

Are we the sum total of our purchases?



Material possessions are a notable element of the self, as the acquisition and loss of physical possessions are found to directly impact one's sense of self. Consumers verify their self-concept through the brand experiences that they have when they purchase luxury brands and they may wish to share these experiences, and themselves, by spreading word-of-mouth.

A research study was conducted by Rina van Niekerk, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to examine whether significant relationships exist between self-brand connection, the brand experience dimensions and word-of-mouth. Additionally, she examined whether self-brand connection and the brand experience dimensions significantly affect word-of-mouth. This quantitative research study was executed using a secondary database of 322 respondents, collected by self-administered online surveys amongst adult South African Facebook users who have purchased a luxurious brand within the last six months.

Findings indicated that there were significant relationships between: self-brand connection and the brand experience dimensions, self-brand connection and word-of-mouth, and between sensory and affective brand experience dimensions and word-of-mouth. Additionally it was found that affective brand experience and self-brand connection significantly affect word-of-mouth.

It is thus recommended that brand managers should ensure that when developing any marketing initiatives they keep the consumer in mind therefore communicating the unique quality of the brand and ensuring the consumer has a positive brand attitude. By forming strong brand associations through effective advertising, the brand managers can ensure that consumers will link their self-concept to the brand resulting in consumers spreading positive word-of-mouth about the brand.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2016 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Rina van Niekerk under the supervision of [Dr Liezl-Marié Kruger](#).