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/ Revisiting the effects of anthropomorphism on brand relationship outcomes: the moderating role of psychological disposition

# relationship outcomes: the moderating role of psychological disposition

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## Abstract

### Purpose

Given the thriving attention paid to brand personification in marketing, this paper aims to delve into consumers’ psychological traits that may moderate the positive anthropomorphic effects on brand outcomes specific to relationship marketing.

### Design/methodology/approach

A theoretical model was proposed based on a review of the extant literature. Study 1 conducted an online survey and used confirmatory factor analysis to validate the constructs significantly correlated with anthropomorphic processing. Two follow-up studies (Study 2a and 2b) using experimental designs were performed to provide evidence substantiating the moderated mediation in the process.

### Findings

Based on the results across the three studies, motivational, rather than cognitive, disposition significantly correlates with perceived anthropomorphism and brand relationship outcomes. Need for belonging serves as a sociality moderator in strengthening the mediating effects of perceived anthropomorphism on brand attachment and brand experience, respectively. Parasocial interaction serves as an effectance moderator in augmenting the mediating effects of perceived anthropomorphism on brand attachment.

### Research limitations/implications

This research extends and contrasts the theoretical grounding for anthropomorphism as a set of situational consumer perceptions by

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Practical implications

This research sheds light on marketers’ strategic management efforts in implementing brand personification to target a wide range of market segments with diverse psychological disposition.

Originality/value

Conceiving anthropomorphism as an in-process situational output in information processing, this research provides further understanding of the psychological traits that facilitate the construction of consumer-brand relationships through anthropomorphic perceptions in the context of brand personification.

Keywords

- Anthropomorphism
- Need for cognition
- Need for belonging
- Parasocial interaction
- Brand attachment
- Brand experience

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