

**IT'S LOVE!!! THE BRAND LOVE OF THE BELO HORIZONTE STREET
CARNIVAL.**

**É O AMOR!!! O AMOR DA MARCA DO CARNAVAL DE RUA DE BELO
HORIZONTE.**

**¡¡¡ES EL AMOR!!! EL AMOR DE LA MARCA DEL CARNAVAL CALLEJERO DE
BELO HORIZONTE.**

Luiz Rodrigo Cunha Moura
Doutor em Administração – UFMG. Professor do Curso de Mestrado Profissional de Administração
do Centro Universitário UMA
luizrcmoura@gmail.com
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7040-7864>

Dorota Klimecka-Tatar
Department of Production Engineering and Safety, associate professor. Czestochowa University of
Technology, Polonia
d.klimecka-tatar@pcz.pl
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6212-6061>

Frederico Rafael Vargas Rocha
Doutor em Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, URJC, Espanha. Mestrado em
Máster Oficial en Marketing. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, URJC, Espanha
frechavargas@hotmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2591-1495>

Ester Eliane Jeunon
Doutora em Psicologia pela UNB. Professora da Fundação Pedro Leopoldo
esterjeunon@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5158-0151>

Nina Rosa da Silveira Cunha
Doutora em Economia Rural pela Universidade Federal de Viçosa - UFV. Professora Titular do
Departamento de Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade Federal de Viçosa - UFV- MG
ninaufv@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2292-2159>

Editor Científico: José Edson Lara
Organização Comitê Científico
Double Blind Review pelo SEER/OJS
Recebido em 10.10.2021
Aprovado em 18.12.2021



Este trabalho foi licenciado com uma Licença Creative Commons - Atribuição – Não Comercial 3.0 Brasil

ABSTRACT

Objective: To develop and test a theoretical model on brand love and its consequences on behavioral intentions related to loyalty and word-of-mouth communication among participants in the street carnival in Belo Horizonte.

Methodology: A survey research was carried out on the internet and reached 522 valid responses. The target audience was the revelers who participated in the street carnival in Belo Horizonte. Data analysis used structural equation modeling techniques.

Originality: This is a model developed specifically to understand a phenomenon that is the growth of Belo Horizonte's street carnival. This study is a pioneer in Brazil on brand love and carnival. Thus, a model based on brand love was developed in conjunction with word-of-mouth communication to explain this event's high level of loyalty and growth.

Main results: The brand love for the Belo Horizonte carnival is high, and the developed model reached nomological validity, as supported by all hypotheses. Thus, it is concluded that brand love significantly and positively impacts loyalty and the intention to make word of mouth, just as loyalty also impacts word of mouth.

Theoretical contributions: Developing an explanatory model about loyalty and WOM based on brand love. This work also brings as an academic contribution the study in an unexplored sector for this theme, deepening the knowledge on the subject and its consequences in terms of loyalty and word of mouth.

Keywords: Carnival, Brand love, Loyalty, WOM, Branding.

RESUMO

Objetivo: elaborar e testar um modelo teórico sobre brand love e suas consequências sobre as intenções comportamentais relativas à lealdade e a comunicação boca a boca dos participantes do carnaval de rua de Belo Horizonte.

Metodologia: Foi realizada uma pesquisa *survey* pela internet sendo que foram alcançados 522 respostas válidas. O público-alvo foram os foliões que participaram do carnaval de rua de Belo Horizonte. A análise de dados utilizou técnicas de modelagem de equações estruturais.

Originalidade: esse é um modelo desenvolvido especificamente para tentar compreender um fenômeno que é o crescimento do carnaval de rua de Belo Horizonte. Esse estudo é pioneiro no Brasil sobre o brand love e o carnaval. Assim, foi desenvolvido um modelo baseado no brand love em conjunto com a comunicação boca a boca para explicar o alto índice de lealdade e de crescimento desse evento.

Principais resultados: O brand love ao carnaval de Belo Horizonte é alto e o modelo desenvolvido alcançou a validade nomológica, pois, todas as hipóteses foram apoiadas. Assim, conclui-se que o brand love impacta significativamente e positivamente a lealdade e a intenção de fazer o boca a boca, assim como a lealdade também impacta o boca a boca.

Contribuições Teóricas: o desenvolvimento de um modelo explicativo sobre a lealdade e WOM a partir do brand love. Esse trabalho traz ainda como contribuição teórica o estudo em um setor inexplorado para essa temática aprofundando o conhecimento sobre o tema e as suas consequências em termos da lealdade e boca a boca.

Palavras-Chave: Carnaval, Amor à marca, Lealdade, WOM, Branding.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: desarrollar y probar un modelo teórico sobre el amor por la marca y sus consecuencias en las intenciones de comportamiento relacionadas con la lealtad y la comunicación de boca en boca entre los participantes del carnaval callejero de Belo Horizonte.

Metodología: Se realizó una encuesta de investigación en Internet y se obtuvieron 522 respuestas válidas. El público objetivo fueron los juerguistas que participaron en el carnaval callejero de Belo Horizonte. El análisis de datos utilizó técnicas de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales.

Originalidad: se trata de un modelo desarrollado específicamente para intentar comprender un fenómeno que es el crecimiento del carnaval callejero de Belo Horizonte. Este estudio es pionero en Brasil sobre el amor por las marcas y el carnaval. Así, se desarrolló un modelo basado en el amor por la marca en conjunto con el boca a boca para explicar el alto nivel de fidelización y crecimiento de este evento.

Resultados principales: El amor de la marca por el carnaval de Belo Horizonte es alto y el modelo desarrollado alcanzó validez nomológica, ya que todas las hipótesis fueron apoyadas. Así, se concluye que el amor por la marca impacta de forma significativa y positiva en la fidelidad y la intención de hacer boca a boca, así como la fidelidad también impacta en el boca a boca.

Aportes teóricos: el desarrollo de un modelo explicativo sobre la lealtad y el WOM basado en el amor por la marca. Este trabajo también trae como aporte teórico el estudio en un sector inexplorado para esta temática, profundizando el conocimiento sobre el tema y sus consecuencias en términos de fidelización y boca a boca.

Palabras clave: Carnaval, Amor por la marca, Lealtad, WOM, Branding.

1 INTRODUCTION

Despite being strongly linked to Brazilian culture and being, to some extent, one of the symbols of Brazil (Santos, 2005; Santos *et al.*, 2016), Carnival was brought to the country by the Portuguese. Related to the Catholic Church, carnival celebrated pagan festivals in the days

before Lent (Saldanha & Gonçalves, 2019; Santos, 2005) between the beginning of the year and the beginning of spring (Braga & Vieira, 2013).

It is considered the largest and most important popular festival that takes place in the country (Braga & Vieira, 2013; Cruvinel, 2019; Saldanha & Gonçalves, 2019) and is composed of several popular manifestations through events that take place in the most diverse locations, such as clubs, salons, sambódromos and on the streets (Lima, 2008). Furthermore, it is one of how people express their feelings through dances and games and add social, political, economic, and cultural manifestations and criticisms (Cruvinel, 2019; Santos *et al.*, 2016).

About the city of Belo Horizonte, the first commemorations took place in 1897, even before the town was inaugurated (Santos *et al.*, 2016). After its inauguration, it continued to take place regularly until the 1930s (Dias, 2017).

Later, carnival – mainly on the street – lost its importance, and in the 1990s, Belo Horizonte became synonymous with tranquility and tranquility during the revelry period (Dias, 2017).

However, around 2010, the street carnival reappeared in this city, mainly due to the creation of new blocks and the increase in the number of participants (Dias, 2017; Santos, *et al.*, 2016). Thus, in 2013 estimates indicate that 500 thousand people participated in the Belo Horizonte carnival, and in 2017 this number jumped to three million revelers (Saldanha & Gonçalves, 2019). The city hall's most recent data indicate that about 4.5 million revelers enjoyed carnival on the city's public streets in 2020, through more than 300 blocks (PBH, 2020).

It is noteworthy that carnival can be considered as a complex provision of public service - aspects related to traffic, urban cleaning, security, access to health care, among others are considered (PBH, 2020) -, in which the government is interested in satisfying the public, with high quality of services and with the formation of a positive image of the event (Santo *et al.*, 2016), and in this case specifically, of Belo Horizonte's street carnival.

In the case of the participants' satisfaction and the provision of high-quality public services, there is a relationship between the participants and this type of party. The stronger the positive relationship between the public and service providers, the greater the loyalty of consumers to the company's brand (Moura *et al.*, 2019).

The Brazilian culture embedded this passion for carnival, and one of the ways to represent this passion can be understood as the loyalty to participate in this party and the love for the brand or brand love. In the case of this research, there is the Belo Horizonte Street Carnival.

Brand love is a relatively new construct, and due to the growth in the number of works that address it, it can be considered an emerging topic (Christino, Moura & Fonseca, 2020). However, it can be understood as the relationship between a brand and the level of emotional commitment of a consumer to that brand (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012).

This work aims to measure the brand love of carnival revelers in Belo Horizonte and its consequences in attitudinal and behavioral terms. A new theoretical model was created and validated consisting of the constructs: brand love, brand loyalty, and word-of-mouth.

The development of new models capable of measuring consumer perception and its influence on behavioral intentions allows for expanding knowledge about brand love and its relationship with loyalty and word-of-mouth. In addition, testing the scales used to measure these constructs and their application to a street event – the carnival – allows filling the knowledge gap about the applicability of these scales in different contexts.

It is noteworthy that the empirical tests of constructs developed in other countries and applied to consumers of different cultures help validate the scales used and generalize the possibilities of applying new models, also configuring themselves as theoretical contributions.

In managerial terms, managers responsible for street events will be able to use the model developed in this article as a management tool capable of measuring the brand love of their customers and, therefore, its consequences in terms of loyalty and word-of-mouth of these customers concerning the event.

Another point to be highlighted is that this topic is of interest not only to managers of for-profit companies but also to non-profit companies and public entities that wish to improve the relationship with their public and may have instruments at their disposal able to indicate the current level and historical trend of this relationship over time.

Thus, these managers will be able to make more assertive decisions about marketing projects and programs, capable of interfering in the perception of their clients' brand love.

Carnival can be considered a great tourist attraction (Braga & Vieira, 2013), and as it attracts a large number of participants and is an event that takes place every year, the study of

factors that can influence the loyalty of revelers and also the attraction of “new customers,” such as word-of-mouth, gain significant importance in economic terms.

It is noteworthy that the Belo Horizonte carnival generates a lot of revenue and contributes to the growth of the local economy (Saldanha & Gonçalves, 2019), in addition to positively impacting job creation, strengthening the tourist destination, increasing hotel accommodation and all infrastructure, knowledge of new local tourist attractions and the like (Cruvinel, 2019).

2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE

This section describes the constructs and hypotheses that form the hypothetical model of this research.

2.1 Brand love

At first, the expression brand love (brand love) may seem like an exaggeration. However, the contemporary consumer society has been increasingly susceptible to material goods to justify their attitudes and behaviors (Christino *et al.*, 2020; Gonçalves Filho, Veit, Souki, & Monteiro, 2010).

Brand love includes a passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation, positive emotions in response to the brand, and, especially, declarations of love for a brand. However, the authors recognize that consumers tend to use “love” more about interpersonal relationships than in consumer-brand relationships (Ahuvia, 1992; 2005; Oliver, 1999; Shimp & Thomas, 1988). However, affection can carry the consumer-brand relationship when the consumer expands his identity through brands (Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi, 2014), which may resemble the feelings between people through interpersonal relationships (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006).

For Carrol and Ahuvia (2006, p.81), brand love is defined as “the degree of emotional and passionate attachment of a satisfied consumer to a particular brand,” also composed of excitement and obsession for the brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Excitement is a feeling resulting from the passion felt by the brand, and it can generate an idealization and obsessive presence in the consumer's mind that will result in a long-term relationship with the brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013).

It was through the study by Fournier (1998) that the brand love concept was boosted in the academic sphere and, since then, this dimension has received the attention of several researchers in the last decade (Albert & Meruka, 2013; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Drennan, Bianchi, Cacho-Elizondo, Louriero, Guibert, & Proud, 2015; Esteban, Ballester, & Muñoz, 2014; Huber, Meyer, & Schmid, 2015; Karjaluoto, Munnukka, & Kiuru, 2016; Langner, Schmidt, & Fischer, 2015; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014) and for further consolidation of this construct and, particularly of its measurement, new studies emerge.

As a mechanism for understanding the brand love construct, scales emerge that enable its measurement (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Esteban *et al.*, 2014). However, there is no agreement on the best scale for mediating brand love. Despite this, it can be observed that Carrol and Ahuvia (2006), which has ten items, were the most cited in studies on this topic (Bizarrias & Lopes, 2017).

Studies on brand love emerge intending to investigate the reasons that lead consumers to love a particular brand to the point that this love becomes brand loyalty (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Christino *et al.*, 2020; Drennan *et al.*, 2015), which is recommended through word-of-mouth to other customers (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006; Karjaluoto *et al.*, 2016) and, consequently, result in a significant increase in the volume of purchases and the willingness to pay a premium price for certain brands (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra *et al.*, 2012).

From the above, the following hypotheses can be established:

H1: Brand love has a significantly positive effect on word-of-mouth.

H2: Brand love has a significantly positive effect on brand loyalty.

2.2 Loyalty

Loyalty can be conceptualized as a deep commitment to a given brand, manifested in the consistent repurchase of the same product/service or the same brand, immune to situational and marketing influences (Oliver, 1999). In this sense, Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) describe loyalty as a relational construct, in which there is an intention to maintain and/or expand the relationship with a company.

According to Oliver (1997) there are stages through which loyalty passes for its development over time. The first phase is cognitive or informational. As the name implies,

consumers prefer one brand among many others, demonstrating their belief in the brand. Then, there is the affective phase, which occurs from positive experiences over time and commitment to the brand arises by associating emotion with the pre-existing cognitive aspect. The third phase is called conative loyalty and represents a step forward from intentional commitment and subsequent repurchase behavior. The fourth and final phase of loyalty is ultimate loyalty, where actions are carried out based on behavioral intentions. At this stage, the actions of competitors have little effect on this type of consumer – in terms of switching suppliers and trying out new brands – and the consumer significantly reduces the search for information and interest in other brands or substitute products.

There are studies that indicate that loyalty is an independent construct and an antecedent of word-of-mouth communication (Dick & Basu, 1994). Therefore, the chances of positive recommendations and referrals from current customers increase depending on the level of loyalty of these customers. In addition, they would be more resistant to negative information about the brand or the company and would be more interested in receiving information about products and services to which there is loyalty (Wangenheim, 2005).

From the above, the following hypothesis can be established:

H3: Loyalty has a significantly positive effect on word-of-mouth.

2.3 Word of mouth

Word of mouth communication can be considered a form of interpersonal communication, in which customers and non-customers of a product or service share experiences and information (Nickels & Wood, 1999).

Word of mouth can be understood as informal communication between customers about all possible aspects of a product, service, brand, or company (Kau & Loh, 2006). Thus, consumers will have information that will be useful in deciding on the purchase of a good or service and which brand they should choose (Lima, Moura, & Souki, 2015).

The importance of word-of-mouth communication derives from the consumers' perception of its credibility (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2014), as those responsible for the information know the service or product and, in theory, are impartial in their evaluations (Bateson & Hoffman, 2016). In addition, friends, family, and opinion leaders provide much of this information, increasing its credibility (Lima *et al.*, 2015).

Word-of-mouth communication is strongly associated with customer engagement. Therefore, to exploit the potential of positive word-of-mouth, marketers must make efforts to improve customers' commitment to the company, mainly through positive affect, identification with the company's values. Commitment linked to high switching costs or lack of alternatives does not have the same effect on commitment and, consequently, on positive recommendations (Harrison-Walker, 2001).

3 THE HYPOTHETICAL MODEL

Considering the concepts and relationships described in the theoretical framework and the development of hypotheses, the model proposed for this research was developed. Thus, Fig. 1 was elaborated, which represents the relationships between the constructs of brand love, loyalty, and word-of-mouth and their respective hypotheses arising from these relationships.

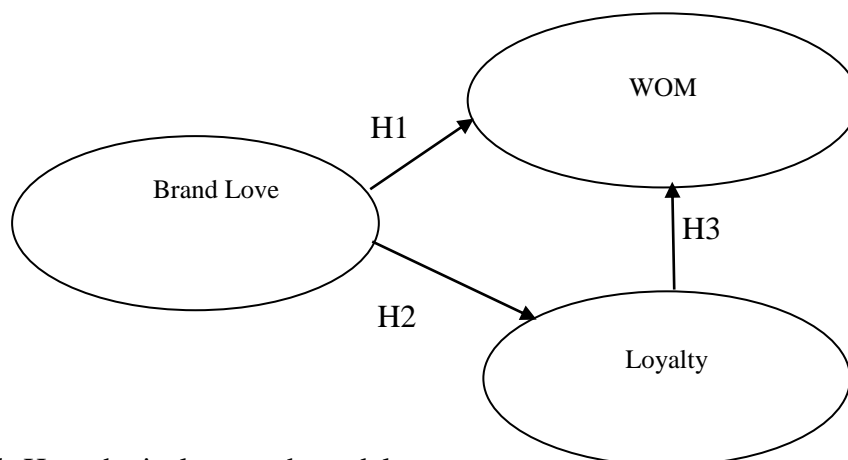


Figure 1. Hypothetical research model

Source: Elaborated by the authors

4 METODOLOGY

This research presents a quantitative approach based on considerations about its objectives. Thus, a survey was carried out with the street users of the Belo Horizonte carnival.

The researchers used scales previously validated by several authors to elaborate the questionnaire used in the survey. Table 1 presents the constructs present in the tested model and the authors used as a reference for elaborating the construct indicators.

Table 1
Constructs used in the research and their origins

Constructs	Authors
Brand Love	Carrol & Ahuvia (2006); Drennan <i>et al.</i> (2015); Christino <i>et al.</i> (2020).
Loyalty	Ly & Loc (2017); Oliver (1999); Ong, Lee, & Ramayah (2018); Pereira, Moura, Souki, & Cunha. (2019); Rocha, Curiel, & Moura /2020).
Word-of-mouth	Chen (2016); Kau & Loh (2006); Lima <i>et al.</i> (2015).

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The people who participated in the street carnival in Belo Horizonte were the research's target audience. Thus, the first question of the data collection instrument is a filter question regarding the respondent's participation in this event. If it was negative, the questionnaire informed the respondent about their inability to participate in the survey.

The questions that contain the indicators of the three constructs used an interval-type scaling, with values between 0 (“totally disagree”) and 10 (“totally agree”). These values were chosen because this 11-item range can reduce severe asymmetry problems, in addition to generating a better visualization of the scale (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996), being preferable to the seven-point scale because, represents an identical group between the values of 0 to 10 points (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

It is essential to highlight that the questionnaire pre-test took place before the data collection process. Thus, the researchers interviewed thirty-five people who make up the target audience. The objective was to verify possible problems and inconsistencies in the content and options that make up each of the questions in the data collection instrument. In the end, results indicated that no modification to the questionnaire was necessary.

The data collection process took place via the internet. Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire developed using the Google Forms tool from the search for groups and communities of users who participated in the street carnival in Belo Horizonte. Thus, this sample can be classified as a "convenience sample." The data collection process obtained a total of 522 questionnaires considered valid. It is noteworthy that as the model was composed

of 17 variables that represent the three constructs, it appears that more than 20 cases were obtained for each item of the questionnaire, meeting the criteria of Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2009) of at least 10 cases for each variable to be used in structural equation modeling (SEM).

The data analysis process used several techniques of multivariate data statistics and sought to verify the reliability and validity of the data set and constructs, achieved through structural equation modeling. SPSS and AMOS software are the ones used for data analysis.

5 RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Treatment of sample data and characteristics

In the case of this research, it was not necessary to deal with the missing data since the electronic form for data collection did not accept blank answers for the quantitative questions. In the case of demographic data, missing data represented less than 1% of the total responses.

Then, the identification and removal of multivariate outliers were performed. Thus, the Mahalanobis D^2 value was calculated, and the sample cases presented a value above the X^2 test with the number of degrees of freedom equal to 17 – number of quantitative variables – and sig. = 0.001, were discarded. In the end, the researchers removed 49 elements, and the sample consisted of 473 elements.

The next step was to examine the normality of the sample. For this purpose, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (K-S Test) was performed, which pointed to a violation of normality (p-value = 0.000 for all quantitative variables). Thus, all multivariate statistical techniques must be robust about the violation of normality.

Next, Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 2
Sample characteristics

Demographic Variable	Characteristics of the sampling	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Feminine	270	57,1%
	Masculine	196	41,4%
	Others	4	0,8%
	preferred not to answer	3	0,6%
Age (Years)	< 18	7	1,5%
	18 – 34	338	71,5%
	35 – 49	107	22,6%
	59 – 64	17	3,6%
	>= 65	1	0,2%
	preferred not to answer	3	0,6%
	< 1	14	3,0%
Monthly Income (minimum salaries / month)	1 < 2	71	15,0%
	2 < 5	167	35,3%
	5 < 8	95	20,1%
	8 < 10	53	11,2%
	10 < 20	49	10,4%
	> 20	21	4,4%
	preferred not to answer	3	0,6%
	preferred not to answer	3	0,6%
Marital Status	Married / Stable union	106	22,4%
	Divorced, divorced or legally separated	21	4,4%
	Single	341	72,1%
	Widower	2	0,4%
	preferred not to answer	3	0,6%

Note: The minimum salary in Brazil is equivalent to approximately 255 dollars per month during the data collection period.

Source: data research.

From the data shown in Table 2, it is possible to conclude that the sample is formed mainly by women, single and aged between 18 and 34 years. Furthermore, the largest income group earns between two and five minimum wages.

It is noteworthy that although more than 90% of respondents reside in the state of Minas Gerais, whose capital is the city of Belo Horizonte, results found that respondents are living in another 15 Brazilian states. In addition, more than 60% of respondents reside in Belo Horizonte, but responses were obtained from residents of another 72 Brazilian women.

5.2 Unidimensionality, Reliability and Validity

One-dimensionality indicates whether only one dimension or factor forms a given construct. For the examination of unidimensionality, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is performed, with three assumptions to be met so that its results are considered valid. First, there must be a high number of statistically significant correlations between all construct

indicators in this case. In addition, the Bartlett Sphericity Test value must have a sig value. at the 0.000 level. Finally, the value for calculating the adequacy of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample must present values above 0.70 for tested scales and 0.60 for exploratory scales (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017; Hair *et al.*, 2009).

For all three constructs, all assumptions were met, as all the correlations between the constructs are statistically significant and the values of the KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity Test are adequate. In addition, both Loyalty and Word-of-mouth generate only one factor and are therefore one-dimensional. Only in the case of the word-of-mouth construct was the KMO value a little lower than expected, being valid for exploratory scales.

Regarding the component and commonality values, they were all above 0.500, which Hair *et al.* (2009) recommended.

In the case of the Brand Love construct, two factors were generated: one with eight indicators and the other with two indicators. In the latter case, it is possible to see that the two indicators are the questions with neutral valence present in the measurement scale of the Love for the Brand – in italics in Table 3. Therefore, we chose to remove these items, even because these values can denote a lack of attention on respondents to fill out the questionnaire.

Thus, the Love a Brand construct consisted of eight indicators, and, as described above, all assumptions and benchmarks were met.

Another item to be considered in the model analysis is the reliability of each of the scales used to measure each of the constructs. This verification is done by calculating the value of Cronbach's Alpha (AC), whose measurement varies between 0 and 1 and presents as appropriate parameters above 0.70 (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017; Hair *et al.*, 2009). All scales presented adequate values, as they are all above 0.90 (Table 3).

The subsequent analysis is related to convergent validity, which indicates whether the indicators really form a construct through a significant correlation between them. The existence or not of convergent validity is verified by calculating two parameters: the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which must have a value of at least 0.500, and the Composite Reliability (CC) with a minimum value of 0.700 (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017; Hair *et al.* 2009).

From the analysis of Table 3, results show that all three constructs present in the model have convergent validity.

Next, Table 3 shows the characteristics of the constructs and their respective indicators in terms of parameters and variables used in the investigation of unidimensionality, reliability, and convergent validity.

Table 3
Dimensionality, Reliability and Validity Values

Construct	Construct Item Description	Component	Standardized Factor Load
Brand Love VE =87.16% KMO = 0.937 AC = 0.977 AVE = 0.889 CC = 0.985			
	The Belo Horizonte Carnival is wonderful.	0,945	0,94
	The Belo Horizonte Carnival makes me feel good.	0,952	0,95
	The Belo Horizonte Carnival is totally amazing.	0,938	0,93
	<i>I have neutral feelings for the Belo Horizonte Carnival.</i>	<i>n. a.</i>	<i>n. a.</i>
	The Belo Horizonte Carnival makes me happy.	0,949	0,95
	I love the Belo Horizonte Carnival!	0,962	0,96
	<i>I don't have any particular feelings for the Belo Horizonte Carnival.</i>	<i>n. a.</i>	<i>n. a.</i>
	The Belo Horizonte Carnival is pure pleasure.	0,868	0,83
	I'm in love with the Belo Horizonte Carnival.	0,959	0,95
	I'm very connected to the Belo Horizonte Carnival.	0,892	0,87
Word of Mouth VE= 83.39% KMO=0.646 AC=0.927 AVE= 0.787 CC = 0.915			
	I recommend Belo Horizonte Carnival to other people.	0,963	0,99
	I indicate Belo Horizonte Carnival to other people.	0,965	0,99
	I only say positive things about the Belo Horizonte Carnival to my relatives and friends.	0,802	0,63
Loyalty VE = 84.62% KMO = 0.770 AC = 0.877 AVE = 0.844 CC = 0.956			
	Even if there are other alternatives, the Belo Horizonte Carnival is my first option to spend the carnival.	0,897	0,78
	In the future, I will go to the Belo Horizonte Carnival again.	0,942	0,97
	I think it's worth continuing to participate in the Belo Horizonte Carnival.	0,947	0,99
	If I have financial conditions, I prefer to go to the Belo Horizonte Carnival.	0,892	0,77

Notes: 1) VE is the variance explained by the factor. 2) KMO is the KMO test value 3) AC is the Cronbach's Alpha value. 4) AVE is the mean variance extracted. 5) CC is composite reliability. 6) n. a. means not available, as this value was not calculated for the construct..

Source: Data Research.

The discriminant validity is another validity that needs to be investigated and indicates the extent to which two constructs really are different from each other. The discriminant

validity verification is done by comparing the values of the correlations between each of the constructs with the AVE square root value of each (Hair *et al.*, 2009). Table 4 shows this comparison. The main diagonal in bold is the square root value of the AVE of the respective construct.

Table 4

Square root value of the AVEs and the correlations between the constructs.

	Brand Love	WOM	Loyalty
Brand Love	0,943		
WOM	0,900	0,887	
Loyalty	0,904	0,874	0,919

Source: research data.

According to the values presented in Table 4, only the relationship between Brand Love and Word of Mouth does not have discriminant validity. However, the other two relationships between the constructs have discriminant validity.

Data analysis proceeds with verifying the nomological validity of the created model and its relationships, as well as the performance of the hypothesis test. For this phase of data analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed, shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Verification of research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Standardized Path Coefficient	Sig. Test t	Result
Hypothesis 1 – Brand love positively and significantly influences brand loyalty.	0,90	***	Supported
Hypothesis 2 – Love for the brand positively and significantly influences word of mouth.	0,60	***	Supported
Hypothesis 3 – Loyalty positively and significantly influences word of mouth.	0,34	***	Supported

*** Significant relationships at the 0.001 level.

Source: research data.

Considering these results, Figure 2 represent the tested model below:

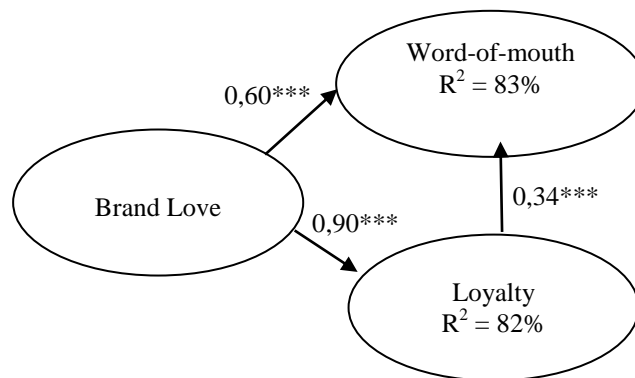


Figure 2. Hypothetical model

Note. *** Significant relationships at the 0.001 level.

Source: research data.

It's possible to verify that the proposed and tested model has nomological validity after analyzing Table 5 and Figure 2. Furthermore, the statistically significant constructs support all hypotheses by relations between them.

Regarding H1, in which brand love positively influences loyalty, the result achieved is consistent with other recent studies. However, what is highlighted is that the value found in this study is greater than that found by other researchers. More specifically, the path coefficient was $\beta = 0.904$ with sig in this research. = 0.000. This value is above the one obtained by Alnawas and Altarifi (2015) - who surveyed hotel guests in Jordan - with $\beta = 0.560$ and sig. = 0.001, by Mody and Hanks (2020) – who surveyed AirBNB guests and conventional hotel guests in the US – with $\beta = 0.841$ (AirBNB guest) and $\beta = 0.787$ (conventional hotel guests) both with sig. < 0.001, by Meiske (2019) – who studied online retailing in Indonesia – with $\beta = 0.51$ and sig. < 0.001, by Bıçakcıoğlu, İpek and Bayraktaroğlu (2018) – who studied people who had a love for some brand – with $\beta = 0.71$ and sig. < 0.05 and, finally, by Phang and Goh (2019) – study carried out in Malaysia – with $\beta = 0.548$ and sig. = 0.000.

On the other hand, Murtiningsih, Ridwan, and Retnaningsih (2019) studied Nike clients in Indonesia with $\beta = 0.118$, and Christino *et al.* (2020) studied smartphone users in Brazil - with $\beta = -0.075$ found no significance between Love Branding and Consumer Loyalty.

In the case of H2, it was not only supported by this research, but also by the research by Strandberg and Styvén (2019) – a study on a tourist city in Sweden – with $\beta = 0.82$ and sig. = 0.000, by Phang and Goh (2019) with $\beta = 0.593$ and sig. = 0.000, by Meiske (2019) with $\beta = 0.16$ and sig. < 0.05, by Christino *et al.* (2020) – who surveyed smartphone users in Brazil –

with $\beta = 0.249$ and sig. < 0.01 and by Bıçakcıoğlu *et al.* (2018) with $\beta = 0.539$ and sig. < 0.05 , demonstrating that the Love of the brand positively impacts the word of mouth of individuals about the brand. The value reached for the path coefficient was 0.60 with sig. < 0.001 , o is above the values found in other studies, except for the study by Strandberg and Styvén (2019).

The last hypothesis, H3, describes that loyalty positively influences word of mouth about the brand. The value found in this research for the path coefficient was 0.34 and sig. < 0.001 . This relationship was also identified in research by Larregui-Candelaria, Ortíz-Soto, and Sosa-Varela (2019), with $\beta = 0.796$ and sig. < 0.001 , from Meiske (2019) with $\beta = 0.24$ and sig < 0.01 , from Christino *et al.* (2020) with $\beta = 0.185$ and sig. = 0.002 and from Bıçakcıoğlu *et al.* (2018) with $\beta = 0.70$ and sig. < 0.05 .

Another point to be analyzed is related to the explained variance or R^2 for the constructs that play the role of endogenous constructs somewhere in the nomological chain. This research occurs with the Loyalty construct, which reached an explained variance of 82%, and with the Word of Mouth construct, with an R^2 equal to 83%. These values are considered very high and are higher than those found for Loyalty in other studies, such as $R^2 = 37.5\%$ of Alnawas and Altarifi (2015), $R^2 = 30\%$ of Pang and Goh (2019) and $R^2 = 27.8\%$ of Christino *et al.* (2020). For Word of Mouth, the results are the same, that is, the value obtained is higher than the 35.2% of Pang and Goh (2019), than the 67% of Strandberg and Styvén (2019), than the 63.3% of Larregui-Candelaria *et al.* (2019) and than the 33% of Christino *et al.* (2020).

This fact is a consequence of the high values found by the path coefficients and represented by the three research hypotheses.

Comparing the results of the studies, Brand Love has a greater impact on Loyalty and Word of Mouth for service consumers than for consumers in the services sector, especially in the tourism sector.

Another necessary analysis is the verification of the fit indices, which help identify the validity of the generated model. In the case of this study, we used the X^2/df indices, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA) - see Table 6.

Table 6
Tested model fit index

Fit Index	Values Obtained for the Model	Reference Value
(X^2 / df)	10.33	Acima de 1 até 3 e para modelos complexos até 5
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.768	≥ 0.90
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.932	≥ 0.90
RMSEA (Root Mean Square of Approximation)	0.141	0.03 – 0.08

Note: 1) based on Hair *et al.* (2009).
Source: Research data.

Observing Table 6, it is verified that only the CFI presented a value within the parameters used as reference.

The values of the Normed Chi-Square (X^2/df), the GFI, and the RMSEA are not adequate, indicating that despite the model having nomological validity, its fit indices are not good. This fact suggests the need for adjustment and further studies to improve the scales. One of the possible explanations for this fact is that a high level of correlation between the variables and indicators that make up a model can bias the adjustment indices.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results achieved indicate that the model developed has nomological validity, and the Brand Love influences both Loyalty and Mouth to Mouth, and the latter is also influenced by Loyalty.

In theoretical terms, the development of an explanatory model about loyalty and word-of-mouth can be mentioned as contributions of this research, based on brand love, but succinct and parsimonious.

The consequences of brand love addressed – loyalty and word-of-mouth – are very important in marketing management. It must be considered that this study is a pioneer in Brazil in the study of brand love and carnival. Other studies have already addressed the services sector and the tourist services, but no study was found on brand love related to carnivals.

Thus, this work also brings as a theoretical contribution the study in an unexplored sector for this theme, deepening knowledge on the subject and its consequences in loyalty and word-of-mouth terms.

In terms of the managerial contributions of this work, it is possible to highlight the development of a model that encompasses the consequences of the Brand Love construct and the possibility of using surveys with customers or potential customers to monitor projects and initiatives managers. This is possible due to the high value achieved for the explained variance of loyalty and word-of-mouth. Thus, initiatives in terms of the marketings' 4P's, positioning, service provision, among others, can be evaluated in quality terms of what is offered and an impact on generating brand love for customers. It must be considered that consumer choices regarding tourism services are often based on their previous experiences, which can lead consumers to love certain brands, places, events, and the like.

Furthermore, as the model is parsimonious, the data collection instrument has only 17 indicators, which makes it possible to apply it to consumers and individuals who may be receiving a service or who are in a moment of pause in this process, in addition to facilitating data collection via the internet as well.

The main limitation of this research is that the sample is not probabilistic, which greatly limits the possibility of generalizing the results.

In the case of continuing this research, through future studies, one of the alternatives would be the inclusion of new behavioral constructs on the part of customers, as a consequence of the Brand Love, such as a tendency to pay more, perception of switching costs, engagement with the brand, among others.

One of the possible improvements is the readjustment of the content of the construct indicators. As a violation of discriminant validity occurred, new scales referring to the same constructs with content changes can produce more adequate results.

Finally, researchers can conduct another study to verify whether Brand Love has a greater influence on service consumers than product consumers.

REFERENCES

- Ahuvia, A. C. For the love of money: materialism and product love. *Association for Consumer Research*, p. 188-198. 1992.
- Ahuvia, A. C. (2005). Beyond the extended self: loved objects and consumers' identity narratives. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1), 171-184.
- Ahuvia, A. C., Batra, R., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2014). Love, desire, and identity: A conditional integration theory of the love of things. In *Handbook of brand relationships* (pp. 364-379). New York: Routledge.
- Albert, N., & Merunka, D. (2013). The role of brand love in consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(3), 258-266.
- Alnawas, I., & Altarifi, S. (2016). Exploring the role of brand identification and brand love in generating higher levels of brand loyalty. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 22(2), 111-128.
- Bateson, J. E. G., & Hoffman, K. D. (2016). *Princípios de Marketing de Serviços: conceitos, estratégias e casos*. São Paulo: Cengage Learning Editores.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. C., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2012). Brand Love. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(1) 1-16.
- Bergkvist, L., & Bech-Larsen, T. (2010). Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love. *Brand Management*, 17(7), 504-518.
- Bizarrias, F. S., & Lopes, E. L. (2017). Escalas concorrentes para mensuração do amor à marca: um estudo do contexto nacional. *Revista de Administração IMED*, 7(1), 180-207.
- Bıçakcıoğlu, N., İpek, İ., & Bayraktaroğlu, G. (2018). Antecedents and outcomes of brand love: the mediating role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(8), 863-877.
- Braga, S. de S., & Vieira, L. M. (2013). Análise da viabilidade turística e cultural do carnaval de Belo Horizonte (MG). *Revista Brasileira de Ecoturismo (RBEcotur)*, 6(5), 910-925.
- Carrol, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 79-90.
- Chen, C. T. (2016). The investigation on brand image of university education and students' word-of-mouth behavior. *Higher Education Studies*, 6(4), 23-33.
- Christino, J., Silva, T., Moura, L. R., & Fonseca, L. H. (2020). Antecedents and Consequents of Brand Love in the Smartphone Market: An Extended Study of the Impact of Switching Cost. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 26(3), 301-321.
- Cruvinel, E. H. de P. (2019). Estudo do impacto econômico do Carnaval de 2018 em Belo Horizonte. *Revista de Turismo Contemporâneo*, 7, 69-84.
- Dias, P. L. (2017). *Sob a "lente do espaço vivido": a apropriação das ruas pelos blocos de carnaval na Belo Horizonte contemporânea*. Dissertação de Mestrado, Escola de Arquitetura, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil.
- Dick, A. S., & Basu, K. (1994). Customer loyalty: toward an integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2), 99-113.
- Drennan, J., Bianchi, C., Cacho-Elizondo, S., Louriero, S., Guibert, N., & Proud, W. (2015). Examining the role of wine brand love on brand loyalty: a multi-country comparison. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 49, 47-55.

- Esteban, A. A., Ballester, M. E. D., & Muñoz, J. P. (2014). ¿Quién ama a las marcas? Determinantes personales y de consumo. *Revista española de Investigación de Marketing ESIC*, 18(1), 2-16.
- Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J., & Bryant, B. E. (1996). The American customer satisfaction index: nature, purpose, and findings. *Journal of marketing*, 60(4), 7-18.
- Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 343-373.
- Gambogi, J. A. (2013). *Aplicação de redes neurais na tomada de decisão no mercado de ações*. Dissertação de mestrado, Escola Politécnica, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brasil.
- Gonçalves Filho, C., Veit, M. R., Souki, G. Q., Monteiro, P. R. R., & Neto, M. T. R. (2012). Strategy, market orientation and entrepreneurship: proposition and test of rival business performance prediction models. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*, 15(4), 275-291.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. (2009). *Multivariate data analysis*. Uppersaddle River.
- Harrison-Walker, L. J. (2001). The measurement of word-of-mouth communication and an investigation of service quality and customer commitment as potential antecedents. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(1), 60-75.
- Huber, F., Meyer, F., & Schmid, D. A. (2015). Brand love in progress—the interdependence of brand love antecedents in consideration of relationship duration. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. 24(6), 1-33.
- Instituto De Tecnologia De Alimentos – ITAL. (2010). *Brasil Food Trends 2020*. São Paulo: ITAL/FIESP. 173 p. Disponível em: <www.brazilfoodtrends.com.br>. Acesso em: 15 jan. 2020
- Karjaluoto, H., Munnukka, J., & Kiuru, K. (2016). Brand love and positive word-of-mouth: the moderating effects of experience and price. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.
- Kau, A. K., & Loh, E. W. Y. (2006). The effects of service recovery on consumer satisfaction: a comparison between complainants and non-complainants. *Journal of services marketing*, 20(2), 101-111.
- Langner, T., Schmidt, J., & Fischer, A. (2015). Is it really love? A comparative investigation of the emotional nature of brand and interpersonal love. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(6), 624-634.
- Larregui-Candelaria, G., Ortiz-Soto, M., & Sosa-Varela, J. C. (2019). Amor hacia la marca: una perspectiva de relación continua. *Estudios Gerenciales*, 35(152), 271-282.
- Lima, F. C. de (2008). Espaços de Rua e de Espetáculo no Carnaval de Florianópolis Spaces of Street and Spectacle in Florianópolis' Carnival. *Revista Linhas*, 9(2), 124-152
- Lima, K. R., Moura, L. R. C. M., & Souki, G. Q. (2015). Proposição e teste de escala de avaliação da qualidade do metrô. *Revista Pretexto*, 16(3), 21-40.
- Ly, P. T. M. & Loc, L. T. (2017). The relationship between brand experience, brand personality and customer loyalty. *International Journal of Business & Economics*, 16(2), 109-126.

- Malhotra, N.; Nunan, D.; Birks, D.F. (2017). *Marketing Research: an applied approach*. 5th Edition. New York: Pearson.
- Maree, T., & Van Heerden, G. (2020). Beyond the “like”: customer engagement of brand fans on Facebook. *European Business Review*. Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-02-2019-0025>
- Meiske, T. E. B. (2019). How to Build Word-of-mouth: The Role Brand Personality, Brand Love and Brand Loyalty.
- Modroño, M. D. P. (2019). Theoretical approximation to the construct brand love. *Dimensión Empresarial*, 17(1), 138-158. DOI: [10.15665/dem.v17i1.1540](https://doi.org/10.15665/dem.v17i1.1540).
- Mody, M., & Hanks, L. (2020). Consumption authenticity in the accommodations industry: the keys to brand love and brand loyalty for hotels and Airbnb. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(1), 173-189.
- Moura, L. R. C., Ferreira, P. R., de Oliveira, A. D., & Cunha, N. R. da S. (2019). Test and validity of the Brand Resonance Model's. *Revista Gestão & Tecnologia*, 19(1), 4-24.
- Murtiningsih, T., Ridwan, M. S., & Retnaningsih, W. (2019). Influences Of Brand Experience, Brand Trust, And Brand Love Toward Purchase Intention By Word-of-mouth And Brand Loyalty As Intervening Variables In Fashion Branded In East Surabaya. *Archives of Business Research*, 7(9), 106-120.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1994). *Psychometric theory 3E*. Tata McGraw-hill education.
- Oliver, R. L., Rust, R. T., & Varki, S. (1997). Customer delight: foundations, findings, and managerial insight. *Journal of retailing*, 73(3), 311-336.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty?. *Journal of marketing*, 63(4_suppl1), 33-44.
- Ong, C. H., Lee, H. W., & Ramayah, T. (2018). Impact of brand experience on loyalty. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(7), 1-20.
- Pang, Ing & Goh, Shien Y. (2019). Offline Brand Outcomes of Instagram: Do Cognitive Network and Self-congruity Matter?. *AJBA*, 12(2), 287-314.
- PBH – Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte. *Belo Horizonte vive o melhor Carnaval da sua história*. Disponível em: <https://prefeitura.pbh.gov.br/noticias/belo-horizonte-vive-o-melhor-carnaval-da-sua-historia>>. Acessado em: 14 de abr. 2020.
- Pereira, M. J. R., Moura, L. R. C., Souki, G. Q., & Cunha, N. R. da S. (2019). Proposition and test of an explanatory model of innovation perception and it's consequences. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, 18(4), 25-50.
- Rauschnabel, P. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2014). You're so lovable: Anthropomorphism and brand love. *Journal of Brand Management*, 21(5), 372-395.
- Rocha, F. R. V., Curiel, J. de E., & Moura, L. R. C. (2020). La relación entre la confianza y el compromiso y sus efectos en la lealtad de marca. *Revista de métodos cuantitativos para la economía y la empresa*, 29, 131-151.
- Sajtos, L., Cao, J. T., Espinosa, J. A., Phau, I., Rossi, P., Sung, B., & Voyer, B. (2020). Brand love: Corroborating evidence across four continents. *Journal of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.040>
- Saldanha, R. L., & Gonçalves, C. A. (2019). O evento carnaval como motor da economia criativa: um estudo na Capital Mineira entre 2015 e 2017. *RITUR-Revista Iberoamericana de Turismo*, 9(2), 54-67.
- Santos, F. B. P. dos (2005). Trabalhadores informais e governo local: o caso do carnaval de Recife. *Cadernos Gestão Pública e Cidadania*, 10(47), 89-109.

- Santos, G. C. de O., Veloso, C., & Pereira, J. R. (2016). Eu quero é “botar” o meu bloco na rua: uma análise do carnaval de Belo Horizonte entre os anos de 2013 e 2015. *Turismo-visão e ação*, 18(2), 251-279.
- Shimp, T. A., & Madden, T. J. (1988). Consumer-object relations: A conceptual framework based analogously on Sternberg's triangular theory of love. *ACR North American Advances*.
- Singh, J., & Sirdeshmukh, D. (2000). Agency and trust mechanisms in relational exchanges. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 150-167.
- Strandberg, C., & Styvén, M. E. (2019). What's love got to do with it? Place brand love and viral videos. *Internet Research*. Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-07-2018-0311>
- Wangenheim, F. V. (2005). Postswitching negative word of mouth. *Journal of service research*, 8(1), 67-78.
- Zeithaml, V. A.; Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2014). *Marketing de Serviços*. Porto Alegre: AMGH.