behavior and interactions. Besides these, they also impact our choices, attitudes, and behaviors (Andrade & Cohen, 2007; Forgas, 1995). These include not just our interaction with living beings, but also with products and brands. Our social identities and affective processing also impact the products we purchase and the brands we consume (Childers & Rao, 1992; McFerran et al., 2010; Westbrook, 1987). In order to look at this, we need to consider first the relations that people form with brands, how it affects our actions and intentions (both public and private) and what are the possible negative consequences.

Research in marketing has shown that consumers identify and form relations with brands, similar to interpersonal relationships (Fournier, 1998). This research suggests that the process of identification involves first an appraisal of the self and how the brand fits within the self-concept conceptualization (Baumeister, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Brands that link with and promote the self in a positive way lead to long-lasting relationships, while negative connections with brands lead to possible distancing and dis-identification of the self with the brand.

The quality and strength of relationships that people form with brands has been conceptualized by Fournier (1994) within the BRQ construct. According to this concept, people form varying levels of relationships over a broad spectrum (friends, fling, partner, enemies), similar to interpersonal relationships (Fournier, 1998). Upon finding out something distressing about the relationship partner, people tend to question the strength of the relationship. In a branding context, upon finding out a revealing fact that triggers affect or something that makes people want to dissociate with the brand, they would want to put distance between themselves and the brand through dis-identification with the brand (Wolter et al., 2016). This research proposes that through affective communication and triggering dissociative reference groups for alcohol brands, young adults can be made to switch away from their alcohol consumption.

In the succeeding sections, we will look at an overview of the self-concept and how it shapes possible dis-identification with the brand. After this, we will look at the brand relationship quality (BRQ) framework to see how people form relations with brands similar to relating with persons.
A. **Self-Disidentification**

A.1 **Self-concept**

The self-concept is defined as “a person’s perception of him/her self” (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). It includes the individual’s “beliefs about himself or herself, including the person’s attributes and who and what the person is” (Baumeister, 1999). Although the self-concept remains steady over time, it can be influenced by social cues or influences (J. Aaker, 1999; Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012). According to self-concept theory, people indulge in actions to enhance their selves and one way to do this is through brands (Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008, 2011), as they have symbolic connotations that start as early as childhood (Chaplin & John, 2005). Through the usage of brands, consumers express different versions of their selves including the actual self and the ideal self (R. Belk, 1988; Dolich, 1969; Holt, 2002; Landon, 1974), wherein the ideal self involves either an expansion of the actual self (self-representation) or a contraction of actual self (self-presentation) (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

The self-concept evolves over the lifetime of an individual and consists of multiple components in its construction. According to Lewis (1990), the development of self involves two stages over an individual’s life. When the child is just 2-3 months old, it begins to realize the existence as separate from others. The child uses fewer categories (height, hair color, skin color) to define him/her self and the relationship with the world. This stage is called the “existential self”. In the next stage, i.e. the “categorical self”, the child becomes more aware of an existence in the world and uses greater categories (comparing yourself with others, being faster than others, more active) to identify and associate with people, with the attainment of greater consciousness and knowledge about the world (Lewis, 1990). The self-concept involves three components which lead to a complete construction of the self. These include “self-image”, “self-esteem” and “ideal self” (C. R. Rogers & Koch, 1959). Self-image comprises the view that you have of yourself based on physical description, social roles, personality traits of the actual self. Self-esteem includes the extent to which we value or approve of ourselves. The self-esteem evaluation can be positive or negative based on a high or low assessment of self-esteem by individuals for themselves. Lastly, the ideal self includes what you aspire to be for yourself and in front of others. Any discrepancy between the actual and ideal selves can lead to incongruence of self and hamper the self-actualization process (C. R. Rogers & Koch, 1959).

The decision that which self is to be presented to others is dependent on social experience (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Consumers strive for a positive feedback and reaction from others, which leads to the
growth of the self. According to Leary and Kowalski (1990), the presentation of self to others depends on *impression motivation*, i.e. the desire to control the self-image presented to others, and *impression construction*, i.e. choosing appropriate content for presenting the self to others and devising the right strategy for this.

The construction of a self is not always ideal or positive as consumers strive to achieve the right balance between their presented selves (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). There can be instances when consumers engender both a positive and negative self, and mentally weigh them to balance the overall presentation of self (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986; Schouten, 1991). Individuals also maintain a balance in their relationships by agreeing with friends and disagreeing with enemies through forming both positive and negative connections, employing the balance theory of self-concept (Heider, 1958, 2013). Research has also shown that a possible reason for the development of addiction in individuals is to escape from the bounds of an inauthentic self (Hirschman, 1992). There are also instances when individuals tailor their public self-image according to varying situations as a coping mechanism for conflicting selves. In such scenarios, the consumption of brands can vary with the individual’s self-image for each setting (J. Aaker, 1999; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982; Solomon, 1983).

### A.2 Dis-identification

Different kinds of social behavior, be they in an individualistic or public setting, originate primarily from the individual (Tajfel, 1979). According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorization theory (Turner, 1985), an individual’s identity is composed of two components: personal identity (an individual sense of self) and social identity (a collective sense of self, arising from an individual’s group affiliations) (White & Argo, 2009). For the individual, social categories and reference groups provide a means to create and delineate their space in the society and the world at large, with which he/she can generally associate (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Individuals strive to maintain a positive self-worth and self-view not just for the individual self (Dunning, 2007; Steele, 1988; Tesser, 2000) but also for the collective/social self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). After identifying with a social group, the individual strives to maintain a positive self-concept and self-esteem. Based on the differently conceptualized social groups, the individual then associates positive or negative connotations with these groups. These polarized connotations lead to differing evaluations of existing social groups and contribute to the social identity of an individual (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). A positive social identity leads to positive comparisons of the current group with other relevant out-groups. In the case of a negative social identity, the individuals strive to leave the existing group or join a more
positive social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and they would be greatly motivated to avoid the said group which imbues possible negative associations for the self (White & Argo, 2009).

Individual encounters multiple reference groups through the course of their lifetime and these groups vary in their structures, size, and group dynamics. Different researchers have assessed the impact of negative group associations and their role in identifying or dis-identifying with the concerned reference groups such as a nation, an organization, advertising and branding (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Englis & Solomon, 1995; Josiassen, 2011; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Wolter et al., 2016).

Dis-identification is not simply the inverse of identification, as dis-identification involves an aversive and oppositional reaction to a certain characteristic which can possibly threaten the social identity (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Ogbu, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). A perceived sense of social rejection and devaluation arising from association with the reference group (for example a nation) can result in decreased identification and increased disidentification (Portes & Zhou, 1993). In their study, Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) looked at the role of ethnic and religious identities on national identification/disidentification. They showed that people who disidentify strongly with the nation show low commitment to the nation, and greater identification with the ethnicity and religion. A greater sense of disidentification with the nation leads to greater perceived social rejection and presence of dual identities (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007).

Within a structural entity frame, researchers have also looked at dis-identification with an organization, such as the National Rifle Association in the US (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). As per this research, individuals employ self-categorization (defining the self based on social categories) to resolve the cognitive dissociation experienced from groups which do not allow defining the self as aspired by the individual (Brewer, 1991; Steele & Aronson, 1995). As a result, individuals cognitively distance themselves from the groups through self-categorization (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Tajfel, 2010). Recent models of social identity suggest that individuals may also be motivated to disidentify with a group because of their low level of identification with the said group (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). The individual may perceive a threat to social identity due to the low identification in light of a recent crisis or negative event (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). In a similar vein, an individual can also feel the need to cognitively separate from an organization (Steele, 1988), defined as organizational disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). In such instances, individuals find it easier to build self-associations through social groups or organizations to which they do not belong, such
as non-smoker, non-alcoholic, non-NRA, anti-drugs, non-EU (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). Organizational disidentification is formally defined “as a self-perception based on (1) a cognitive separation between one’s identity and one’s perception of the identity of an organization, and (2) a negative relational categorization of oneself and the organization”. This construct also has implications for social marketing, public policy and behavior change as it can help in individual level and collective behavior change for distancing people from an organization with negative consequences such as cigarettes, alcohol, rifles (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002). Such goals have been endorsed and promoted by social marketers and health communication experts who suggest that changing a society’s perception of something can be more important than changing the individual’s perception (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Goldberg, 1995; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Wallack, 1990).

A.3 Brand dis-identification

In order to fully understand the construct of disidentification with a brand, it is imperative to have a look at similar concepts which have been studied recently in marketing and branding. Various authors have used either affective, cognitive or a mix of both to explain consumers’ disidentification with a brand in varying ways, with almost all of them having consequences for consumer behavior.

Some authors have used the term “consumer disidentification” as a variant of national disidentification, a construct discussed previously (Josiassen, 2011; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Although national disidentification is a reactive action towards a country, consumer disidentification is directed more towards the typical domestic consumer of a brand and affects purchasing behavior for the brand (Josiassen, 2011). The author suggests that this can be due to strong perceptions of social identifiers such as religion, politics, ethnicity, age, and negative associations for the typical consumer of the brand. Consumer disidentification can also arise from negative associations for a product due to its association with a specific country such as French wine, Swiss watches, German beer (Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000; Josiassen, 2011; J. G. Klein, Ettenso, & Morris, 1998).

Another concept similar to consumer disidentification is politically motivated brand rejection, which is the rejection of a brand by the consumer due to its association with a negatively perceived political ideology (Sandıkçı & Ekici, 2009). This concept is close to anti-consumption or rejection of a brand due to differences in political beliefs. The authors discussed three possible antecedents for brand rejection: predatory globalization, chauvinistic nationalism, and religious fundamentalism (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). The study was exploratory in nature and hence did not suggest a measurement scale for the concept.
This research aims to extend the conceptualization of self-disidentification (White & Dahl, 2007) with regards to dissociative reference groups by employing the construct of “consumer-brand disidentification” (CBD). When faced with a dissociative reference group, i.e. a group that the individual wishes to avoid being associated with, people feel a sense of disidentification with that group (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Ogilvie, 1987). As a consequence, they disidentify the self with any products consumed by that group in order to avoid being remotely associated with that group, and this [negatively] impacts product evaluations for the products consumed by the intended dissociative group (White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). From a sociological standpoint, disidentification leads to defining the self and social identity by willingly rejecting or excluding a brand from one’s self-definition (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Wolter et al., 2016).

This research intends to employ “consumer-brand disidentification” (CBD), conceptualized as “a cognitive rejection of a brand wherein a consumer consciously views a brand as misrepresenting his or her self and impeding self-motives” (Wolter et al., 2016). For CBD, the motivation to separate the self from the brand in lieu of a rejection from the self is a dominant cognitive process while contemplating the consumption of the brand. CBD is a relatively new concept and is conceptually similar to constructs such as brand avoidance (M. S. Lee, J. Motion, & D. Conroy, 2009) and consumer disidentification (Josiassen, 2011). Table 2 includes some distinguishing features of CBD in comparison with similar constructs in brand relationship and disidentification marketing literature.

Table 2: CBD vs. Similar Concepts in Disidentification and Brand Relations Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Comparison with CBD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment/aversion</td>
<td>A higher order construct composed of brand-self distance and brand prominence. Brand-self distance is defined by C Whan Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) as “the perceived distance between a brand and self.”</td>
<td>CBD, rather than focusing on a consumer’s distancing of a brand from the self, focuses on a consumer’s cognitive and active rejection of a brand. In other words, high CBD places a brand firmly as a consumer’s dissociative group and therefore results in the negative outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand embarrassment</td>
<td>“A consumer’s proneness to a short-lived state of abashment and embarrassment”</td>
<td>Although the concept considers social embarrassment and evaluation, it...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social chagrin</td>
<td>Social chagrin, resulting from brand-related purchases or consumption experiences that increase the threat of unwanted social evaluation, from real or imagined audiences (Walsh, Albrecht, Hofacker, Grant, &amp; Takahashi, 2016).</td>
<td>Emphasizes more on the direct relation between the brand and the consumer. In this way, brand embarrassment does not arise from a need of dissociation arising from the brand’s reference groups or its perceived distance from the self, rather it is instigated more from direct experience with the brand itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer disidentification</td>
<td>“Consumers’ active rejection of and distancing from the perceived typical domestic consumer” (Josiassen, 2011)</td>
<td>The focus of disidentification differs. Consumer disidentification focuses on a typical domestic consumer whereas CBD focuses on a brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand avoidance</td>
<td>Defined by M. S. Lee et al. (2009) as “the incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand.”</td>
<td>Brand avoidance reflects a consumer’s rejection of a brand for more reasons than those related to the consumer’s and brand’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer-brand non-identification</td>
<td>A consumer’s lack of self-definition or self-association with a brand (Kreiner &amp; Ashforth, 2004).</td>
<td>A state in which a brand is not used to represent a consumer’s self through either association (i.e., in-group) or disassociation (i.e., out-group). This is a state that could be argued as a middle ground, except that this could also be a form of ambivalent identification in which a consumer both associates and disassociates with different parts of a brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand hatred</td>
<td>Not defined by Johnson, Matear, and Thomson (2011) but measures seem to indicate active</td>
<td>Hatred is an emotional state whereas CBD is a cognitive state. Thus, the two could be related in any number of ways in which cognitions and emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


All these constructs denote a negative, aversive relation with the brand through anti-consumption or because of emotions felt for the brand. However, CBD goes a step forward by encompassing self-concept and dissociative reference groups, and including within it both affective and cognitive effects to influence disidentification or rejection of the brand. The other constructs employ reasons other than identity formation which lead to a negative relation with the brand. In this way, CBD is both holistic and parsimonious for the current research context as compared to previously explored concepts. 

According to Wolter et al. (2016), consumers of the brand are also in a state of flux and not always fully identifying or disidentifying with the brand. The authors have considered a dynamic relationship between consumer-brand identification and consumer-brand disidentification (Wolter et al., 2016). In this research, we are concerned more with the disidentification of consumers with the brand (see Self-Disidentification). Since the context of this research is built in dissociative reference groups, it is imperative to look at the right half of the figure, signifying either an ambivalent or a pure disidentification state for the consumers. An ambivalent state can occur when consumers feel a mix of both identification and disidentification (Hogg et al., 2009; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). This can occur when consumers feel some parts of the brand as representative of their self while the other parts misrepresent the self or present an undesired self (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Ogilvie, 1987). Examples include people who like Starbucks coffee but would not wish to be associated with it because of its mass commercialization and expansion strategy (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). Within this research, we are suggesting that the prior relation that a consumer has held with a brand would also lead to an ambivalent state, as it would be difficult for consumers to purely disidentify with brands with which they held past relationships. We will look in greater detail the relationships formed between consumers and brands in the next section titled Brand Relationship Quality.
Figure 3: A Dynamic Between Consumer Brand Identification and Disidentification

Source: Wolter et al. (2016)
B. BRAND RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

It has been some time since marketing researchers started to formulate the relationships that consumers form with brands, akin to interpersonal relationships. What started with Fournier (1994)’s seminal work as the foray into relationship marketing and consumer-brand relationships has been explored in detail by various marketing researchers and scholars in the context of brand personality (J. Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Smit, Bronner, & Tolboom, 2007), social media and brand anthropomorphism (Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016), branding decisions (Do, Ko, & Woodside, 2015; Kim, Park, & Kim, 2014), self-image (Kressmann et al., 2006), brand equity (Nyadzayo, Matanda, & Ewing, 2016), and service brands (Nyffenegger, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Malaer, 2015).

B.1 Relationship marketing

Fournier (1994) in her original conception of “brand relationship quality” presented an analogy of an interpersonal relationship but for a brand instead of a person, wherein a brand is treated in the same way as a partner in a dyadic relationship. Prior research has looked at the role that products play as possible partners in a relationship (Lasch, 1979; Yankelovich, 1981). Multiple researchers in marketing have emphasized on moving the focus of marketing from being product centered to one that is focused on customer relationships (Grönroos, 1991; Kapferer, 2012; Kotler, 1992).

Relationship marketing has established itself not just in a consumer context but also in B2B settings. It has been used in industrial marketing, channels and service domains (Fournier, 1994). Marketing scholars have looked at the implications of relationship marketing for selling situations (Levitt, 1983), and interactions between buyers and sellers (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987).

According to Fournier (1994), there has not been substantial comprehensive research on fitting the relationship framework within a single model. Most research on inter-object relationships has only briefly discussed relationship theory. Such research has mostly considered the link that a person has with his/her possessions and this is not discussed specifically within the domain of relationship marketing (R. Belk, 1988; R. W. Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Some authors that have in fact employed relationship marketing in their studies only used a limited vocabulary of concepts. Theories of love, commitment and trust (Ahuvia, 1993; Sternberg, 1986) have received most of the attention in relationship marketing literature (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Shimp & Madden, 1988) as compared to other constructs. Further, Fournier (1994)’s work was the first to consider the relation between a brand and a consumer.
B.2 Forming an interpersonal relation with a brand

Recent research has focused on intimate relationships that consumers build with their brands. The strength of these relationships has been conceptualized as “brand relationship quality” (D. A. Aaker, 2012; J. Aaker et al., 2004; Fournier, 1994, 1998). Brand relationship quality has been defined as “a customer-based indicator of the strength and depth of the person-brand relationship” (Fournier, 1994; Nyffenegger et al., 2015). There needs to be fulfilment of four conditions in order for the relation between a consumer and a brand to qualify as an analogy of interpersonal relationships (Hinde, 1995). These conditions include: (1) a reciprocal exchange between contributing and independent partners; (2) purposive, meaningful relationships for both parties involved; (3) multiple dimensions and factors that affect the relation and lead to possible benefits for the partners; and (4) a continuously evolving relationship over time.

B.2.1 Relationship partner

For any relationship to exist in essence, be it interpersonal or between consumers and brands, there needs to be interdependence between the parties involved (Fournier, 1998; Fournier, Dobscha, & Mick, 1998). Through this, the partners of the relationship will define and redefine the relation over time (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979). By its very nature, the brand is considered a non-human inanimate object so the question arises that how is it possible to form a relationship with such a partner? A way to do this is through anthropomorphizing or animating the brand completely or specific parts of it, so that the consumers feel they are interacting with a real-life character (J. Aaker, 1997; Levy, 1985). Anthropomorphism allows assigning humanistic attributes to a non-human entity such as a brand (Bartneck, Kulić, Croft, & Zoghbi, 2009; Hudson et al., 2016). Anthropomorphized brands are then considered to be capable of emotional states and conscious behavior as human members of the society (Puzakova, Kwak, & Rocereto, 2009). Here, the representation can be done through an endorser, spokesperson or through real-life animation of the brand, such as Michelin Tire or M&Ms. According to Fournier (1998), the marketing activities conducted by a brand qualify it as a reciprocating partner. In order for the relationship to have meaning and evolve over time, it is of primary importance that the brand is identified as a valid reciprocating partner (Fournier, 1998).

B.2.2 Meaningful relationship

The provision of meaning to life and one’s self-concept has been explored by researchers. They have considered this transfer of meaning from objects, celebrities, consumption and physical possessions (R. Belk, 1988; Holt, 1995; S. S. Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; G. McCracken, 1989; G. D. McCracken, 1990; Richins, 1994; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). For any relationship to sustain, it should be purposeful and add structure to a person’s life (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983; Hinde, 1995). Meaningful
relationships allow changing and evolving the self-concept so that it has significance for the partners themselves. The relation allows the self to expand and explore new terrains (Aron & Aron, 1996). A purposive relationship will also strengthen the self-concept through enhancing the self-esteem and self-worth of an individual who believes the relationship is meaningful for his/her existence and adds value to their life (Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995).

Each relationship has three components, which serve as a proxy to signify the importance of the relationship for the partners involved. These include the fulfilment of psychological, socio-cultural and relational goals (Fournier, 1998). Psychologically, relationships help to answer any existential concerns that people might have (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979) and help to build key roles in life that change the self-concept such as how a father-son relationship evolves after the son’s college graduation (Fournier, 1998). The nature and strength of a relationship is defined through multiple socio-cultural identifiers such as age, sex, family, society and culture (Fournier, 1998). Relationships are also attributed more meaning because of their networked nature and links with other relations, for instance, a man/woman should accomplish their roles as a son/daughter, father/mother and husband/wife at the same time. This networked nature and complexity of relationships has been reflected in the context of branding through concepts of “brand community”, “brand public”, “brandscape” (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Fournier, 1998; G. D. McCracken, 1990; Muniz & O’guinn, 2001; Sherry, 1998).

**B.2.3 Multiplex phenomena**

Relationships are very diverse and it is difficult to map them just on a strong-weak spectrum. They can be forced or voluntary, based on a hierarchy or truly egalitarian, and can also be expressed openly or kept in secret (Fournier, 2009). Different relationships vary in their significance based on the perceived benefits derived for the individuals (Fournier, 1998; Weiss, 1974). The nature and strength of the link between the two partners is also important such as that of a friendly affection, love, passion, obsession (Ahuvia, 1993; Fournier, 1998; Sternberg, 1986). Like various kinds of interpersonal relationships, relations with brands can be classified along a wider spectrum containing friendship, kinship, courtship, fling, secret affair, enslavement rather than just a myopic conception of marriage and divorce (Fournier, 1998, 2009). However, there exists limiting research which has explored the placement of consumer and brand at different points along this spectrum. Only a few authors have explored friendships (Price & Arnould, 1999), secret relations (Goodwin, 1992), exchange based relations (Aggarwal, 2004) and abuse (Hill, 1994).
B.2.4 Dynamic evolution

A central tenet of relationships is their ability to evolve, grow and develop over time. This sets them apart from a one-shot transaction or a contractual relation (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983), and gives life to a relationship (Fournier, 1998, 2009). Researchers have used a five staged model for relationship growth (initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration, dissolution) where each stage signifies an interval and a possible movement to the next stage (Levinger, 1983). There exist differing theories on the number of stages, the development in each stage and evolution from one stage to the next (Fournier, 1998). In her later works, Fournier (2009) has defined the relationship cycle to consist of four stages including initiation, growth, maintenance and decline.

B.3 Dimensions of BRQ

(Fournier, 1994, 1998) in her original idea identified six key dimensions of brand relationship quality: (1) love and passion, (2) self-connection, (3) interdependence, (4) commitment, (5) intimacy and (6) partner quality.

B.3.1 Love and passion

The existence of a strong affective feeling for the partner is at the heart of all strong relationships (Sternberg, 1986). Researchers have employed the construct of love and passion to denote the feelings that consumers have towards an inanimate object (Shimp & Madden, 1988; Sternberg, 1986). Feelings of love generally include passion, commitment (Sternberg, 1986), affection (Perlman & Fehr, 1987), infatuation (Lane & Wegner, 1994).

In strong brand relationships, consumers feel that “something is missing” from their life when they have not interacted with the brands for some time (Fournier, 1998). Such strong relationships make brands indispensable to the extent that consumers can possibly face separation anxiety and symptoms of withdrawal in the brand’s absence (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983; Fournier, 1998). Feelings of love for a brand allow giving the brand a second chance in case of transgressions (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991) and giving the brand some benefit of doubt before blaming it (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Fournier, 1998). Further, feelings of love initiate a positive, biased perception of the partner, i.e. the brand, for the self and in front of others (Fournier, 1998; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996).

Recently, some authors have also developed more specific scales for feelings of love and passion by the brand’s consumers. This work started with analyzing feelings of love for an inanimate object such as a car or a motorcycle using Sternberg (1986)’s work on the subject of love (Shimp & Madden, 1988). These approaches employ extending the feeling of love from interpersonal relations to that of a consumption
context, i.e. love between consumers and their brands, as well as defining conceptually what signifies “love for a brand” in the eyes of the consumers (Ahuvia, 1993; Whang, Allen, Sahoury, & Zhang, 2004). They identify love as being composed of multiple dimensions including passion, self-congruity, and positive affect among others (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2007; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). In a similar way, some researchers have conceptualized passion for a brand as a strong intense feeling for the brand (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2013). Brand passion has been identified as being composed of identification with and trust for the brand, which consequently impacts relational constructs of commitment (Albert et al., 2013; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Some recent works employing BRQ in their frameworks have also treated love and passion as separate constructs instead of using a single construct for both (Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007).

### B.3.2 Self-connection

The component of self-connection involves the extent to which the brand fulfills important aspects of the identity (Fournier, 1998), contributing to the formation of the self. This feeling of being connected with the brand can be felt across different points in the time horizon. For events that happened in the past, it is termed “nostalgic connection”, while connections in the present or future can be considered as possible realizations of the future or desired selves (Fournier, 1998; S. S. Kleine et al., 1995). Stronger feelings of self-connection incite protective tendencies for the relation, greater dependence on the brand and enhanced tolerance when faced with adversity (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992; Fournier, 1998; Lydon & Zanna, 1990).

In some of her later works, Fournier (2009) has segregated self-connection from “nostalgic attachment”. “Nostalgic attachment” includes sentimental feelings for the brand linked to momentous occasions in the past and “self-connection” indicates the brand’s ability to reflect and be a part of the self (Fournier, 2009). This segregation between self-connection and nostalgic attachment has been validated and used by multiple authors (Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007). Similar to the self-connection construct, some authors have endeavored to measure “self-brand connection” as a reflection of the self by the brand to facilitate identity formation and an incorporation of the brand within the self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005) (see section titled Self-Brand Connection for a full review).

### B.3.3 Interdependence

Strong relationships are imbued with a high level of dependence that both partners have on each other. Similarly, strong consumer-brand relationships are identifiable due to a high level of dependence between the brand and the consumer (Fournier, 1998; Hinde, 1995). For consumer-brand relationships,
there are a few characteristics that manifest high level of interdependence. These include frequent interactions with the brand, such as putting on the same lipstick brand or consuming the same coffee brand multiple times in a day. It also includes a high level of interactive engagement with the brand, for instance, making food with your favorite microwave oven and being engaged/joyous in the process. According to Fournier (1998), relationships that are highly integrated in daily rituals, such as cooking and cleaning, can outlast times of declined intimacy and affection (Hinde, 1995).

**B.3.4 Commitment**

Another dimension that is considered an integral component of an interpersonal relationship is the intention to maintain the relation in the long-run. Researchers have termed this intention as commitment, and classified it as one of the components of love in interpersonal relationships (Sternberg, 1986). Some marketing scholars have studied commitment as an indication of love for an inanimate object (Shimp & Madden, 1988), but there have been varying results as to whether commitment is a component of brand love (Albert et al., 2007; Batra et al., 2012).

According to Fournier (1998), consumers forming a relation with brands show strong emotional commitment to them. Presence of commitment to the brand also adds stability to the relationship as consumers feel a strong bond or debt to the brand. Commitment to the brands has also been shown to indirectly reduce other viable alternatives in the environment (Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Thomson, MacInnis, & Whan Park, 2005). Furthermore, high levels of commitment also lead to brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Fournier (2009) in her recent conceptualizations of BRQ has considered love and commitment to be composed within the same construct. Besides this, some authors have also considered commitment more in terms of loyalty to the brand (Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007) and a lasting desire to maintain the relation with the brand (J. Aaker et al., 2004).

**B.3.5 Intimacy**

A greater level of intimacy suggests more stable relationship bonds and greater meaning embedded in the relationship (Fournier, 1998). Forming intimacy with brands allows to make greater personal memories and reliving experiences (Escalas, 1996). The presence of intimacy also allows for a positive bias for the partner and enhanced salience over a longer period of time (Murray et al., 1996).

Some authors have considered intimacy as being psychologically close with the partner and attaining knowledge about the brand to understand it’s actions better (Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007). Others have referred to intimacy as the consumer acquiring extensive knowledge about the brand.
(Kressmann et al., 2006). According to more recent measures of BRQ by Fournier (2009), intimacy is a two-way component including the intimate knowledge the customer has about the brand as well as the knowledge and understanding that the brand has about the consumer. These constructs have been formally termed as “consumer-brand intimacy” and “brand-consumer intimacy”.

**B.3.6 Partner quality**

In interpersonal relations, the perceived quality of the partner’s role in the relationship has been seen to affect relationship strength and overall satisfaction (Fournier, 1998). For brands, partner quality is perceived as the brand’s actions in fulfilment of its role as a partner. It is affected by a positive attraction towards the brand, positive judgments about the brand’s role in the relationship, faith that the brand will deliver up to its promises, the brand’s compliance to certain relationship rules and comfort in the brand’s responsibilities (Fournier, 1998).

The different applications of this concept have used parts of this definition for research. Most constructions have considered this as the quality of the brand as a relationship partner. Some have defined partner quality as the brand being reliable and interested in the relationship, and taking care of the consumer (Smit et al., 2007). Others have employed partner quality as reliability of the brand’s communication, compliance with relationship rules and the consumer’s belief that the brand would perform well in future (Kressmann et al., 2006). A few researchers have gone a step further by considering partner quality as reliability of the brand’s communication, compliance with relationship rules and the consumer’s belief that the brand would perform well in future (Kressmann et al., 2006). A few researchers have gone a step further by considering partner quality as a separate component and not as a part of BRQ. These scholars have employed partner quality as a general assessment of the brand’s role as a relationship partner based on whether the brand is interested in, takes care of and treats the consumer well (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Nyffenegger et al., 2015). In these studies, partner quality has been employed as an antecedent of BRQ rather than as a component.

**B.3.7 Limits of BRQ dimensions**

Some authors have questioned the existence of a brand’s relationship with consumers (Smit et al., 2007). Although (Fournier, 1994, 1998, 2009)’s work has defined the conditions for a relationship and the different kinds of relationships, the author has not specified how brands can make efforts to reach specific relationship stages or how to progress from one stage to the next, except for a few remarks (Fournier, 2009). Some authors have also questioned the pre-requisite conditions for the existence of a consumer-brand relationship (O’Malley & Tynan, 2001). According to them, it is difficult for a consumer-brand relationship to exist, as they believe intimate relationships are very close and rare. It might not be possible then to emulate the same characteristics as that of an intimate relationship with brands.
A few authors have also looked at the impact of brand personality on forming relationships with brands. For symbolic brands like Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson and Nike, forming a relationship is easier because of the brand’s history and a well-structured brand heritage (D. A. Aaker, 1992, 2009). Some brands are more relatable for consumers, because of the value and importance that they hold for the individuals (Dowling, 2002). For other brands, a relationship is possible through brand anthropomorphism by employing animated characters for the brand, which builds a strong relatable personality for the brand (J. Aaker, 1997; J. Aaker et al., 2004). This allows the consumers to relate and associate with the brand by associating with the character. The anthropomorphic process allows to satisfy the need for social connection and a need to control and understand the environment, both of which are at the core of human beings (Epley, Akalis, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2008; Hudson et al., 2016). The fulfillment of these needs allows individuals to feel the brand relationship similar to an interpersonal relationship.

### B.4 Affective and cognitive components

Previously, some researchers have criticized and questioned the appropriateness of brand relationship quality as a comprehensive relationship marketing metaphor as hypothesized by (Fournier, 1998, 2009). These efforts include asking questions such as are there other any other factors which affect BRQ? Researchers have tried to answer this by looking at the importance that individual brands hold for consumers (Dowling, 2002) and through the brand personalities formed by the consumers (J. Aaker, 1997; J. Aaker et al., 2004). Some researchers have also considered the differences in BRQ perceptions across multiple brands belonging to varying product categories, based on brand personalities (Smit et al., 2007).

A way to resolve these issues could be to understand the mental processes and how different dimensions impact the minds of consumers. Research has shown that humans process information through affective and cognitive components in the brain (Kahneman, 2003, 2011; Millar & Tesser, 1986; Zajonc, 1980). Similarly, emotions and cognition also influence the relationships formed with brands.

A major constraint of the BRQ construct is that it does not include within itself a division of affect and cognition, to represent the two distinct processing systems. Recently, Nyffenegger et al. (2015) proposed a new conceptualization of BRQ which will be the focus of this research. This research proposes that through this framework, brands and consumers can better understand their relations by knowing which parts of the brain are affected the most by which dimensions. Although prior studies have focused mostly on an overall measure of BRQ (J. Aaker et al., 2004), this concept can be divided into “hot” and “cold” attitude centers (C Whan Park & MacInnis, 2006), which differentially affect aspects of decision making. Hot BRQ relates to affective components of overall BRQ which arouse feelings of affect towards the brand,
whereas cold BRQ relates to cognitive components which are built after rationalizing and justifying the relationship with the brand in the mind of the consumer (Nyffenegger et al., 2015).

B.4.1 Hot BRQ
Hot BRQ has been defined as relationship with brands based largely on affective components. More specifically, prior research has defined it as forming strong connections with a brand based on positive feelings (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Nyffenegger et al., 2015). These feelings develop largely due to the brand’s link with the self and its congruence with the self-image (Kressmann et al., 2006; C Whan Park & MacInnis, 2006; M. J. Sirgy et al., 1997). This research proposes that hot BRQ is “a formation of strong beliefs in what the brand says because it satisfies emotional needs”.

Hot BRQ is composed of three components: passion, intimacy and commitment. This structure is similar to a prior concept of love (Sternberg, 1986). Passion is a feeling of longing and completeness due to the presence of the brand in a person’s life (Fournier, 1994). Intimacy refers to a feeling of understanding and knowledge about the brand’s actions, due to a psychological closeness between the brand and the consumer (Smit et al., 2007). Commitment reflects an intention to stay in a long-term relationship with the brand and remain faithful to it (Smit et al., 2007).

B.4.2 Cold BRQ
Cold BRQ has been defined as cognitive and objective beliefs about a brand’s nature and performance (Nyffenegger et al., 2015). It is the strength of a consumer’s beliefs about the brand and a cognitive evaluation of the brand’s performance. Cold BRQ develops from evaluative judgments formed by the consumer about the brand and its performance (C Whan Park & MacInnis, 2006). According to the current research, cold BRQ can be defined as “positive evaluations of, and beliefs in, a brand based on a sense of reliance and satisfactory performance as a relationship partner”.

Cold BRQ is composed of three components: interdependence, satisfaction, and trust. This component is close to similar conceptualizations of relationship quality in relational marketing, which consider satisfaction and trust as the main dimensions of a relationship (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Nyffenegger et al., 2015). Interdependence refers to a dependence on the brand by the consumer, leading to perceptions of mutual dependency (Kressmann et al., 2006). Satisfaction for a brand by the consumer denotes a consistent contentment with the decision to consume the brand’s offering (Nyffenegger et al., 2015). Trust represents a consumer’s beliefs about the honesty and reliability of a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The three components involve an
assessment of the brand’s performance compared to consumer’s expectations (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Oliver, 1993).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have looked at how affective needs and our desired social groups influence our relations with brands, in the same way as they would affect our relations with human beings. Consumers interact and identify with brands just like how they associate themselves with others. They form relationships with brands, based on affective feelings and memories of them. They also try to integrate brands within the self-concept and feel a greater level of self-esteem upon associating themselves with people and brands similar to their self-concept (Baumeister, 1999; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982; Turner, 1985).

We have seen the different kinds of relationships that consumers form with brands through the concept of BRQ. This construct is holistic in that it allows assessing the strength of a consumer-brand relationship through its multiple components. These components and the BRQ construct in general, would allow us to determine the relationship strength that consumers have formed with brands in their prior interactions. Specifically, within the context of this research, we will be able to assess the relationship type, strength and its dimensions. This assessment will help to determine how strongly youth consumers are associated with alcohol consumption and specific brands of beer. Through this, we will also know whether individuals are unsure to let go of beer brands and alcohol consumption because of a strong relationship already existing in place between them and the beer brands.

Consumers can also feel the need to dis-identify and distance themselves from brands, if associating with these brands would signal an undesired identity and a version of the self that they do not wish to portray to others (Ogilvie, 1987; White & Dahl, 2006). Research has shown that consumers feel the need to diverge from others through their consumption patterns and brand preferences (Berger & Heath, 2007; White & Dahl, 2007). Furthermore, research has shown that youngsters specifically can be made to diverge from alcohol consumption if they feel socially threatened or that it portrays an unintended identity to the social environment (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Berger & Rand, 2008).

In Chapter 3: Impact Of Consumer and Social Psychology, we will look at how people partake differing mental frameworks for every situation and decision that they approach. Within the context of social environment and social approval, it is necessary to assess the acceptability of one’s actions by the society through the role of “subjective norms”. We will also consider how individuals perceive the environment and their own selves through the variables of “self-construal” and “psychological well-being”.
CHAPTER 3: IMPACT OF CONSUMER AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Most research in marketing has been borrowed from either psychology or economics. In most marketing papers, there exist ample discussions of psychological and socio-psychological concepts. Following in this vein, the third chapter of this thesis will go further into the realm of psychology.

As we have seen previously in the first two chapters, people differ in their individual needs and motivations, which is reflected in their behavior and social interactions. They associate with certain groups and brands which they prefer, while dissociating with certain others which portray a negative identity. This process of social categorization and association/dissociation is especially prevalent in young adults (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996), whose alcohol consumption is the focus of this research. Prior research has shown that identity constructions and group associations are significant in curbing alcohol consumption (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Berger & Rand, 2008).

In order to consider the social actions and motivations of these individuals, it is pertinent to understand the mental processes that go in the minds of consumers for indulging in actions, associating with groups, the acceptance of their actions by the social environment and their general satisfaction levels.

The first section of this chapter will consider the variables of “regulatory focus” and “self-construal” to see how individuals approach actions and decisions through their self-regulation goals and whether they construe themselves as individuals or as part of a group. This will help to ascertain individuals who have an approach/avoidance framework, and to differentiate between persons who rely on themselves against those who rely on others. Both these variables will have differentiating effects on the ways information is processed in the human mind. The second section will look at how the people and the environment around us shape our norms, attitudes, and a sense of well-being through the variables “subjective norms” and “psychological well-being”. These concepts will allow us to determine the extent of acceptability of one’s actions by the inner self and by those around them, both of which are pertinent in the context of social behaviors and health related studies. The last section of this chapter will conclude the theoretical framework by giving a detail on the behavioral consequents for intentions and behaviors, arising from the impact of all concepts discussed herein for the research model. These variables will allow us to determine whether individuals will accept the information presented to them, and how they intend to act on it. It is pertinent to know about their behavioral intentions, which will make it evident whether the intended effects of the proposed variables have been executed in the minds of the consumers.
A. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS

A.1 Regulatory Focus

According to past researchers, sociologists and psychologists, human beings are more likely to interact in an action or event when it leads to a possible feeling of pleasure. This has been termed generally in psychology as the hedonic principles. According to Thorndike (1935), when certain events led to feeling pleasure in the past they were repeated more often by the individuals, which he called “hedonism of the past”.

With regulatory focus, the emphasis is more on how individuals endeavor to reach a possible end-state. Most prior research has focused only on an approach motivation (Elliott & Harackiewicz, 1996), while neglecting a motivation to avoid situations. According to E. T. Higgins (1997), humans have differentiated needs for nurturing and protection, based on their desired end-states (see Figure 4). According to self-regulation theory, both nurturance and protection differ in their regulation by the self. The first involves a promotion focus while the second emphasizes on prevention (E. T. Higgins, 1997).

Promotion and prevention focus differ in how individuals aspire to reach their ideals, and how they believe they ought to behave. There are different individuals in a person’s life that influence the adoption of a promotion or prevention focus. These include the caretakers (parents, guardians) at the early stages of life, friends, teachers at school and at later stages, spouse, coworkers, employees (E. T. Higgins, 1997). The desired end-states for both foci differ; while promotion focused individuals prefer to pursue their aspirations and dreams, i.e. the attainment of positive outcomes, prevention focused individuals prefer to fulfill their responsibilities and ensure safety, i.e. avoid negative outcomes. The regulatory focus of an individual also has salient differences for decision making and emotions, which will be reviewed in the next section.
A.1.1 Promotion focus

Promotion focused goals influence a tendency to achieve an ideal self, and an overarching sensitivity to the presence or absence of positive outcomes (Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002). These individuals are motivated by a drive to achieve their dreams and aspirations in life (E. T. Higgins, 1997). They take actions to attain gains or successes in life. In this state, people recall information about the success of
others (T. Higgins & Tykocinski, 1992), and make strategies to attain similar success in life by following positive role models (Lockwood et al., 2002). These role models can include a star sportsman, an outperforming student or co-worker, a Nobel prize winner. Positive role models encourage the adoption of similar strategies to attain success, aspire people to be like them and personify how to realistically achieve desired selves (Lockwood et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 1996).

In a consumer behavior context, prior research has shown that regulatory focus influences product and brand choice, and decision making (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001). Promotion focused individuals intend to buy products that have more positive attributes such as enjoyment in the driving experience, enlivening the thrill of racing by and excellent handling of a Ferrari sports car. Promotion focused individuals are intent on capitalizing from opportunities available to them, and at times, even willing to accept risks to reach their desired states (Pham & Avnet, 2004). Amongst promotion focused consumers, persons who feel a strong level of pride would be more likely to indulge in repurchase decisions, intending to feel proud with the purchase opportunity provided by the same brand which has met their expectations satisfactorily (Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2005).

A.1.2 Prevention focus

Prevention focused individuals are driven to avoid adverse outcomes, and are sensitive to the presence or absence of negative events. They tend to avoid running in to any possible threats or hazardous situations (E. T. Higgins, 1997). These individuals take actions to avoid losses or failures in life (Lockwood et al., 2002). They recall information related to the losses or failures of other individuals in life and formulate plans to avoid similar losses, increasing their preference for negative role models who show specific negative outcomes to be avoided (Lockwood et al., 2002). For them, the role models can include people who were in an accident, AIDS patients and smokers suffering from cancer, or people who ran into bad fortune. Negative role models show strategies to avoid failure, illustrate possible undesired selves (Ogilvie, 1987) and show people how they can avoid reaching those outcomes (Lockwood et al., 2002).

The tendency of self-regulatory focus affects consumers’ choice of products and brands (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001). For instance, a prevention focused consumer would be more willing to purchase a safe, convenient car with minimal chances of speeding and accidents. Prevention focused individuals want to avoid any discrepancy with desired end states, which forces them to minimize risks and be more vigilant (Pham & Avnet, 2004). Proud prevention focused consumers would be apprehensive of repurchasing the same brands, in fear of a possible negative outcome or a possibility of more lucrative offers by alternative brands (Louro et al., 2005).
A.1.3 Regulatory focus as moderator of emotional tendency

Research has also found that the strength of regulatory focus moderates the intensity of pleasure or pain felt from emotions (E. T. Higgins, 1997). The attainment of desired end-states has been seen to influence greater cheerfulness and dejection in the respective presence and absence of promotion related goals. Similarly, acquiescence and dejection was felt respectively in the presence and absence of prevention goals (E. T. Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997).

Research has shown that regulatory focus is also affected by the self-construal that an individual possesses. There is a possible matching effect between regulatory focus and self-construal (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001). The self-construal for an individual is also determined differently based on varying cultures (such as American or Chinese cultures), which can act as an antecedent to regulatory focus (Angela Y Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000). The concept of self-construal will now be studied in more detail, to make these relationships and the concept itself clearer.

A.2 Self-Construal

North Americans and Asians are generally considered to be individualistic and collectivistic across different domains (Chen et al., 2014; H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Generally, it is believed that people in the West see themselves as more independent, unique, working in small teams or by themselves. On the flip side, non-westerners or people in the East perceive themselves to be more dependent on others, as they have to follow cultural norms and social rules (H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, these conceptualizations can be a hasty generalization at times with the onset of people moving across countries for education, work, marriage. In this, they gain from the new cultures and their internal concepts of individualism-collectivism can also evolve temporally with exposure to multiple cultures (Hannerz, 1996).

A more concrete and individual-level concept that allows for better segregation and understanding of persons is the “self-construal”. The concept of self is integral to understanding evaluations, decisions and perceptions (H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cultural norms, values, beliefs do indeed play a significant role in forming the self-image (Singelis, 1994). Self-construal is more focused on the formation of social connections, the relationship that people form with others and the degree to which they see themselves as among others, i.e. interdependent, or distinct from others, i.e. independent (H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It is specifically a collection of one’s thoughts, feelings and actions in relationship with other people around them, and keeping the self as distinct from other persons (Singelis, 1994). Although prior research has proposed individuals function as independent or interdependent based on their country (H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991), it is suggested that persons can be both independent or interdependent regardless of
their country of birth, origin, residence (Singelis, 1994). A description of both construal forms will follow next to clarify the differences between the two.

A.2.1 Independent self-construal
The independent self is considered stable and separate from social context. It includes: 1) internal abilities, thoughts, feelings; 2) uniqueness of self and being expressive; 3) realization of internal characteristics and promoting own self; and 4) conducting direct communication (Singelis, 1994). These refer to their own abilities and actions when thinking of themselves. They feel high self-esteem upon expressing and validating themselves (Singelis, 1994).

A.2.2 Interdependent self-construal
The interdependent self is more flexible and malleable than the independent self, with strong emphasis on: 1) public contests of status and relationships; 2) fitting in with others and groups; 3) occupying appropriate space for the self and taking proper actions; and 4) conducting indirect communication and trying to “read” others’ minds (Singelis, 1994). For these persons, the self and others are complementary and not distinct. They derive self-esteem from being harmonious in their relationships and being flexible in adjusting to various situations. These relationships and situations then become a part of the interdependent self (Singelis, 1994).

A.2.3 Self-construal in marketing literature
The role of self-construal has also been studied in the marketing and branding domain. Independent consumers strive for positive self-worth by indulging in actions to maintain a positive self-concept and identity (White et al., 2012). Interdependent consumers, on the other hand, fulfill their need for belongingness by employing multiple positive social identities (White et al., 2012). According to consumer behavior research, self-construal can lead to individual-level differences across people from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Angela Y Lee et al., 2000; H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). People with independent selves can distance themselves from outgroups, greater than interdependents, due to motives of differentiation and individuality (Kampmeier & Simon, 2001).

Brands allow individuals to meet their identity goals and express their selves both in public and private settings. Through consumption of brands and products, consumers are able to integrate with groups or assert their distinction from others (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998). Brands become linked to a consumer’s identity when they help the consumer achieve self-motivated goals, that of nurturing social integration or a construction of the self (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Consumers with an independent self focus more on their uniqueness and distinction from others. In contrast, interdependent persons are concerned more
about their social appearance and approval, and wish to conform to group norms (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; White et al., 2012; White & Dahl, 2007).

Self-construal has been shown to influence brand meaning (Escalas & Bettman, 2005), advertising appeals (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005), brand attitudes (Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007) and brand extensions (Ng & Houston, 2006). Independent individuals will attempt to distance themselves from brands and form weak connections with brands consumed by outgroups (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). For them, forming brand associations based on beliefs, such as “Samsung is durable” or “Apple is high quality”, is more accessible as they focus on individual traits (Ng & Houston, 2006). Independent people also prefer to consume brands that allow them to express their individuality and self-concept (Swaminathan et al., 2007). However, interdependent people would not react as strongly to distance or differentiate themselves from others, rather they are motivated to follow social norms and adopt multiple social identities (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Knowles & Gardner, 2008). Interdependents emphasize on contextuality and inter-relatedness so they use brand examples instead of beliefs as associations, such as Apple’s iPhone 7 and Samsung Galaxy S8 (Ng & Houston, 2006). They prefer to consume brands based on group level salience, such as national identity or country-of-origin (Swaminathan et al., 2007). In the context of advertising, ad appeals that are consistent with an individual’s self-construal are more persuasive in nature (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005).
B. SOCIOLOGICAL VARIABLES

B.1 Subjective Norms

According to Oxford University Press (2017), “norm” is defined as “something that is usual and typical”, and a “standard or pattern of social behavior that is expected of a group”. Subjective norms have been studied in numerous studies of behavior, health, psychology, marketing (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001; Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008; Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; White & Simpson, 2013).

Subjective norm is a central topic in research models employing rational choice and cognition for behavior. Behavior theorists have employed subjective norms as a critical component for predicting behavior, behavior change and the process of learning. Models such as theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), norm activation model (Schwartz & Howard, 1981), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) have employed subjective norms in varying ways to explain behavior.

B.1.1 Norms in social psychology

Subjective norm is an integral theme in social psychology and has been extensively used for the theory of planned behavior and theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein, 1979). According to theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), people form intentions to adapt a behavior before actually indulging in the behavior or behavior change. These intentions arise from behavioral and normative beliefs. While the behavioral beliefs influence attitudes towards the behavior, normative beliefs affect the individual’s norms concerning the behavior. This theory was then extended to include perceived behavioral control (see Figure 5), after which it came to be known as theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The individual perception of having greater resources and opportunities has an impact on the perceived behavioral control. When people believe they have less control over their behavior, their intentions to perform a behavior and the probability to indulge in that behavior would decline. Behavioral control would influence behavior intentions and behavior, even in the presence of positive attitude and favorable subjective norms toward the behavior (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992).
Subjective norms are defined as “perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform a behavior” (Ajzen, 1991). Analytically, subjective norms comprise the sum of all normative beliefs that a person forms.
over his/her life and is the measure of how much “important others” would approve or disapprove of indulging in a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It has also been suggested that in certain situations where a person’s morality might be called into question, such as cheating on an exam or shoplifting, personal or moral norms should be preferred. This construct would allow measuring personal moral obligation or responsibility instead of just perceived social pressure (Ajzen, 1991).

B.1.2 Norms in marketing

In the domain of marketing, norms have been used predominantly for two streams of research: in a consumption context and sustainable consumer behavior. For sustainable consumer behaviors, norms have been used as an appeal for persuading persons towards responsible behaviors (Goldstein et al., 2008; White & Simpson, 2013). This stream research has focused on identifying which kind of normative appeal works best when influencing individuals towards responsible behaviors such as water consumption, waste conservation and grasscycling (Goldstein et al., 2008; White & Simpson, 2013). Using normative appeals based on descriptive norms influences consumers to shift their behavior towards more sustainable approaches. Descriptive norms are aimed at informing individuals about which actions are more effective in a situation. Furthermore, using provincial norms, i.e. norms of similar individuals in the same situation, such as “people who stayed in the same hotel room as yours” has a greater impact than other normative appeals based on gender, nationality, citizenship (Goldstein et al., 2008). This is in line with similar research suggesting that people adapt and change their responses to situations based on the behavior of others in similar circumstances (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Some authors have looked at the comparative influence of descriptive and injunctive norms on individuals’ actions. While descriptive norms outline how other people act, injunctive norms describe what others approve or disapprove (White & Simpson, 2013).

In a consumption context, researchers have considered subjective norms as an antecedent to commitment, specifically normative commitment (Bansal, Irving, & Taylor, 2004; Shukla et al., 2016). These studies have considered subjective norms as how important other people consider a behavior desirable or undesirable, reflecting the perceived social pressure felt from these people (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The presence of favorable social pressure from others, for consumption of a particular brand, would influence people to keep using the same brands instead of switching to another alternative (Bansal et al., 2004). This behavioral pattern has been observed for different classes of brands, including luxury and non-luxury (Shukla et al., 2016). The presence of subjective norms reinforces conformity in purchase decisions and brand consumption, leading to possible bandwagon effects (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014).
Besides subjective norms, another similar concept which is frequently used is the “consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence”. This concept was first introduced by Bearden et al. (1989) and has been used extensively ever since. Defined as the “need to identify with or enhance one’s image in the opinion of significant others through product and brand use”, it also includes conforming to others’ expectations and gathering information about products/services favored by others (Bearden et al., 1989). This concept has been used by other researchers to assess the normative influence of other consumers in luxury consumption and bandwagon effects (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014), as well as the impact on environmental behaviors (Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014).

As compared with subjective norms, susceptibility to interpersonal influence can be a possible consequent of social norms and is more applicable in the context of products and brand usage. As this research focuses more on health, anti-consumption, dis-identification and persuasive behaviors, employing the concept of subjective norms is more relevant in this regard (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Albarracin et al., 2001).

B.2 Psychological Well-Being

Over time, there have been different conceptualizations of the well-being construct. Researchers have aimed to include multiple constructs within this broad measure. The concept of subjective well-being (SWB) has been studied vastly to include global judgements of mood, life satisfaction, hedonism, and self-realization. Subjective well-being includes an individual’s personal assessment of his/her life and not based on an expert’s evaluation (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2009). The study of well-being started in the 20th century with attempts to measure happiness, with a breakthrough attained through Bradburn (1969)’s work showing that affect valence (positive/negative) differentially impacts subjective well-being.

The concept of well-being is important due to a multitude of reasons. Firstly, well-being leads to numerous benefits, including among others satisfaction, good health, longevity, and happiness. Second, the concepts of satisfaction, well-being and happiness have established their significance in research being conducted all over the world. For policymakers, it is an additional measure besides the mainstream objective socio-economic indicators of GDP/GNP and crime rates to assess the quality of life for a nation’s citizens. Lastly, the validity of this construct has been tested on people belonging to multiple age groups, such as the elderly, students, adolescents (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009; Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009).
B.2.1 Components of well-being

The well-being construct has evolved over time to include multiple components within itself. The first works started by including positive and negative affect within the measurement of subjective well-being (Bradburn, 1969). Many authors have endorsed this view by saying that affective evaluations form an integral part of a person’s well-being (Frijda, Kuipers, & Ter Schure, 1989; Kahneman, 2003). Some researchers have tried to explore motivational properties of a few basic/primary emotions (Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1992), which have been highlighted in Figure 6. Some researchers have also looked at the dimensionality of emotions by adding pleasantness, arousal, intensity, frequency of the emotions felt (Larsen & Diener, 1987; Russell, 1980; Watson et al., 1988). However, there have been some problems in the measurement of emotions from self-reports by individuals and regarding intensity of emotions (Ekman, 2007; Larsen & Diener, 1987). It is rare to experience intense emotions and people who do so are just as likely to experience intensely both positive and negative emotions (Larsen & Diener, 1987). To resolve these issues, researchers have found it useful to include life satisfaction within the well-being measure. However, life satisfaction is prone to being assessed based on irrelevant factors like weather or time of day at the time of measuring well-being, and it can also be influenced by current mood (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009). It has also been found that individuals sometimes use comparative information about similar persons, such as income and job satisfaction, to assess life satisfaction levels. Although life satisfaction is evaluated subjectively by individuals in its assessment, it has proved its worth as a general assessment of well-being (Diener, 1994; Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009). The fourth component of domain satisfaction includes satisfaction of individuals with specific parts of life, such as marriage, work, family. Ideally, the aggregation of domain satisfaction would lead to overall life satisfaction, however the process and weighting of each domain varies for individuals. Although domain satisfaction does not entail overall life satisfaction, it can still give unique information about a person such as the importance of job or marriage for that person in assessing overall life satisfaction (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009). Figure 6 below presents all components of life satisfaction as discussed above.
**B.2.2 Psychological well-being**

A similar concept that has been employed in health marketing is the concept of psychological well-being. According to Netz, Wu, Becker, and Tenenbaum (2005), psychological well-being is a complex phenomenon (Gauvin & Spence, 1996), which has also been studied for the elderly (McAuley & Rudolph, 1995; Rejeski & Mihalko, 2001; Spirduso & Cronin, 2001; Stewart & King, 1991). Netz et al. (2005) proposed four components of well-being: (1) emotional well-being, (2) self-perceptions (i.e., self-efficacy, self-worth, self-esteem, self-concept), (3) physical well-being (i.e., pain and perception of physical symptoms), and (4) global perceptions such as life-satisfaction and overall well-being (McAuley & Rudolph, 1995; Spirduso & Cronin, 2001; Stewart & King, 1991). This finding supports Rejeski and Mihalko...
Ryff and Keyes (1995) argue that the study of psychological well-being has focused on two conceptions of positive functioning. The first formulation, attributable to Bradburn (1969) in a seminal work distinguishing between positive and negative affect, defined happiness and well-being as a balance between the two spectrums of affect. The second conception, more commonly used by sociologists, emphasizes on life satisfaction as an indicator of well-being. Considered as a cognitive component, life satisfaction was considered as a complement to happiness, which represented a greater affective component for positive functioning (Andrews & McKennell, 1980; Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). Still other studies have considered well-being as a global conception of overall life satisfaction and other components including work, income, social relationships, and neighborhood (Andrews & Robinson, 1991; Diener, 1994).

Psychological well-being is based on the idea of satisfying universal human needs as defined by multiple theorists (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Richard M Ryan & Edward L Deci, 2000; Richard M. Ryan & Edward L. Deci, 2000; Ryff, 1989). While subjective well-being includes people’s evaluation of their life, psychological well-being is representative of optimal functioning of humans. It broadly includes an assessment of the following concepts: 1) meaning and purpose; 2) rewarding relationships; 3) being engaged and interested; 4) contributing to the well-being of others; 5) competency and being optimistic; 6) self-acceptance and 7) being respected (Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009). This construct has contributed to existing psychological well-being by adding components like engagement and optimism. Engagement and flow have been proven to be necessary components of well-being and psychological capital (M Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Well-being also comprises feeling engaged, pleased, meaningful and optimistic, all of which are necessary for healthy functioning (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2004). The need for feeling respected and contributing to the well-being of others have already been proven by psychologists to be basic human needs that also contribute to health (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Maslow, 1943).

The concept of psychological well-being is even more relevant for the current research as it deals with human decision making, health and social behaviors, all of which refer more to a psychological assessment of well-being than subjective or purely physical well-being. The use of this concept is also justified considering the components involved are parsimonious and comprehensive in their predictability based on results from another study (Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009).
C. BEHAVIORAL VARIABLES AND CONSEQUENTS

C.1 Persuasion

There exist two persuasion models which have been more commonly studied in the field of persuasion and communication. These include the “elaboration likelihood model” (ELM) and “heuristic systematic processing” model of information processing (HSM). The HSM states that individuals process information either through heuristics or systematically and critically analyzing the information (Chaiken, 1980). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, heuristics are defined as “a way of solving problems by discovering yourselves and learning from your experiences”, while Kahneman (2011) defines heuristics as a “rule of thumb” or “rules of processing”. According to the ELM, there are two ways in which people consider and process any information presented to them: 1) the central route, which involves careful thought and consideration, coupled with an enduring impact on persuasion; and 2) peripheral route, where individuals are persuaded more by peripheral cues such as length of the argument and credibility of the source, which are less related to the logic of the information presented (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

C.1.1 Persuasion in health marketing

The significance of identifying effective ways through which health communications can be impactful is increasing by the day. Public health advertising is gaining more ground as producers of food and beverages, including unhealthy and harmful ones, have started to reach out to children and adolescents (Kelly et al., 2010; Li et al., 2016). These advertisements are targeting children because of their influence on parents in purchase decisions and treat them as future adult consumers, all of which is implemented through the use of multiple marketing channels such as television, the Internet, in-school marketing (Story & French, 2004).

According to some authors, little research has been done in marketing to enhance the persuasiveness of health communications, with most work being done on ads that endorse consumption of brands and products rather than anti-consumption (Lauren G. Block & Keller, 1997). While research has proven that complexity of an ad (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra) and its episodic nature (Loewenstein, Raghunathan, & Heath, 2011) can impact attention and attitude towards an ad, these variables do not have the same impact on the target audience of health based communication (Lauren G. Block & Keller, 1997). In persuasive communication targeted towards health marketing, researchers have previously used negative affect to improve persuasion (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Morales et al., 2012). However, it has been seen that negative affect is more persuasive when individuals experience low self-efficacy and conduct in-depth processing of the information presented (L. G. Block & Keller, 1995). The usage of vivid
imagery in advertising has also been shown to improve persuasiveness, albeit at varying levels for different age groups (Rothenberg, 1991). In the context of health advertising, vividness of ad imagery has a greater impact when individuals feel more vulnerable to the mentioned disease (Rook, 1987) and when they perceive a higher level of self-efficacy (Lauren G. Block & Keller, 1997).

C.1.2 Processing of persuasive health communication

In marketing and persuasion literature, scholars have studied the impact of psychological processes on message acceptance and persuasion. The acceptance of a message depends on varying factors, based on the self-regulation goals. Promotion focused individuals rely more on the affective responses generated by the message, whereas prevention focused place more emphasis on message content (Pham & Avnet, 2004). It has also been shown that when promotion focused individuals see a positively framed message they are more likely to be persuaded by the message. Conversely, prevention focused individuals are more likely persuaded by messages focusing on negative features such as social disapproval (Zhao & Pechmann, 2007).

Further, research has shown that there is a match between efficacy levels, coping strategy and construal levels. Specifically, different coping strategies are activated when consumers are exposed to health ads or manipulations which trigger stress (Agrawal & Wan, 2009). Individuals cope with this stress either by resolving the problem or through alleviating emotional responses generated from the situation (Han et al., 2016; Lazarus & Folkman, 1986). When problem-focused coping is paired with low-level construal, i.e. concrete details, and self-efficacy perceptions, this results in higher message effectiveness. Similarly, emotion-focused coping fares better when matched with a high-level construal, i.e. more abstract details, and response efficacy perceptions (Han et al., 2016). For environmental behaviors, some researchers have also shown a congruency between message frame and construal levels, such that a loss framed message is more persuasive when construed with concrete details, while showing grand, abstract gains like saving the planet results in higher persuasion (White, MacDonnell, & Dahl, 2011).

In order for any information to be persuasive, it has to be accessible and diagnostic (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). According to this, any information presented to an individual has to be considered understandable, upon which its relevance to the person will be considered before processing it (Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). Hence, in order to be persuasive, the message presented should be accessible, diagnostic and in line with self-regulatory goals of the individual (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Pham & Avnet, 2004).
C.2 Purchase Intentions

According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), intentions comprise a central factor and are a good predictor of actual behavior. Intentions are shaped through attitudes toward the behavior as well as normative influence from the people around you (friends, family, peers). These intentions encompass the motivation for indulging in a behavior, i.e. how much effort would an individual put in to perform the concerned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Generally, stronger intentions to indulge in any behavior should increase the probability of its actual execution. Some reputed scholars have also suggested that prior to indulging in a behavior, behavioral intentions are the strongest predictor of actual behavior, even more so than attitude towards the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

There can be an inconsistency between intending to indulge in a behavior versus executing the behavior. A study by LaPiere (1934) suggests a contradiction between people’s intentions and their behavior. This is possible because the individuals forgot about it, a significant time lag occurred between intention formation and actual behavior, or the formation of unstable intentions over time (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). A way to close the gap between intentions and behavior is to form what is called an “implementation intention” (Gollwitzer, 1999). Asking people about concrete details of the behavior, such as when, how, where they will carry out the formed intentions increases the likelihood of performing the behavior. Forming an implementation intention activates a mental representation of a specific situation and makes it chronically accessible in memory (Gollwitzer, 1999). Implementation intentions are more effective because of the enhanced memory recall through specifying concrete details about the behavior. When consumers delineate explicit details about how to carry out an action, this adds a sense of commitment and increases the likelihood of carrying out that action/behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

C.2.1 Health marketing literature

The domain of this research is within the context of health marketing and to assess ways in which purchase intentions can be decreased for a pernicious product. In this context, it is pertinent to study purchase intentions with the aim of curbing future purchases. In marketing literature, anti-consumption is defined as being “against consumption”, different from alternative forms of consumption (M. S. W. Lee, K. V. Fernandez, et al., 2009). This stream of research (including the current research) focuses more on reasons to avoid consumption of a product or brand. This issue was raised in a recent special issue of the Journal of Business Research (M. S. W. Lee, K. V. Fernandez, et al., 2009) and is becoming a rising research domain. According to the editors, it is equally important to understand the reasons for anti-consumption as it is to study consumers’ pro-consumption behaviors. Just as doctors and scientists need to understand
what are the things that cause illness, it is imperative for marketing scholars to understand the anti-thesis for consumption (M. S. W. Lee, K. V. Fernandez, et al., 2009).

In a health marketing context, prior marketing scholars have argued that purchase intentions can result from higher efficacy perceptions of an individual (P. A. Keller, 2006). Specifically, people with a promotion focus are concerned more whether an action is an easy means to a desired end state, i.e. high self-efficacy. In contrast, persons with a prevention focus would be more concerned whether the action will be effective, i.e. high response efficacy. These regulatory-efficacy fit perceptions would enhance the intentions to perform a healthy behavior (P. A. Keller, 2006).

Some researchers have also worked on cigarette and alcohol consumption to study the factors which lead to purchase intentions (Pechmann & Knight, 2002; Shiu et al., 2009). They found that seeing an anti-smoking ad alongside an ad promoting cigarettes would result in negative stereotypes and intentions to smoke for adolescents. This is because the negative thoughts resulting from anti-smoking ads can be easily recalled and causes viewers to look for unfavorable evidence on smokers. Once such evidence is found, it results in lower smoking intentions (Pechmann & Knight, 2002). In a similar vein, marketing scholars have suggested that the entire marketing mix needs to be revamped in order to influence consumers’ attitudes towards a specific product category such as alcohol or cigarettes, both as an industry and as a habit, to reinforce their intentions to quit over time (Shiu et al., 2009). Governments have tried to curb cigarette and alcohol consumption by considering factors in isolation, however the 4Ps of marketing need to be considered to make a holistic and comprehensive attitude change. Over a period of 10 months, researchers found that an elicitation of the four marketing Ps (product, place, price, promotion) for de-marketing cigarette consumption led to negative attitudes toward smoking and intentions to quit (Shiu et al., 2009). Within the domain of alcohol consumption, some researchers have employed negative emotions triggering social threat to influence attitudes and alcohol consumption (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). These authors used social emotions of fear, guilt and shame to influence negative perceptions regarding alcohol in a social context, which is pertinent in the case of young adults. They found that shame arising from a social threat of consuming alcohol results in the highest level of persuasion (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014).

Besides using threat and risk perceptions, some scholars have tried alternative approaches to guide people towards healthy behaviors. Research has suggested that identity perceptions and signaling can be used to shift people’s intentions and behavior (Berger & Rand, 2008). Most health research has focused on using risky behaviors and risk avoidance strategies, ignoring identity salience and social marketing.
A research conducted recently found that using identity cues and an aversive social identity can shift people’s behavior towards healthier choices (Berger & Rand, 2008). When individuals were asked to associate alcohol consumption with identities that they wanted to avoid, they sought to avoid signaling that identity to others by reducing the consumption of alcohol. Another interesting finding is based on the shape of the container used for consumption. Research has found that people pour a greater quantity of drink based on the elongation of the glass (Wansink & Van Ittersum, 2003). In one study conducted at a bar, bartenders poured more alcohol to their consumers in a short, wide glass as opposed to a tall, wide glass, leading to possible greater consumption for people drinking in shorter glasses.

C.3 Word of Mouth

The intention to share an experience with other beings is a core characteristic of all living kind. It stems from a tendency to associate oneself with others and to relive the same experience with others (Argo, Dahl, & Morales, 2008; Hinde & Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel, 1984). Researchers have looked extensively at this willingness to share an experience or any information gained with others. The different terms that have been used to define this sharing intention include word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions (Nyffenegger et al., 2015), consumer contagion (Argo et al., 2008), sharing intentions (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Shukla et al., 2016).

C.3.1 Defining WOM and similar concepts

According to Nyffenegger et al. (2015), word-of-mouth includes any action or intention to recommend the brand to others. Many studies have shown that word-of-mouth is caused by satisfaction, trust and commitment (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gremler, Gwinner, & Brown, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The impact of trust is accentuated by the need to reduce the risk of giving a bad recommendation (Mazzarol, Sweeney, & Soutar, 2007). Besides these relational constructs, the feeling of love towards a brand has also been shown to generate positive word-of-mouth for the brand (Albert et al., 2007; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Since consumers strongly identify with brands as their possessions and a part of their identity (R. Belk, 1988; Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005), talking about brands contributes to the identity construction process (Batra et al., 2012; Holt, 1997). However, some authors have argued that WOM is more objective and based on cognitive processing rather than affective feelings towards the brand (Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Westbrook, 1987). They propose that affective feelings give limited rational arguments for patronage of a brand (Nyffenegger et al., 2015) and these affective feelings can
only be shared with a few people (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993), thus restricting the potential net of sharing the brand with others.

The concept of word-of-mouth has been extended to online domains by using the term “electronic” word-of-mouth (eWOM). eWOM is defined as word-of-mouth communication conducted over the internet through online forums, bulletin boards, online review sites and social media (Floyd, Freling, Alhoqail, Cho, & Freling, 2014; Goldsmith, 2006). In comparison with conventional WOM, eWOM is more accessible globally, is produced mostly in written form and can be moderated or controlled by retailers and website designers (Floyd et al., 2014). eWOM is not structurally the same as WOM, as it can also occur when the exchange is not necessarily a conversation, such as reading a product review posted by someone on Amazon.com (Berger, Sorensen, & Rasmussen, 2010; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Some researchers have considered another concept which is similar to word-of-mouth but lies more in the domain of social influence. According to them, the attractiveness of other consumers affects the willingness to share and consume the same products (Argo et al., 2008). When individuals see an attractive person of the opposite sex trying a product, they want to try and purchase the same product because of a “positive contagion”. According to anthropologists, when a person touches an object, they transfer some of their properties through the touched object to the recipient of the object and this can raise product evaluations (Rozin, Markwith, & McCauley, 1994; Rozin & Nemeroff, 1990). In contrast, the contagion effect also works in the opposite direction when consumers feel a product has been “contaminated” because other individuals have touched it and or an undesired product came in contact with it. This consequently leads to negative evaluations and purchase intentions for the “contaminated” products (Argo, Dahl, & Morales, 2006; Morales & Fitzsimons, 2007).

Sharing or advocacy intention, is defined as willingness to recommend a brand or a piece of information to others (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Shukla et al., 2016). People share stories, brands, experiences, information because they contain valuable information or experiences for the individual. Through sharing it with others, the persons want to be perceived as someone who shares their experiences and makes others feel good (Berger & Milkman, 2012). Individuals are also motivated to act as brand advocates, because sharing the brand with others will enhance the perception of other people about the brands that a person uses. These sharing intentions often succeed a positive experience with the brand (Shukla et al., 2016).

In a product or service context, the extent to which the said relationship with a brand meets the consumers’ expectations motivates them to share the positive brand experience with others (De Matos
& Rossi, 2008). However, the scope of this research is not on consumption of a brand, rather it focuses more on brand dis-identification, anti-consumption and sharing of information. A more recent and general definition of word-of-mouth conceptualizes it as “an interactive exchange of information between two or more individuals that is not commercially motivated” (Baker, Donthu, & Kumar, 2016). This definition has been based on a historic WOM definition from marketing literature (Arndt, 1967). It includes as a necessary component the interactive exchange of conversation between two humans and excludes eWOM because of its selective focus on electronic sharing and not humanly conversations (Baker et al., 2016). The current research will aim to extend this definition for information learnt and shared with others. Hence, this research will define WOM as consumers “wanting to act on the information presented [to them] by sharing it with others”.

Word of mouth has been shown to have an impact on product adoption and sales (Berger & Milkman, 2012), specifically for purchase intentions, message transmission and retransmission intentions (Baker et al., 2016). Purchase intentions can be considered as the motivation to eventually purchase the brand discussed in the WOM conversational exchange (Baker et al., 2016). Retransmission intention is the desire to share with another person the content of the WOM communication message. WOM transmission or message transmission is a similar concept which includes sharing the information of a product/service experience rather than message content, heard vicariously through the experiences of another (Angelis, Bonezzi, Peluso, Rucker, & Costabile, 2012; Berger & Milkman, 2012)

C.3.2 Valence of WOM

WOM valence is also noteworthy while considering WOM because positive and negative content instigate an approach/avoidance response, leading to positive or negative WOM (Baker et al., 2016; Berger & Milkman, 2012; Berger et al., 2010; Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010). Positive WOM increases brand purchase and referrals, while negative WOM inhibits purchase intentions and brand related behaviors (Ryu & Feick, 2007). It is interesting to note that negative WOM has a greater impact on consumers than positive WOM (East, Hammond, & Lomax, 2008), because of the differing weights assigned to loss and gain frames by persons (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991).

People with high self-enhancement needs discuss the brand experience in a negative light when the experience is conducted vicariously (Angelis et al., 2012). There is, however, a greater tendency for positive WOM to promote the self-enhancement goals of being interesting, informative and presenting a positive identity to others (Baker et al., 2016; Berger & Milkman, 2012). Negative and ambivalent WOM is also more commonly shared than neutral WOM because of the level of intrigue and information of the
content, and it still allows to attain some of the self-enhancement goals albeit at the cost of lower purchase intentions (Baker et al., 2016).

**CONCLUSION**

In order to better understand social relations and interactions, the presence and importance of psychological variables needs to be studied in detail. Specifically, why consumers indulge in certain actions and avoid other actions is of interest for marketing researchers, and has been studied in detail in this chapter within the construct of “regulatory focus”. It allows to determine whether individuals prefer an approach or avoidance frame when making decisions, based on their self-regulatory goals of promotion or prevention. This will help us to categorize consumers as people who prefer to be promotion focused and aspirational when consuming brands, or those who prefer to be responsible and prevention focused. Further, the role of self-construals has also been assessed to see whether individuals consider themselves as an independent person or as part of a larger group of people (i.e. interdependent). A person’s self-construal and regulatory focus will collectively influence the impact of affect laden messages and have a greater impact for consumers to dis-identify with the brand, which we discussed in Self-Disidentification and will see again in hypotheses development.

We also looked at the variable of “subjective norms” to assess how the norms and beliefs in a society would affect an individual’s actions. This is relevant in the context of associating with groups and dissociating with others. Further, this will have an even greater impact for younger consumers, who are highly concerned about their social perceptions and approval (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Berger & Rand, 2008). Lastly, an assessment of well-being is important in any research lying within the health domain, as health studies aim for a better well-being and life satisfaction of humanity (Diener, 1994; Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009).

The current chapter concluded by discussing behavioral intentions through WOM, persuasion and purchase intentions. These variables are necessary to assess the impact of the research on viewers and the target audience, i.e. young consumers. It is pertinent for us as researchers to be able to assess whether individuals are persuaded to act and change their behaviors as a consequence of the factors discussed in this research. We have detailed these through a person’s level of persuasion and acceptance of message, their purchase intentions which for the current research implies consumption of alcohol, as well as how willing they would be to spread the message to others. These variables are necessary as they assess the
consumer’s willingness to stop his/her own consumption as well as ask others to do the same within a social context.

This brings us to a conclusion of the first part of this thesis, where we discussed in detail the relevant concepts for the purposes of this research. In the succeeding part of this research thesis, we will go into detail regarding the specific relationships between the different variables along with a map of the conceptual model, and the preferred method of data collection and analysis.
PART 2 - RESEARCH PROJECT

In the preceding chapters, we have considered a detailed review of the literature conducted on the domains of identification, forming relations with brands and dis-identifying with brands. We also learnt how consumers’ goals and self-perceptions influence these decisions and how it shapes behavioral intentions. In the next parts of this thesis, we will try to create links between all the concepts discussed herein to visualize an integrative model. Building on this, we will go in more concrete detail as to the proposed methodology, data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND MODEL

This chapter will aim to explain further the choice of selected variables and the existing research gaps. This will be followed by the research hypothesis connecting the links between all variables.

A. VARIABLES

The explanation of variables will be conducted in a way similar to the literature review. This will start with the identification antecedents, relational variables for the self and brands, the impact of moderators and lastly, behavioral variables.

A.1 Identification antecedents

Chapter 1: Antecedents Of Identification discussed in detail the different ways through which people process affect, and identify with those around them. Research on affect and cognition has been mostly focused on persuasion models, while ignoring the impetus for these affective and cognitive processes. Researchers have tried to understand the routes and methods through which people process and store information (Chaiken, 1980; Kahneman, 2003; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991).

Marketing scholars have even gone as far to differentiate between different terms used to describe affective responses (see Table 1 for an overview) and differentiate between mood, emotion, feeling (Bagozzi et al., 1999). The work on affect has been conducted extensively to the extent of differentiating between different kinds of affective responses such as joy, fear, shame, guilt (Ekman, 1992, 2007) and how they influence behavior and attitudes (Frijda, 1987, 2009; Griskevicius, Shiota, & Nowlis, 2010; Lazarus, 2001). There also exist works on how affect and cognition work in the human mind while processing information (Forgas, 1995; Kahneman, 2003, 2011). Even though researchers have identified different levels of emotion (Izard, 1992), there exists confusion in measuring these as we still do not know
their exact origin. This research intends to fill this gap by suggesting that the motivation to pursue affect varies for each individual, which has an impact on how they process information. The variable called the “need for affect” (Haddock et al., 2008; Maio & Esses, 2001) intends to measure this willingness to approach affect. Although conceptually similar to affect intensity (Larsen & Diener, 1987), affective orientation (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1990) and positive and negative affect (Watson et al., 1988), it is sufficiently distinct in its nomological net (Maio & Esses, 2001). This concept accounts for individual level differences in the perception of affect, and includes both an approach and an avoidance frame. Both these features make this an innovative concept which has not been tested extensively in past research.

Further, the ability to associate and relate with individuals has long been discussed in psychology through the social identity theory (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel, 1984). However there exists very little work on people’s willingness to dissociate with a group (White & Dahl, 2007). This research intends to look at the factors which cause people to avoid certain reference groups and how they go about doing it. Furthermore, these aversive actions are done to promote a positive version of the self. Associating or dissociating with groups helps individuals in the identity construction process and signaling the desired identity to others (Berger & Heath, 2008; White et al., 2012). This research is unique in its aim of looking at how people interact with dissociative reference groups to build a positive sense of self and identity (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986). Although there exists some research on identity signaling and divergence in the context of health (Berger & Rand, 2008), however they did not consider the relations that people form with brands which we will now discuss.

**A.2 Brand relations**

The need for affect and dissociative reference groups act as antecedents for the identification process. Once consumers assess the affective motivational need and the need to dissociate from certain groups, they then decide how to shape their relations with brands.

It has been shown previously in
Chapter 2: Consumers And Their Brands, that consumers form relationships with brands similar to interpersonal relationships. They also form meaningful connections with brands showing the extent to which the brand has been insinuated within the self (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Based on identification antecedents and connections with brands, we then see how consumers dis-identify with brands.

Prior research on self-brand connection has only considered it within a consumption context and not within the domain of health (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). The research on BRQ has been mostly considered for brand personality and anthropomorphism (J. Aaker et al., 2004), social media usage (Hudson et al., 2016), relational marketing (Fournier, 2009) and self-image (Kressmann et al., 2006). No research exists to date which has considered the role of BRQ within the domains of health, persuasion, and anti-consumption. Past research on dis-identification in marketing has studied different forms of dis-identification (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Josiassen, 2011; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; White & Dahl, 2007), with the exception of only one work showing consumers’ disidentification with brands (Wolter et al., 2016).

Within the context of this research, the process of identity construction leads to an assessment of the connection and identification with brands. Since we are looking at how to dissociate consumers from alcohol drinkers, this would lead to a weakened self-brand connection and disidentification with the brand. For consumers who already have formed some relationship with brands, they will also consider their prior relationship with the brand (BRQ). Specifically, while disidentifying with the brand, alcohol users who have a strong relationship with a brand (for example, Heineken) could be unwilling to strongly disidentify with the brand (Heineken) because of their existing strong relationship.

A.3 Moderating variables

The moderating variables of the current research influence how consumer process the information presented to them, in addition to the antecedents. The moderators of self-construal and regulatory focus affect how individuals perceive themselves within the society and their mental frame while approaching certain decisions. Subjective norms influence the perceptions of how desirable a person’s actions are for the people in the environment. Psychological well-being relates to an optimal psychological functioning and satisfaction with life.

This research proposes that there will be a matching effect between the regulatory focus and self-construal which would influence the identification process (see section B.2 Self-construal and regulatory focus for details). Past research has shown that matching the regulatory focus and self-construal of the
portrayed message with the respondents’ preferred self-regulation and self-construal improves message persuasion and acceptance levels (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; P. A. Keller, 2006; White et al., 2012; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). The variables for psychological well-being and subjective norms will influence the impact of dis-identification on persuasion and behavioral variables, as these are an individual’s independent assessment of the self and the evaluative judgments of people for one’s own actions.

A.4 Behavioral variables

The main dependent variables for this research are based on message acceptance and behavioral intentions. In section C.1 Persuasion, various models for persuasion were discussed along with the factors that affect attitude and persuasion. The same factors that make a regular ad appealing for viewers cannot be considered for health communications. For health marketing, a message that is in accordance with the viewer’s regulatory goals and self-construal has a greater impact (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). Further, viewers also assess the relevance and understandability of the content presented to them (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). We have chosen the variable for persuasiveness of the ad to assess how much of an impact the message has for its viewers.

This research also uses two other constructs to assess whether individuals actually intend to change their behavior after persuasion. Although some researchers have suggested that intentions may not result in actual behavior, however specifically asking people about how they will act improves the stability and predictability of the measure (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The second behavioral construct in our model will be that of purchase intentions, based on implementation intentions of quitting alcohol consumption.

Furthermore, since the research is based on social settings and the social environment, message persuasion will also be assessed based on how willing the individuals willing be to share this information with others. This will include the intention to act on the specified behavior by sharing the information and experience with others in your social circle.
B. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In the previous section, we have developed a reasoning for the selection of the chosen variables for this research. The aim of this section is to mobilize the variables as discussed before in PART 1 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK and the section on Variables to understand the relationships between them. This will also include building and understanding a comprehensive research model which contains the links between the variables involved as per this research.

B.1 Antecedents of identification

In the section titled Need for Affect, we have seen how individuals process and accept information differentially. Research has shown that people prefer to rely on their affective responses to situations, judgment decisions and interactions more often than not (Kahneman, 2011). They do this because this kind of response is more instinctive and natural, than thinking hard and in detail, i.e. systematic processing (Chaiken, 1980; Kahneman, 2011).

People rely on their affective processes and responses frequently, but the individual motivation for this reliance varies for everyone. The need to experience affect differs for each person based on the motivation they feel to approach or avoid emotions, be they positive or negative affective experiences (Andrade & Cohen, 2007; Maio & Esses, 2001). It measures individual level motivation to approach or avoid affect. Individuals experiencing a high need for affect have a greater impulse to act on their affective responses (Haddock et al., 2008; Kahneman, 2011; Maio & Esses, 2001). It consists of the individual desire to experience and understand affect (one’s own and that of others) in a better way. This need also comprises an underlying belief that emotions are useful in forming judgments, attitudes and behavior, leading to affective processing (Forgas, 1995).

Affective needs play a large role in shaping attitudes, choices and actions (Forgas, 1995; Haddock & Huskinson, 2004). They also influence the way we interact with products, brands and our consumption patterns (Westbrook, 1987). Individuals high in need for affect are more receptive of affective information; they are able to relate with and recognize more information from an affective message (Haddock et al., 2008). An affective message has been shown to influence high need for affect individuals greatly towards healthy behaviors (Conner, Rhodes, Morris, McEachan, & Lawton, 2011). Previously, research has shown that people high in need for affect pursue the fulfilment of positive emotions from an affective message (Haddock et al., 2008). Hence, when they see an affective message portraying a
brand or product that gets in the way of experiencing affect, they would have a strong impulse to put some distance between them and the brand.

**H1: Individuals high in need for affect would be more receptive to affective ad messages portraying brands as getting in the way of experiencing affect. They would want to experience greater affect by putting some distance between them and the brands through brand disidentification.**

In a similar way, the need for dissociating varies for individuals similar to their need for uniqueness and divergence (Ariely & Levav, 2000; Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Brewer, 1991). According to social identity theory (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel, 1984), people form perceptions of different social groups and then wish to associate or dissociate with certain groups. They then compare the member groups with other (non-member) groups and being a member of the current group improves their self-esteem (Tajfel, 1979, 1984). These group memberships are also a way of signaling your desired identity. Individuals distance or dissociate themselves from groups with whom they do not wish to be associated with and that signal an undesired self (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Ogilvie, 1987).

Individuals strive to portray a positive version of themselves through both the individual and the social self, which imparts a positive self-worth (Dunning, 2007; Steele, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tesser, 2000). People form associations with brands in a similar way as how they interact with social groups. When consumers feel that the brand and its user group presents a negative sense of identity, they will wish to avoid signaling an undesired version of their selves to others (Berger & Heath, 2008; Ogilvie, 1987). The brand and its reference groups will be construed as an out-group because of its exclusion from the possible desired self (H. Markus & Nurius, 1986; White & Dahl, 2006). In the context of brands, a sense of identity can be made salient in connection with the brand and its associated reference groups, which consequently influences consumption preferences (White & Dahl, 2007). Brands that are imbued with negative associations will influence consumers to avoid the portrayed negative identities to not signal an undesired self-identity to others (Ogilvie, 1987; Tepper, 1994; White & Argo, 2009). Hence, because of the negative associations arising from the brand’s dissociative reference groups that could threaten the positive identity (White & Argo, 2009; White & Dahl, 2007), consumers will wish to avoid the brands and dis-identify themselves from the brand (H2a).

Consumers form connections with brands through a process of meaning transfer from the brand to the self (G. McCracken, 1989), because of the brand’s ability to help in identity construction (Escalas &
Bettman, 2003). These self-brand connections allow an incorporation of the brand within the self-concept (Baumeister, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). However, if a brand is not associated with an in-group and a positive identity anymore, it would negatively affect the self-brand connection. The weakening of self-brand connection is further enhanced if the brand is symbolic and communicates something about the user’s identity (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Research has shown that publicly consumed brands are considered to be more symbolic (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). For young consumers, indulging in risky health behaviors like alcohol consumption is synonymous to signaling a positive identity (Berger & Rand, 2008). It has been shown through previous studies within health marketing that such identity perceptions and symbolic consumption can be modified through by associating such behaviors with unintended identities and reference groups (Berger & Rand, 2008; Englis & Solomon, 1995). Hence, the willingness to dissociate socially with groups that consume the brand also dissociates the self from the brand, leading to a weakening of the connections formed with the brand (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007).

\[
H2: The willingness to dissociate with users of the brand would lead to:
\]

\[a) \text{Consumer-brand disidentification;} \quad \text{and b) a weakening of self-brand connections in the minds of consumers.}\]

Individuals generally have a tendency to differentiate themselves from others (Berger & Heath, 2007) and to distinguish between in-groups and out-groups (Marques et al., 1998). Consumers in general wish to maintain positive self-views of themselves which helps in improving their self-esteem and self-worth (Dunning, 2007; Hinde & Tajfel, 1979; Tesser, 2000). They do this by associating with groups portraying positive associations and by avoiding interactions with negatively perceived groups or dissociative reference groups (White & Dahl, 2007).

Consumers who feel a weak self-brand connection because of the brand’s negative associations and dissociative reference groups, would want to diverge from the brand in their behaviors. Research has shown that people are motivated to achieve a positive identity and they do this through a multitude of actions such as decreasing association with groups (the brand’s dissociative reference groups in this case) that do not present positive associations (Jackson et al., 1996) and by avoiding products/brands that are associated with such groups portraying negative identities (Tepper, 1994; White & Argo, 2009; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). Specifically, due to a weakened self-brand connection arising from dissociative reference groups (with alcohol and beer consumers), young consumers would want to avoid
consumption of such beer brands. Consumers can avoid the consumption of such brands through a rejection of the brand because it misrepresents their self and self-motives (Wolter et al., 2016). Hence, due to a weakened self-brand connection arising from dissociative reference groups, consumers will indulge in a dis-identification with the brand (H3).

\[ H3: \text{A weakened self-brand connection arising from dissociative reference groups would lead to consumer-brand disidentification.} \]
Figure 7: Proposed research model
B.2 Self-construal and regulatory focus

A person’s construal of the self has been shown to influence the sense of identity. Independent individuals strive to maintain a positive self-worth and positive identity, and have a greater tendency to distance themselves from dissociative reference groups (White et al., 2012) because of greater focus on individuality and differentiation (Kampmeier & Simon, 2001). Interdependent persons, however, focus more on the need for belongingness and reinforce their bonds through multiple social identities to establish a positive social identity (White et al., 2012).

Through the interaction with brands, people are able to express their selves, because of the symbolic nature of brands (Levy, 1959) and the ability to form relationships with them (Fournier, 1998). Because of their social symbolism, brands allow consumers to assimilate with groups and assert their distinction from others (Ahuvia & Wong, 1998). Research has shown that independent consumers use brands to emphasize a sense of uniqueness, while interdependent consumers assess whether they are conforming to group norms through their brand usage (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014).

Previous research in marketing has shown that a sense of public self-consciousness moderates the effect of dissociative groups on avoidance (White & Dahl, 2006). There exist multiple works which have shown that people diverge in their social interactions and associations to avoid signaling an undesired identity, with support for both the independent as well as interdependent selves. Some researchers have emphasized a distancing of the private self from brands to avoid dissociative reference groups arising from brand usage (White & Dahl, 2007). Others have stressed that people distance themselves from brands to avoid signaling an undesired identity to the people around them (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008). Hence, we can hypothesize that both independents and interdependents have a motivation to dissociate themselves from brands, albeit with differing goals which will be looked at from the lens of an individual’s regulatory focus.

According to self-regulation theory (E. T. Higgins, 1997), people differ in their needs to nurture (i.e. promotion focus) and protect (i.e. prevention focus) the self. These instinctive variations arise as a result of influence from the people around us since the time of childhood (E. T. Higgins, 1997). While promotion focused individuals strive for positive outcomes, prevention focused persons work to avoid negative outcomes (Lockwood et al., 2002).

Regulatory focus has also been shown to influence product and brand choice (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001). Promotion focused individuals prefer products because of their positive attitudes and are willing to take
risks to achieve the desired positive state (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Pham & Avnet, 2004). Prevention focused individuals prefer safe and convenient brands, making them more vigilant and risk-averse in their consumption (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Pham & Avnet, 2004). Research has also shown that individuals generally prefer brands whose typical users are similar to their own self-identity perceptions, while avoiding interaction with brands consumed by dissociative reference groups because of the differences with self-concept (Berger & Rand, 2008; Niedenthal, Cantor, & Kihlstrom, 1985).

Prior research has shown that self-construals are not chronically prevalent, and people can be made to access different self-views based on experimental manipulations in marketing research (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001). This shows the temporal activation or suppression of self-construals, further highlighting that these views can be modified and the self can be altered to influence attitudes (J. Aaker, 1999; Robert E Kleine et al., 1993).

In marketing literature, there exist a few studies which have instigated a new field of work focusing on both regulatory focus and self-construal. According to these works, self-construal can be an antecedent for regulatory focus (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Angela Y Lee et al., 2000). The construing of self leads to distinct thought processes and goals. While the independent self strives to keep distinct from others, the interdependent self endeavors to maintain harmony with others (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). The independent self strives for autonomy and ambitions, whereas the interdependent self endeavors to maintain belonging, and fulfilling obligations (Heine et al., 1999; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; White et al., 2012). The act of distinguishing oneself from others is reflective of forming positive features for the self and self-enhancement goals, which is more in line with a promotion focus. The desire to belong with others and to avoid indulging in actions that would lead to segregation from others, is representative of self-improvement goals and a prevailing prevention focus.

Research has shown that individuals with a more accessible independent self-view prefer to be promotion focused while those with a more accessible interdependent self-view prefer to be prevention focused (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Angela Y Lee et al., 2000). This match between self-regulation and self-construal has been shown to be reliable and stable in predicting attitudes and consumption preferences. Hence, this research suggests that a matching of goal compatibility between promotion-independent and prevention-interdependent would moderate the impact of identification antecedents on self-disidentification.
H4a: The match between independent self-views and promotion focused framing will positively moderate the link between identification antecedents and self-disidentification.

H4b: The match between interdependent self-views and prevention focused framing will positively moderate the link between identification antecedents and self-disidentification.

B.3 Persuasion

Consumer research on brands has drawn heavily from social identity theory (Tajfel, 1984) and interpersonal relationships (Hinde & Tajfel, 1979) to outline the exchanges between the self and the brand. Consumers actively consume and interact with brands to show their relationships (Fournier, 1998), an extended version of the self (R. Belk, 1988), to personify brands (J. Aaker, 1997) and form attachments (C. W. Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Lacobucci, 2010).

There are also instances when consumers dislike the brands that they are associated with and wish to put some distance between themselves and the brands. Consumers actively reject and dissociate with a brand when they feel that it is giving the wrong identity signals and disrupts the formation of desired identity (Hogg et al., 2009). Marketing literature has assigned varying names to these intentions including anti-consumption (M. S. W. Lee, J. Motion, et al., 2009) and politically based brand rejection (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). Within social identity perspective, researchers have also seen how associating the self with certain groups and dissociating it with other groups influences brand consumption (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). Furthermore, the role of identity signaling from the context of product adoption and consumption preferences has been shown to hold in mainstream consumption as well as health-related behaviors (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008).

When faced with the dilemma of dissociative reference groups, people wish to avoid them and feel dis-identification with the group (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Ogilvie, 1987). In a similar way, they would also wish to avoid consuming any products and brands that signal a possibly negative self in lieu of its association with the groups that the self wishes to dis-identity with (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). The act of dis-identification includes a willful exclusion of the brand from the self-definition (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002). Once consumers realize that the brand is separate from the self and results in a rejection of the self, they will be greatly persuaded to accept the message.
recommendation and consciously think about their alcohol consumption. Prior research has shown support for this hypothesis and has tested the effect of identity signaling in the health context, specifically for alcohol consumption (Berger & Rand, 2008).

\[ H5: \text{Consumer-brand disidentification will positively impact persuasiveness of the message.} \]

**B.4 Subjective norms**

People form intentions to conduct behaviors, which are influenced by their attitudes and normative beliefs. These normative beliefs include the acceptability of one’s actions and behaviors by the society (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A positive perception of subjective norms would imply that a person’s actions are considered desirable by others and those around them (Ajzen, 1991). It includes the perceived social pressure to conduct an action or behavior, based on the approval of “important others” in one’s life (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Previously, researchers in marketing have identified subjective norms as an important predictor of actions in a social context (Bansal et al., 2004; Goldstein et al., 2008; Shukla et al., 2016; White & Simpson, 2013). The presence of favorable subjective norms from others influences people’s behavior towards consumption of a brand (Bansal et al., 2004). People strive for the approval of others when consuming and interacting with brands in a social context (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Shukla et al., 2016). As brand relationships are similar to inter-personal relationships, the approval of others is deemed essential prior to breaking such relationships with brands, akin to socially supported marriages and relations (Fournier, 2009). The presence of favorable subjective norms and acceptability of one’s actions by others regarding dis-identification with a brand will influence consumers to be greatly convinced about their actions (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007). Hence, in an anti-consumption context individuals will conduct an assessment of the acceptability of their actions (i.e. breaking consumer-brand relations) by the society, prior to being persuaded to indulge in those actions.

\[ H6: \text{A favorable perception of subjective norms regarding one’s disidentification with the brand will lead to a greater impact on message persuasion.} \]
**B.5 Brand relationship quality**

Consumers form extensive and lasting relationships with brands, similar to interpersonal relationships, and this concept has been studied extensively in marketing literature within the construct of brand relationship quality (Fournier, 1998). This concept defines the strength and depth of an existing relation between the brand and its consumer (Fournier, 1994; Nyffenegger et al., 2015). The relationships that consumers form with brands are based on both an affective and cognitive role, both of which influence consumer attitudes (Millar & Tesser, 1986; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; C Whan Park & MacInnis, 2006). Affective or “hot” BRQ outlines a strong relationship and belief in the brand because of a fulfilment of emotional needs from the consumer-brand relationship (Nyffenegger et al., 2015). Cognitive or “cold” BRQ delineates positive evaluation and belief in the brand due to the ability to rely on it and its prior performance as a relationship partner (Nyffenegger et al., 2015). Hot BRQ would be measured through the components of passion, intimacy and commitment, while cold BRQ is based on interdependence, satisfaction and trust.

Consumers with a strong and deep relation with the brand are more likely to forgive negative experiences with the brand, even after facing a lack of trust and feeling dis-identification with the brand (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Mattila, 2001; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Wieseke, Geigenmüller, & Kraus, 2012). The BRQ construct allows for a comprehensive assessment of the consumer-brand relationship through its multiple components within the affective and cognitive domains. A strong BRQ would imply that consumers are unwilling to discontinue their relationship with the brand (i.e. consumer-brand disidentification with beer brands) due to the effort put in by both relationship partners to maintain it (Fournier, 1998; Hinde & Tajfel, 1979). This would [negatively] influence the persuasion resulting from health manipulation even after feeling consumer-brand disidentification.

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**H7:** A strong BRQ (hot and cold) perception for the brand would weaken and negatively moderate the link between consumer-brand disidentification and persuasion.

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**B.6 Behavior and well-being**

The persuasiveness of an ad has been shown to be influenced by multiple factors including features of an ad (Pieters et al.), the chronological order of elements (Loewenstein et al., 2011) and the types of stimuli used (Angela Y. Lee, 2002). However, for health advertising, the same variables cannot be used to enhance persuasion (Lauren G. Block & Keller, 1997).
Prior research has shown that using ad messages which are deemed to be understandable and relevant has a greater impact on persuasion (Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). Relying on the accessibility-diagnosticity framework (Feldman & Lynch, 1988), this research has shown that information which is more in line with an individual’s mental processes results in greater persuasion. For promotion-focused individuals, an independent self-view is deemed to be more effective, whereas prevention-focused individuals are more persuaded by interdependent self-views (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Angela Y Lee et al., 2000).

According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the intention to indulge in an action is shaped by the attitudes that people form regarding that action. Since identity constructions and group dissociations are an important component of the self, individuals would spend careful thought on these processes. Favorable attitudes and beliefs regarding a behavior can be formed once people cognitively process it and accept the information present to them through careful processing and consideration (Chaiken, 1980; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Prior research has also shown that identity salience and social marketing can influence persuasion and consumption of individuals (Berger & Rand, 2008).

Once individuals feel more persuaded and a positive attitude towards the recommended action (i.e. limit the consumption of alcohol), they would be willing to share and tell others about it. Research has shown that individuals can also act as advocates to inform other individuals’ views (Richins, 1994) and to be perceived as more knowledgeable (Berger & Milkman, 2012). For information deemed to be practical and useful, people share it also as a social exchange and to engender reciprocity (Berger & Milkman, 2012). Within the context of dis-identification and dissatisfaction, research has shown that a negative experience with a brand makes one to inform others about discontinuing their use of the brand and to publicly express their negative views about it (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003; Wolter et al., 2016). Hence, upon dis-identification with the brand and being persuaded against it, consumers would wish to inform others about their experience. Research has shown that negative WOM has a greater impact on consumers than positive WOM (East et al., 2008), arising as a result of lowered purchase intentions (Baker et al., 2016).

\[ H8: \text{A high level of persuasiveness from the message would result in greater intentions to quit/limit alcohol consumption.} \]

\[ H9: \text{A high level of persuasiveness from the message would result in greater word-of-mouth intentions to suggest curbing of alcohol consumption to others.} \]
H10: The intention to quit/reduce alcohol consumption would positively influence word-of-mouth intentions regarding curbing of alcohol consumption.

Well-being includes a global and personal assessment of mood, life satisfaction, hedonism and self-realization for an individual (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009). It is an important component of behavioral sciences to assess an individual’s evaluation of life (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009). Psychological well-being, specifically, implies a satisfaction of human needs and optimal functioning of humans and is different from subjective well-being which includes an evaluation of life based on affect, life judgments, and satisfaction (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009).

The construct of psychological well-being includes an assessment of 1) meaning; 2) relationships; 3) engagement; 4) contributing to others’ well-being; 5) competency; and 6) self-acceptance (Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009). These components have been shown to be human needs that are integral to healthy human functioning (Brown et al., 2003; Maslow, 1943; C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Within a health marketing research context, it is pertinent to assess an individual’s assessment of psychological well-being. A perception of psychological health and well-being can influence future perceptions of healthy behaviors and intentions and have an impact on mental processes during decision making in a social context. More specifically, psychological well-being would influence the role of message persuasion on behavioral intentions.

H11: A high perception of psychological well-being would moderate the role of persuasion on: a) intentions to quit alcohol consumption, and b) word-of-mouth intentions.
CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter introduced the chosen variables and presented the proposed research model, along with the connections between different constructs explicated through the development of hypotheses. In this chapter, the methodology envisioned to validate the proposed links between the chosen variables will be detailed. This chapter will be divided into three parts: first, we will explain the process and mode of data collection, which will then be followed by the chosen measurement scales for all the variables involved. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the statistical methods of analysis.

A. DATA COLLECTION

The selection of a relevant product category and associated brands is needed to assess the impact of identification antecedents on dis-identification and behavioral variables. We will first look at which product category suits the current research better and then select the appropriate brands within that category.

A.1 Product category

Within the context of health, significant studies have been conducted recently on consumption of drugs, cigarettes and alcohol due to their rising nature as a pernicious product (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Berger & Rand, 2008; Biener & Siegel, 2000; Duhachek et al., 2012; Lobstein, Landon, Thornton, & Jernigan, 2017; Piacentini & Banister, 2009; Rose et al., 1992; Wansink & Van Ittersum, 2003; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). Alcohol is one of the top three health priority areas and is a leading cause of ill health, premature death, unsafe sex (World Health Organization, 2012). It is a cause of various non-communicable diseases\(^1\) including cancer, cardiovascular and liver disease; communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and pneumonia; and injuries arising from homicide, suicide, domestic violence, intoxication and drunk driving (World Health Organization, 2012). It also has an adverse impact on prenatal health, as pregnant women who keep consuming alcohol do not consider it as a risky behavior for themselves and their children (Morris, Swasy, & Mazis, 1994). Even more insidious is the prevalence of underage drinking by minors because, in addition to the illegality of this behavior, youngsters and adolescents are far more likely to indulge in binge drinking than others (Berger & Rand, 2008).

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\(^{1}\) Non-communicable (or chronic) diseases are ailments lasting for a long duration which progress slowly and are non-transmissible. Its major types include cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and respiratory diseases such as asthma (World Health Organization, 2013).
Alcohol is consumed the most within the European region, with an average adult greater than 15 years consuming 12.5 liters of pure alcohol or around three drinks per day, which is double the global average (World Health Organization, 2012). Most countries allow legal purchase and consumption of alcohol by the age of 18. In the United States, buying alcohol is not allowed until the age of 21 while the equivalent age for France is 18 years². In 2015 alone, 7.7 million persons aged 12-20 years reported consuming alcohol within the last month in the US (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2017). 30-day drinking rates are generally used to indicate regular or current consumers of alcohol. In the same year, around 2.4 million youngsters aged 12-17 years consumed alcohol for the first time in life (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2017).

There is a general perception that because the legal drinking age is higher in the US, these individuals make up for this “missed” opportunity by drinking more frequently and indulging in binge drinking more than European youth. However, this is not the case as proven by recent research. Europeans generally drink more frequently and have higher intoxication rates, with a greater proportion of youth below 13 years having been intoxicated than in the US (Friese & Grube, 2010). From a survey conducted across schools in Europe, 64 percent of French youth aged 15-16 years reported drinking in the past month (Friese & Grube, 2010).

A.2 Selection of brands

After specifying the context of this research within alcohol consumption, there is still a need to further outline the specific kind of alcohol to be considered as well as the brands to be selected for the purposes of research. There exist different kinds of alcoholic beverages including wine, rum, vodka, beer, and spirits. Although the consumption of different kinds of alcoholic beverages has changed across Europe over the years, beer has remained the most prominent and consistent drink in the European region over the years (World Health Organization, 2012).

In France, the consumption of overall alcohol and wine has declined over the years however beer consumption levels have remained steady within the last half century (World Health Organization, 2014). French people are considered to be among the top consumers of pure alcohol in the world, drinking up to 12.2 liters of pure alcohol per capita (World Health Organization, 2014). Furthermore, alcohol consumption leads to approximately 45,000 deaths annually with the age for initial alcohol consumption having gone down to as low as 11 years old³ (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). Amongst the entire

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² Alcohol purchase is illegal below 18 years for liquor/spirits and below 16 for other alcoholic beverages.
³ Survey conducted by IPSOS in 2004 for Institut National de Prevention et d’Education pour la Sante (INPES
French population, around 30 percent indulged in heavy episodic drinking at least once in 2010, which includes an intake of at least 60 grams of pure alcohol within the past month (World Health Organization, 2014). Regarding their consumption preferences, French individuals consume wine predominantly (56 percent), followed by spirits and beer (World Health Organization, 2014) because of France being a hub of local wine production and breweries.

For the purposes of this research, beer will be chosen as the alcohol variant to be studied due to multiple reasons. First, beer brands are positioned on a variety of attributes targeting identity constructs, allowing consumers to identify or dis-identify with those brands. Second, beer companies spend a significant sum on their advertising to create brand identities and personalities, due to which consumers are either attracted or repulsed. This identity conception and symbolism has been proven to be crucial for marketing (Berger & Heath, 2007; Knowles & Gardner, 2008; Levy, 1959; Reed, Forehand, Puntoni, & Warlop, 2012) and this research employs the context of identity to influence consumer dis-identification with brands. Third, past studies have shown that beer brands allow the definition of self through their identification/disidentification (E. Banister & Piacentini, 2006; Dolich, 1969; Pettigrew, 2002; Piacentini & Banister, 2009). Lastly, beer is amongst the highest consumed alcoholic beverages all over the world, both globally and across different regions of the world (World Health Organization, 2014). This makes the selection of this product as highly pertinent for marketing research focusing on the health sector.

For the purpose of this research, multiple beer brands including Bud Light, Leffe, Hoegaarden, Kronenbourg 1664, Heineken and Guinness would be chosen. This list is not exhaustive and more brands can be added to increase generalizability. However, the selected brands also have to be few due to logistical constraints in recruiting respondents, and to have the most representative brands for the French youth population. A pre-test would be conducted beforehand to assess the familiarity of respondents with a list of popular beer brands and compile a final selection of brands for the study. It is essential to also test the reputation and recognition of these brands, in order for consumers to be able to initiate dis-identification process.

A.3 Sample selection

The selected product category of beer allows recruiting both genders of the population. Although males consume alcohol and beer at a higher rate than women (World Health Organization, 2012, 2014) and also indulge in drunk driving incidents (Lastovicka, Murry, Joachimsthaler, Bhalla, & Scheurich, 1987), alcohol consumption presents a more severe risk for women’s health and pregnancy (Morris et al., 1994).
leading to breast cancer, heart disease, STDs and death (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2015). Hence, the sample selection would focus on an equal mix of both men and women.

There exist very few studies that have studied the impact of identity construction and affective experiences on young adults. A person’s self-construal and regulatory focus start developing as early as childhood from the influence of cultures and parents (E. T. Higgins, 1997; Singelis, 1994). Research on adolescence has shown it to be a tumultuous and rebellious time for the individuals, characterized by a heightened need for affect and anxiety (Pechmann & Knight, 2002; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). This increases their vulnerability to impulsive actions and seeking out risky, addictive products as a recluse (Pechmann, Levine, Loughlin, & Leslie, 2005). Furthermore, research has shown that young adults are more concerned about conforming to social peer pressure of drug and alcohol consumption (Rose et al., 1992). They take actions to enhance their social approval and acceptance by peers (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996), and these can also include indulging in alcohol consumption (Rose et al., 1992). A staggering majority of youngsters that start underage drinking lead to a lifetime prevalence of alcohol consumption, with 85 percent of young adults aged 19-28 years taking up alcohol consumption (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2017).

Within the field of marketing, it is a common practice to employ convenience samples and use students as research participants. Some researchers have challenged the generalizability of this approach and whether this leads to credible and authentic results that can be reproduced for marketing research (Ashraf & Merunka, 2016; R. A. Peterson & Merunka, 2014). Students have strong cognitive skills, personality traits and experience; they belong to a narrow age range and background making them a good candidate for laboratory based studies (Wells, 1993). Since the focus of this research is on curbing alcohol consumption and initial consumption is done during adolescence by most individuals which leads to a lifetime of drinking, it makes sense to target individuals at a stage where they are most prone and vulnerable to acquiring this habit.

A.4 Manipulation development

This research intends to develop multiple experimental manipulations in the form of an ad which portrays dis-identification with beer based on the identification antecedents. It is suggested that individuals with an independent self-construal would be more responsive to promotion-focused ad, while individuals with an interdependent self-construal would be responsive to prevention focused thoughts in line with prior research (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Angela Y Lee et al., 2000).
The designed manipulations would be evaluated and scored by independent raters to assess whether the intended manipulations are effective. Four versions of the ad would be designed in the form of a video advertisement to cater to different combinations of individual self-construal (independent, interdependent) and regulatory focus (promotion, prevention). Participants would be exposed to an audio/text description projecting them within the proposed scenario of group dissociations with alcohol consumption. After this, the ads would be shown at the start of the data collection process to trigger the intended effects, and their impact would be assessed through an online questionnaire.

To complement the quantitative data collection, this research will also employ a projective technique that has been recently used in marketing research. Projective methods allow to discover hidden opinions of individuals and are needed to acquired more informed views which direct methods are unable to tap in to (Malhotra, 2008). This technique, called the Album On-Line approach, allows for assessing participants’ elicitations through a set of images (Kessous, Valette-Florence, & De Barnier, 2016). Through imagery, people are better able to communicate their internal ideas and representations (Zaltman, 1997). This method allows to combine the advantages of an in-depth approach like interviewing and focus group with that of a projective method. The technique asks participants to search for pictures online, then submit them for evaluation and comments by other participants, all of which is conducted anonymously (Kessous et al., 2016). We will conduct this qualitative method to assess the reasons why individuals indulge in consumption of beer, which occasions lead to such consumption and what beer brands they use most often.

A.5 Medium and procedure of data collection

The main method of data collection would be conducted online in the form of a questionnaire. Internet would be used as the medium of data collection as it allows adaptation of the survey progression based on participants’ responses. The online questionnaire would be conducted with university students in France, as the research is based on young adult consumers.. This would help us to ensure the respondent profiles, age groups, socio-economic backgrounds.

Online questionnaires are a cost-effective and efficient way of collecting data, as opposed to field work and in-person questionnaires which are more costly and time consuming. There exist multiple survey websites and softwares, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk, Survey Gizmo, Sphinx Online which allow online data collection, are more flexible and adaptable in terms of design and user interface, and incur no cost for the researcher.
At the beginning of the survey, participants’ alcohol consumption would be measured through the standard recording mechanism (Berger & Rand, 2008; Wechsler, Brener, Kuester, & Miller, 2001). They would be asked, “For each day of the week, please enter how many alcoholic drinks you had. A drink is defined as 12-ounce beer, an 8.5-ounce malt beverage, a 12-ounce wine cooler, a 5-ounce glass of wine, a mixed drink, or a shot of liquor”. This would allow to distinguish between regular drinkers and heavy drinkers, as binge or heavy drinkers within the week might produce biased responses within the survey. Furthermore, the survey would include social desirability as a control variable as studies focusing on social contexts and self-reported assessments are prone to social desirability bias (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Derbaix, Brée, & Masson, 1994).

An online cross-sectional survey would be designed containing all the measures and focal constructs of this research. Research participants would be provided a short message containing the link to the survey. They will read the hypothetical scenario of group associations and affective needs, based on which they will see one of the health manipulations. After this, they will proceed to answer the questions assessing their post-exposure responses. A detail of these measures is provided in the section “Measurement scales for selected variables”. Our aim is to focus on participants within the age range of 16-28, as these people consume the most amount of alcohol and are highly concerned about social identities. In order to ensure this, the questionnaire link would be sent to undergraduate and graduate students in France, and a question for age would be embedded within the questionnaire to ensure participant age.

The validity of responses would be assessed by checking the URLs for possible duplication and restricting participants from filling the questionnaire a second time. The impact of intended manipulations would be assessed through manipulation checks that would be asked after respondents see one of the four health manipulations. Participants’ engagement would be assessed through an instructional manipulation task (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009). We would assess participants’ responses by asking a question assessing their attention, and responses would be eliminated if participants failed to respond correctly. The questionnaire would come to a conclusion with respondent demographics.
B. MEASUREMENT SCALES FOR SELECTED VARIABLES

This part of the chapter will look at the chosen measurement methods and scales for each variable. We will start first with the identification antecedents, followed by the manipulation checks, relational and identification variables, and end with behavioral response measures.

B.1 Antecedents of identification

This research has chosen two variables as core identification needs for individuals. The first variable called the “need for affect”, measures an individual’s motivation to approach or avoid affect (Maio & Esses, 2001). The authors were the first ones to define this concept, and hence also to develop a scale. They developed a scale with 29 items, out of which 15 assessed emotion approach (α=.83) and the rest were for emotion avoidance (α=.84) with a good internal consistency for the overall measure (approach minus avoidance, α=.87). Within this, 3 items showing low inter-item correlation were removed to reduce the scale to 26 items (13 approach, 13 avoidance). They were able to produce a two-factor model (approach, avoidance items) with good fit measures of SRMR=.07 and RMSEA=.06. Hu and Bentler (1999) have shown that SRMR and RMSEA fit statistics should be near or below .08 and .05 respectively.

The need for affect scale showed correlations with various individual difference measures of affective processing, confirming its convergent validity, and shared only 10 percent of variance leading to a strong discriminant validity (Maio & Esses, 2001). High scores in the need for affect have been shown to influence political preferences (Leone & Chirumbolo, 2008), and extremity of attitudes (Britt, Millard, Sundareswaran, & Moore, 2009; Maio & Esses, 2001), as high need for affect individuals are more polarized than others.

The length of this scale makes it demanding to measure when there are already multiple constructs in a model and to reduce the measure salience for possible demand effects or priming. Due to the length of these measures, there is a need for a shorter scale for this construct. Appel, Gnambs, and Maio (2012) have contributed to this demand by creating a short 10-item measure for the need for affect. They administered the scale to four independent samples and found good internal validity for the scale ranging from α=.72 to .82, with just ten items. The scale produced two factors, i.e. approach and avoidance, both of which were negatively correlated (r=-.34 to -.46). Furthermore, the short version of the scale held strong correlations with the long, original form (r=.92).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel that I need to experience strong emotions regularly</td>
<td>If I reflect on my past, I see that I tend to be afraid of feeling emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Emotions help people to get along in life.</td>
<td>I find strong emotions overwhelming and therefore try to avoid them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I think that it is important to explore my feelings.</td>
<td>I would prefer not to experience either the lows or highs of emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It is important for me to be in touch with my feelings.</td>
<td>I do not know how to handle my emotions, so I avoid them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is important for me to know how others are feeling.</td>
<td>Emotions are dangerous – they tend to get me into situations that I would rather avoid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Appel et al. (2012)

Maio and Esses (2001) have suggested measuring the approach and avoidance components separately, along with a total measure (approach minus avoidance). This allows to avoid any imprecision or risk from aggregation, and this research will intend to follow suit. This construct will be measured with a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1= ‘strongly disagree’ to 6= ‘strongly agree’.

Various researchers have used differing measures to assess group associations and dis-identification. (White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007) have used a measure of disidentifying the private self with a product. White et al. (2012) have measured the extent to which people feel a threat to their social identity. Within social rejection research, Knowles and Gardner (2008) have assessed group entitativity (membership) as a result of rejection from the group. The current research suggests that individuals themselves reject groups that they perceive would get in the way of experiencing greater affect. As Knowles and Gardner (2008) assessed group entitativity within the context of social identity and group dissociations, we can also employ the same measures for this research. Some researchers have also tested the impact of reference groups on self-construals and brand meanings. This stream of research has focused specifically on self-brand connections and how in/out groups can influence self-brand connections for differing self-construals (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). The current research attempts to measure the same concepts of social identity and reference groups within the presence of self-brand
connections, hence the use of these measures is justified. This scale showed a strong internal consistency (α=.96) when conducted by the authors within the domains of brand connections and reference groups.

For the construct of dissociative reference groups, we will join both measures discussed above into a single measure for dissociative reference groups. The scale used by Knowles and Gardner (2008) employs four items, out of which we will use three items to ensure parsimoniousness and the scale for in-group associations (Escalas & Bettman, 2005) will be used as is. This measure will be reverse scored as the items are phrased along the lines of group membership, whereas this research focuses on dissociative reference groups. We will use a 6-point Likert type scale for this measure (1= ‘strongly disagree’; 6= ‘strongly agree’), as before to maintain consistency across measures and allow ease for respondents.

Table 4: Scale for dissociative reference groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The group is meaningful and cohesive.</td>
<td>(Knowles &amp; Gardner, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The group is important to its members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Members of the group share common goals with me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I consider myself to be this type of person</td>
<td>(Escalas &amp; Bettman, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I belong to this group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I fit in with this group of people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B.2 Brand relations

In order to assess the relationship and meaning assigned to brands by consumers, this research intends to use two different constructs which have been sufficiently used in prior research. These include the concepts of self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005) and brand relationship quality (Fournier, 1994, 1998).

People indulge in consumption behaviors to construct their self-concept and personal identities (Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Robert E Kleine et al., 1993; Richins, 1994). This process of identity construction allows them to feel high self-esteem and self-worth within the social environment (Tajfel, 1979, 1984). A way for consumers to construct their identities is through the associations that they form with brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Ng & Houston, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007). These associations also arise from usage of the brands by reference groups which are considered as typical users of the brand (White & Dahl, 2006; White
& Dahl, 2007). Using these brand associations to construct the self allows consumers to form connections with brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

The focus of this research is on dissociative reference groups and how they influence the process of brand meaning transfer. Specifically, dissociative reference groups would confer negative brand meanings and a weakening of the self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007). This construct has been used previously within social identity theory and reference group influence (White & Dahl, 2007), self-construals (Escalas & Bettman, 2005), negative brand relations (Cheng, White, & Chaplin, 2012). This validates the application of this construct within the current research as it employs similar conceptualizations and relationships.

This construct employs seven items, as measured and validated previously in research (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007). This construct has been shown to have strong internal consistency from a single factor ($\alpha=.90$). The scale would comprise 6-point items ranging from 1= ‘not at all’ to 6= ‘extremely well’.

Table 5: Self-brand connection scale items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>This brand reflects who I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I can identify with this brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel a personal connection to this brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I use this brand to communicate who I am to other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I think this brand helps me become the type of person I want to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I consider this brand to be “me” (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way that I want to present myself to others).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>This brand suits me well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Prior research on brand relationship quality has used the measures as originally proposed by Fournier (1994). Fournier (1994)’s original measure comprised seven dimensions, which were later reduced to six dimensions (Fournier, 1998). Researchers have deviated from this model by employing some of the
dimensions as antecedents. For instance, J. Aaker et al. (2004) and Nyffenegger et al. (2015) have used the dimension of partner quality as an antecedent of BRQ.

Recently, Nyffenegger et al. (2015) suggested splitting BRQ into the dimensions of cognitive and affective domains, which they called “hot” and “cold” BRQ. These have employed some of the original BRQ dimensions such as interdependence, passion, intimacy and commitment. Besides these, the constructs of satisfaction and trust have been derived from well renowned publications on brand relations within the domain of relationship marketing (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Oliver, 1993). A recent study employing BRQ within the domains of social media and consumer-brand interactions has used a 16-item measure of BRQ (Hudson et al., 2016), which is also based on two-dimensional model of BRQ focusing on emotional and behavioral components (Smit et al., 2007).

The overall measure of BRQ would use six first order dimensions/facets, categorized within two second order dimensions of hot and cold BRQ. The hot BRQ would comprise of passion, intimacy and commitment, while cold BRQ would consist of interdependence, satisfaction and trust. The higher third order dimension (BRQ) would encapsulate all these components within itself. The final scale consists of 12 items, which is shorter than the 16-item reduced version that has been recently used in prior studies (Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007). This measure would be anchored on a 6-point scale ranging from 1= ‘strongly disagree’ to 6= ‘strongly agree’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Measures for BRQ construct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hot BRQ</th>
<th>Passion <em>(Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. It is a feeling of loss when I have not used my X for a while.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Something would definitely be missing in my life if X would not exist anymore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intimacy <em>(Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have the feeling that I really understand X.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It feels like I have known X for a long time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment <em>(Hudson et al., 2016; Smit et al., 2007)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. X can always count on me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I will continue using X in the near future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cold BRQ

**Interdependence (Fournier, 1994, 2009)**

1. I need X and rely on its benefits.
2. X is an integral part of my daily life.

**Satisfaction (J. Aaker et al., 2004; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Oliver, 1993)**

1. X offers exactly what I expect from [product category].
2. I am completely satisfied with X.

**Trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Smit et al., 2007)**

1. X is an honest brand.
2. I rely on this brand.

Previously existing scales on disidentification have considered it in the form of national disidentification of local products (Josiassen, 2011), organizational disidentification (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001), disidentification with a country (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) and private self disidentification (White & Dahl, 2007). However, there lacked a measurement of specific disidentification with the brand as purported by consumers.

Recently, Wolter et al. (2016) have developed a scale based on four items for consumer-brand disidentification. This scale has been tested across various brands and product categories (retail, packaged goods, online services) confirming its usage for different brands. The measure has shown good reliability scores ($\alpha = .79$, composite reliability = .80), convergent validity ($AVE=.50$) and discriminant validity with respect to similar constructs ($r=.25$ with attachment-aversion, dissatisfaction, and attitude). This scale would be measured on a 6-point scale ranging from 1= ‘strongly disagree’ to 7= ‘strongly agree’ to ensure consistency with previous constructs.

**Table 7: Measurement scale for consumer-brand disidentification (CBD)**

| 1. My identity is based on NOT consuming _______. |
| 2. Refusing to be a _______ drinker is part of my sense of who I am. |
| 3. *Buying _______ would inhibit expressing who I am.* |
| 4. I do NOT want to be mistaken as a _______ user. |

Source: Wolter et al. (2016)
**B.3 Manipulation checks and measures**

As the manipulations designed for this research would be based on self-construal and regulatory focus, we will employ manipulation checks to ensure that the participants have understood the manipulations well and were able to process them. These manipulations have been employed and tested by previous researchers for both regulatory focus (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001) and self-construals (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). These measures would be assessed on a 6-point scale from ‘not at all’ to “extremely”.

*Table 8: Manipulation checks for regulatory focus and self-construal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Self-construal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Regulatory focus</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdependent self</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promotion focused</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is important for me to respect decisions made by the group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent self</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prevention focused</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I’d rather say ‘No’ directly than risk being misunderstood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely

Source: (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Escalas & Bettman, 2005)

Furthermore, in order to assess the full extent and impact of these manipulations, we can also use the full version scales for self-construal (Singelis, 1994) and regulatory focus (Lockwood et al., 2002). These scales use 24 items and 18 items respectively, hence in order to reduce the length of the questionnaire we can assess the impact of manipulations through the manipulation checks. The individual level differences based on self-construals and regulatory focus can be assessed through another study conducted on the same participants but at an earlier point in time before conducting the main study (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

**B.4 Psychological variables**
In this part, we will discuss the measures to be used for the psychological constructs of well-being and subjective norms which act as moderators for the proposed model.

The construct of well-being has been studied extensively as subjective well-being and psychological well-being, which was also detailed in section titled “B.2 Psychological Well-Being”. For this study, a short and concise measure for psychological well-being has been chosen as it is more parsimonious as compared to other existing scales for well-being (Bradburn, 1969; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). While Bradburn (1969)’s scale is short, it measures only the impact of positive and negative affect. Ryff and Keyes (1995)’s scale is comprehensive, however it employs 42 items which make the overall measure tedious for the respondents to evaluate along with the other measures of the study. A shorter version of the measure by Diener, Wirtz, et al. (2009) includes components of meaning and purpose, self-acceptance, optimism, contributing to other’s well-being, all of which have been deemed necessary for the functioning of human health and well-being (Diener, Scollon, et al., 2009; Diener, Wirtz, et al., 2009). Hence for the sake of parsimoniousness and conciseness, we have chosen Diener, Wirtz, et al. (2009)’s scale which is comprised of 8 items that would be measured on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = ‘strongly disagree; 6 = ‘strongly agree’).

Table 9: Measurement scale for Psychological well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am a good person and live a good life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am optimistic about my future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>People respect me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Diener, Wirtz, et al. (2009)

Within marketing research, scholars have used the terms subjective norms and susceptibility to interpersonal influence to show the impact of the social environment in a consumption context. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) is comprised of normative and informational influences.
(Bearden et al., 1989) and has been used within the context of sustainable consumption (Haws et al., 2014) and conspicuous consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). Comparatively, the construct of subjective norms has been used more extensively within consumption research, consumer commitment and buying contexts (Bansal et al., 2004; Shukla et al., 2016). This construct has shown strong internal reliability across studies (α=.89 and α=.91) and is composed of two items, which would be measured through a six point Likert scale (1= ‘strongly disagree’; 6= ‘strongly agree’)

Table 10: Measures for subjective norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Most people who are important to me would approve of me switching from “brand X”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>People I care about would approve of me switching from “brand X”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bansal et al., 2004; Shukla et al., 2016)

B.5 Behavioral variables

Within persuasion and marketing communications, multiple scales have been used to assess persuasiveness and message acceptability of the information presented. The most famous of these include the works on persuasion by Rook (1987) and Lauren G. Block and Keller (1997). Furthermore, persuasion has also been studied within the domains of fear and health messages (P. A. Keller, 2006; Morales et al., 2012; R. W. Rogers, 1983; Witte, 1992). Some researchers within health advertising have also considered persuasion influenced by affect (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Duhachek et al., 2012) and efficacy mechanisms (L. G. Block & Keller, 1995; Han et al., 2016).

The measures for persuasion chosen for this research have been previously used in a study focusing on negative emotions and alcohol consumption (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). They have adapted the measurement scales from Rook (1987)’s persuasion index which has also been used by Lauren G. Block and Keller (1997). This measure is comprised of six items which will be evaluated on 6-pt. Likert type anchors (1= ‘strongly disagree’; 6= ‘strongly agree’).

Table 11: Measures for persuasion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>This ad is persuasive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The ad that you saw is convincing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I will be more receptive to information presented in this ad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This ad will influence my future decisions.  

After seeing this ad, I will be more likely to stop my consumption of beer.

After seeing this ad, I think I’ll stop consuming beer.

Source: Becheur and Valette-Florence (2014)

Various authors have used behavioral intentions to measure whether people will indulge in a purchasing behavior. However, as discussed previously, intentions do not always translate into actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Within the health literature, authors have used various measures to assess intentions not to smoke or to avoid drinking (Berger & Rand, 2008; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). They have employed concrete measures to assess actual smoking or drinking behavior of individuals. In a similar vein, this research will employ the measure of intention to quit drinking in the near future. This measure consists of one item and is based on behavior change theories, specifically the Transtheoretical Model of Change (DiClemente et al., 1991; Shiu et al., 2009). This model outlines an individual’s change in behavior progressing through multiple steps, and has been tested for consumption of cigarettes, which is considered similar to alcohol consumption and drug usage (Rose et al., 1992).

Table 12: Intention to quit/purchase intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you planning to quit drinking?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Not planning to quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sometime in the future, beyond six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Within the next six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Within the next month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shiu et al. (2009)

The last variable for this section includes the intention to share the information with others, which we call herein as ‘word of mouth’ (WOM). Word-of-mouth has been measured previously by (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) as positive word of mouth for a brand by a consumer experiencing love for the brand. However, authors have also used WOM as a more cognitive construct rather than an affective measure (Nyffenegger et al., 2015; Westbrook, 1987).
Some authors have employed WOM as sharing information over the internet, called eWOM (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Berger et al., 2010). Others have employed ‘advocacy intentions’ to refer to the sharing of information/recommendation to others (Shukla et al., 2016). These items have shown strong internal consistency within the research studies ($\alpha=.95$). As the context of this study lies within anti-consumption, we will also use items from a scale for negative WOM to assess participants’ willingness to stop others from using alcohol. Previous work on this has focused on complaint behavior, service relationships and negative emotions arising from brands (Bougie et al., 2003; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli, 2012; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). These items have demonstrated strong internal consistency within the context of emotions arising from brands ($\alpha=.95$).

The chosen scale for WOM would be comprised of five items based on a mix of advocacy intentions and negative word-of-mouth. We need both components to assess the sharing intentions and negative information shared with others in an anti-consumption context. This scale would be anchored on 6 point Likert type ranging from 1= ‘not at all’ to 6= ‘very likely’.

Table 13: Measures for word-of-mouth (WOM)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How likely would you be to share the information that you just learned with others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I would recommend others to seek my advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I would encourage friends and family to reduce their consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I would discourage friends and relatives to buy this brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I would recommend not to buy this brand to someone who seeks my advice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Bougie et al., 2003; Romani et al., 2012; Shukla et al., 2016)
C. **Statistical Method**

In order to validate the measurement scales used and the proposed model, we will use structural equation modeling (SEM) and the partial least squares (PLS) method. PLS is preferred generally due to a greater flexibility and its ability to deal with greater number of connections, as compared with LISREL and AMOS (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982; Wold, 1985). PLS is being more commonly used as opposed to LISREL, as it offers more flexibility for the distribution of variables and sample size (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). In this section, we will consider a micro level validation of our measured components and a macro level validation of the overall research model.

C.1 **Validity of measuring instruments**

C.1.1 **Convergent validity**

The first step in the validation of different scales of measurement is to test the convergent validity. It checks the shared variance between each variable, wherein the scale must correlate with another variable designed to measure the same concept. By getting a convergent validity greater than 0.5, we ensure that construct variance is further explained by the items than measured by the error.

C.1.2 **Internal consistency**

Cronbach’s alpha is generally used to measure internal consistency of measurement scales, however it is inflated with greater number of items and is good for unidimensional scales only. In order to present a better statistic, the Rho of Jöreskog (Jöreskog, 1971) is preferred in this study because of the limitations of Cronbach’s alpha (Churchill Jr., 1979). The internal consistency coefficient Joreskog is less sensitive to the number of items, and may be more suitable for methods of structural equations. In the same way as traditional Cronbach alpha, the reliability of measuring instruments requires obtaining an index greater than 0.7 or 0.8 as preferred by multiple authors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

C.1.3 **The discriminant validity**

Lastly, discriminant validity, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), ensures that the selected scales are actually measuring what they are supposed to measure. For this, the average of the extracted variance (AVE) must be greater than the squared correlations ($r^2$) between constructs.
C.2 Model validation and its assumptions

C.2.1 Model validation

Unlike the methods of structural equation which are based on covariance, the PLS approach offers no overall index of model validation. The global adjustment indicator Goodness of Fit (GoF) proposed by (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005), can be seen as a solution to this problem.

It is measured by the geometric mean of communities and the average regression coefficient ($r^2$), with values lying between 0 and 1. The research model is considered to be more effective with GoF values lying closer to 1.

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\text{Communities} \times \bar{R}^2}$$

C.2.2 Testing the research hypotheses

To verify the research hypotheses outlined in section titled “Research hypothesis”, we will use a bootstrapping procedure of creating “artificial” samples from the actual sample (Efron, 1979) which has been validated in prior research (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). This procedure provides significant regression coefficients for the structural model. In order for any hypothesis to be validated, the path coefficients obtained must be significant at 95 percent confidence interval.
CONCLUSION

The use of reference groups and the social environment has been sparsely employed within the marketing literature. The concepts of social identity and self-concept have only been studied previously from the perspective of social psychology, with little attention being given to them in marketing except only within the last decade. This research intends to use these conceptions within the context of alcohol consumption, specifically beer consumed by youngsters.

The consumption and interaction with brands is a social exchange that individuals undergo while making consumption decisions. This research has considered the consumption of alcohol brands as a social decision that people undergo. Individuals and specifically youngsters are highly concerned about their public image, signaled identities, social approval by peers and the social environment in general. According to this research, youngsters would be more perturbed by signaling an unintended (or even intentional) negative identity which portrays undesired versions of their self to others. This motivation would be significant enough to stop them from indulging in certain actions which are imbued with social connotations, one of them being alcohol consumption.

This research intends to use affective advertising, identity constructions and reference group associations in a novel and unique way influencing youngsters against the consumption of beer. Prior research has shown that merely using informational and risk-related information is not persuasive enough to change the desire of deleterious products including cigarettes and alcohol (Berger & Rand, 2008). Rather, young adults and individuals are influenced even more to indulge in these behaviors as a result of social pressures and peer presence (Rose et al., 1992; Zhang & Shrum, 2009). They believe resisting to drugs and alcohol goes against social conformity; hence they indulge in these actions even more to gain social approval, which is a prime motivator for actions of young individuals (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996). This research suggests using the same constructs of identity construction, reference group associations and affective experiences, which are important for younger individuals and would have a greater impact on behavior change for them than informational campaigns (Milne et al., 2000; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Piacentini & Banister, 2009).

Lastly, this research intends to employ behavioral, social and marketing concepts to counter a rising health issue, i.e. alcohol consumption. The proposed research model will apply the aforementioned concepts as detailed in PART 1 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK and Variables section, within the health
marketing domain. Within the next sections, we will look in greater detail on the specific contributions of this research, its potential limitations and avenues for future research.

**Research Contributions**

This research sheds light on some unique concepts which would be interesting for marketing scholars to analyze and interpret. Furthermore, the context of this research is based on curbing alcohol consumption, which is a major health risk contributing to innumerable diseases all over the world (World Health Organization, 2012). The proposed research will make significant advancements to marketing theory and for practitioners, which will be detailed in the next sections.

A. Theoretical Contributions

The contributions of this research are multifold. Firstly, the current research establishes the significance of affective experiences and the individual motivation to pursue affect in a social context. This concept has been sparsely studied in prior literature, with no applications to date in a social context. The need for experiencing affect by individuals, and consumers’ disidentification with the brand, have been rarely studied, if not at all.

This research proposes an innovative way to use positive affect for health marketing. Previously, health marketers and research scholars have relied heavily on the use of negative emotions to make people feel ashamed, afraid, disgusted and guilty of consuming drugs and alcohol (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Lauren G. Block & Keller, 1997; Duhachek et al., 2012; P. A. Keller, 2006; Morales et al., 2012). Relying on identity constructions and social integration concepts instead of negative emotions and restrictive consumption, this research goes a step beyond existing works and opens new avenues for research and health marketing. Affective experiences form a part of each individual’s decision making, however the extent to which persons actively pursue affect differs on an individual level (Maio & Esses, 2001). This construct directly influences decision making, information receptivity, recognition, and preferences (Haddock et al., 2008), establishing its firm significance within marketing literature.

Second, the research adds to a growing body of works on social identity (Knowles & Gardner, 2008; White & Dahl, 2006; White & Dahl, 2007), identity signaling and divergence (Berger & Heath, 2007; Berger & Rand, 2008), social influence (Hudson et al., 2016; McFerran et al., 2010). Identity theorists have been working on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) for a long time now, which
encompasses the way that people interact with the social environment by classifying and associating with certain groups. Various researchers have shown how family and peers influence consumption decisions (Childers & Rao, 1992), and how people vary their responses based on their age (Tepper, 1994). This research shows through its focus on social underpinnings that people strive for actions which lend them social credibility, but also avoid being associated with persons through whom a negative image of the self would be projected. It is important for people to follow the societal norms and associate with groups, but not at the expense of a negative self-image and undesired identity signaling.

Third, this research is one of the few to look at anti-consumption behaviors using affective experiences and group associations. Most marketing literature has focused more on consumption contexts, while largely ignoring anti-consumption by individuals (M. S. W. Lee, K. V. Fernandez, et al., 2009). The consumer-brand disidentification construct intends to demystify and explore how consumers distance themselves from brands. While there exists substantial research on consumption behaviors, the addition of anti-consumption research is also of equal import. Through this research, it is being effused that fear of projecting a negative identity to the social environment influences individuals to distance themselves from these people and the brands that they consume. In order to protect their self-image and self-identity, individuals would be willing to indulge in anti-consumption of the brand and even to disidentify with the brand. We are arguing that dissociating with the brand’s reference groups is essential for consumers to disidentify with a brand, after which they would stop consuming the respective brands.

Fourth, the research adds valuable addition to scholarly endeavours conducted on the concepts of identity construction and meaning, through the relations formed with brands. Previously researchers have worked on self-presentation concerns (Wooten & Reed, 2000), process of meaning transfer from brands to the self (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005; G. D. McCracken, 1990), identifying with brands (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012), portraying different versions of the self (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012) and forming relationships with brands (Fournier, 1994, 1998, 2009; C. W. Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005). This research sets itself apart from these as it is based on how consumers’ relations with brands can be disrupted and brought into question (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). We show that consumers use brands to build their identities, however when they realize that associating with the brand is signaling an undesired, negative identity, these people wish to dissociate and disidentify with the brand. This willingness to disidentify with the brand for motives of identity protection, presentation and preservation is strong enough to overcome the connections and relations formed with brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007).
B. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Besides its theoretical contributions, this research also aims to lend practical import for marketers and practitioners. Health informational campaigns and health marketing research has mostly focused on informational campaigns or employing negative emotions to influence people towards healthy behaviors (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Duhachek et al., 2012; Han et al., 2016; Peattie & Peattie, 2009). The intent of this work is to show how positive affect and identity constructions can be just as or even more effective in influencing decision making. People have a greater motivation to indulge in actions or behaviors which present them as socially acceptable, promoting a positive social identity and avoiding interactions with people or brands that they do not wish to be associated with because they project a negative self-identity to others. Further, research has shown that using informational campaigns or risk perceptions does not impact future behaviors of individuals (Milne et al., 2000). It is suggested that people in themselves would have a greater inclination to experience affect and distance themselves from negative identity signals which also get in the way of positive affective experiences. This finding is of relevance for health marketers and practitioners, as well as policymakers. These implications can be used in future health marketing campaigns targeting consumption of alcohol specifically, and more broadly all forms of addictive substances.

This research also has practical implications for brand managers, which they can employ in their marketing. First, a brand should try to avoid possible formations of dissociative reference groups, especially for its core customers. There should be maximum efforts made to help individuals associate and relate with the brand and its target customers (i.e. reference groups). For brands, even in terms of a hurting relationship, certain components of the brand’s personality can still save the brand from a failing relationship (J. Aaker et al., 2004). With this research, it is hypothesized that some people might still be hesitant/unwilling to cut off their consumption of the brand, even after disidentifying with the brand and its customers. This effect is possibly due to an existing long-lasting relation of the customer with the brand. (Fournier, 1994, 1998) has stated that people form relations with brands similar to interpersonal relations, some of which can also be in the form of a marriage, partnership, courtship or fling. When people have a strong, firm relation with the brand, it would force them to give the brand a second chance and the benefit of doubt, even when they feel betrayed or disidentified with the brand.

For health marketers and policymakers, all is not lost. Having a strong relation with the brands does not mean that it is impossible to convince consumers against a brand. It simply implies that this relation might get in the way of persuasion. This research would show that a mix of both positive affective
messages and dissociative identity traits related to the brand’s consumption, would be more effective than prior marketing efforts targeting negative affect, risk perceptions and cognitive information within health campaigns. This research suggests the usage of affect, identity constructions, social identity perceptions, brand relations and brand disidentification for health advertising based on curbing alcohol consumption.

The focus of this research is on youngsters who are the highest consumers of beer, and mostly consume beer in social settings (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2015, 2017). These people are inclined to become lifetime consumers of alcohol once they start drinking at school-going ages, which is more and more becoming the norm across Europe now (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2017; World Health Organization, 2012). Targeting young consumers through identity constructions and affective advertising could be more persuasive, as they are the ones most concerned about social approval (Schoenbachler & Whittler, 1996) and most influenced by affective experiences (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010; Agrawal & Wan, 2009; Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Duhachek et al., 2012). Using this group of consumers would allow to curb their consumption right now, and their future potential consumption along with their progeny.

Lastly, this research intends to contribute to a growing body of works on health awareness and potential risks of consuming alcohol. Alcohol is considered among the top three causes for public health concerns. It is a cause of numerous non-communicable diseases including cancer and liver disease, and increases the risk of HIV, tuberculosis and pneumonia. It is also a cause of pre-natal as well as post-natal risks, child diseases, low birth weight and unsafe sex (World Health Organization, 2012). For women, excessive alcohol consumption leads to breast cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy, causing 25,000 deaths each year (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2015). This risk also permeates the fabric of social structures, with poor and disadvantaged people being at risk the most. Alcohol consumption affects the social environment and not just the drinker, through social and domestic violence, increased health care costs and unemployment, and rising crime rates as a result of intoxication (World Health Organization, 2012).
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Like all works of research, this effort is also filled with its potential limitations, which future research can attempt to resolve by extending this work.

C. LIMITS

The current research has aimed to present the selected concepts in a holistic way, albeit with certain limitations at the theoretical level. In PART 1 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, we have endeavored to present a comprehensive review of the available concepts as applicable and relevant for the current research. It is possible that there might be more concepts whose addition to the model could further explain consumer behaviors. In this research, we have only considered the context of anti-consumption due to a lack of existing research on this topic. Further, we have considered behaviors greatly in a social context and less in an individual context to cater to social consumption of alcohol. Individual level disidentification has also been shown to influence evaluations, behavior and choices regarding product and brand usage (White & Dahl, 2007). We have also focused more on protecting the identity construction process by avoiding negative identity signaling in line with prior research (Berger & Heath, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008). Regarding the consumption of alcohol, we have not considered forced consumption resulting from peer pressure (Rose et al., 1992), episodic drinking and driving behaviors (Cismaru, Chao, Lavack, & Markewich, 2009; Lastovicka et al., 1987) and impulsive consumption of alcohol (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Further, we have also not considered an impact of gender at this stage as the intention is to reach out to a larger audience of alcohol consumers; previous research and health studies have already considered the differential impact of gender on alcohol consumption (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2015; Lastovicka et al., 1987; Morris et al., 1994; World Health Organization, 2012, 2014). Lastly, the behavioral component of the research model includes variables on intentions and sharing, which might not be the same as actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

This research also has some potential constraints regarding its methodology. First, selecting a specific age group can have possible implications on research conclusions. For instance, are the results generated from youth sample generalizable in the same way to older age groups (Ashraf & Merunka, 2016; R. A. Peterson & Merunka, 2014)? The research is also prone to a social desirability bias, as participants would be submitting their written/verbal responses by themselves. This method can lead to an overestimation of response variables especially in studies based on social contexts and affective experiences (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014; Derbaix & Poncin, 2005). Further, we have selected a specific type of alcohol, i.e.
beer consumed by the youth, as this is the most likely consumed form of alcohol by persons belonging to
the ages 19-27 years. In order to verify the results, a limited number of beer brands within France have
been chosen as a starting point. Further, it is possible that the impact of our experimental manipulations
might be subject to certain control variables such as involvement, attitude towards drinking and other
individual level differences.

D. Future Research

In order to validate and extend the current research, future research can test the same concepts
across different regions such as the Americas, Asia and Middle East. In some Muslim majority countries
like Pakistan, alcohol consumption is legally prohibited because of religious reasons. Future research can
also explore these concepts to see how much of an impact do the state, religion and law have on
consumption of addictive and deleterious products. This research can be replicated in other regions to
assess the presence of proposed effects as per this research for other countries, and also to attain a macro
level analysis through the use of cross-national research. Furthermore, collecting data from younger
consumers such as school-going students and older consumers would provide additional insight to the
research problem. It has been shown that consumers respond differently to age segmentation cues in
labeling and advertising (Tepper, 1994), hence the role of alcohol health labeling can also be considered.
Further research can also review the state level policies and how policymakers can devise a
comprehensive plan for curbing consumption, as has been done in other similar research works (Peattie
& Peattie, 2009; Shiu et al., 2009).

In this research, we have considered the context of dissociation and disidentification from the brand
and its reference groups. Future research can consider identification with the brand and how it affects
consumer-brand relations. In this research, we have chosen to study alcohol because of its high
consumption levels, vast potential risks and implications for the society. Further research in this domain
can include the repercussions as faced from the consumption of other addictive substances such as
cigarettes, drugs, energy drinks and even carbonated drinks. There is a need for exploratory works looking
at how people form relations with such products and what are the factors that make them stay
connected/addicted and be a part of these brands? Can these relations be controlled by the brands, the
state and policymakers? Or does this relationship occur due to arbitrary reasons purely occurring in the
minds of the consumers?
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APPENDIX 1: MEASUREMENT SCALE FOR SELF-CONSTRUALS

Using the scale below, please write the appropriate number in the blank beside each item.

Not at all true of me | | | | | | | | Very true of me

1. ___ I am focused on preventing negative events in my life.
2. ___ I am anxious that I will fall short of my responsibilities and obligations.
3. ___ I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations.
4. ___ I often think about the person I am afraid I might become in the future.
5. ___ I often think about the person I would ideally like to be in the future.
6. ___ I typically focus on the success I hope to achieve in the future.
7. ___ I often worry that I will fail to accomplish my academic goals.
8. ___ I often think about how I will achieve academic success.
9. ___ I often imagine myself experiencing bad things that I fear might happen to me.
10. ___ I frequently think about how I can prevent failures in my life.
11. ___ I am more oriented toward preventing losses than I am toward achieving gains.
12. ___ My major goal in school right now is to achieve my academic ambitions.
13. ___ My major goal in school right now is to avoid becoming an academic failure.
14. ___ I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to reach my “ideal self”—to fulfill my hopes, wishes, and aspirations.
15. ___ I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to become the self I “ought” to be—to fulfill my duties, responsibilities, and obligations.
16. ___ In general, I am focused on achieving positive outcomes in my life.
17. ___ I often imagine myself experiencing good things that I hope will happen to me.
18. ___ Overall, I am more oriented toward achieving success than preventing failure.

Source: (Lockwood et al., 2002)
APPENDIX 2: MEASUREMENT SCALE FOR SELF-CONSTRUALS

1. I interact
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me
4. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments
8. I should take into consideration my parents’ advice when making education/career plans
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group
10. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I’m not happy with the group
11. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible
12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument
13. It is important for me to be a good listener
14. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards
17. I am the same person at home that I am at school
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me
19. I act the same way no matter who I am with
20. I feel comfortable using someone’s first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am
21. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I’ve just met
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects
23. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me
24. I value being in good health above everything

Source: (Singelis, 1994)