

How We Feel and What We Buy: The Influence of Amusement and Love on Consumers' Choice  
between National Brands and Private Labels

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### Abstract

Love and amusement are positive emotions that are commonly used in marketing. Although a plethora of research has shown that emotions have influence on consumer choice, few prior studies have examined the influence of discrete positive emotions (i.e. love and amusement) on consumers' preference between national brands and store-owned brands. The present study primed amusement, love, and neutral emotions in 195 participants via memory recall, then participants were presented with a \$75 budget to choose between nine pairs of national brand and private label products. Although no significant difference was found between emotions and brand choice, people who felt more love were more likely to purchase private label household products. With participant exclusion, people who felt more amusement were emerged as more likely to purchase private label food products. These findings have implications for both advertisers and consumers, suggesting that discrete positive emotions have influence on purchase decisions in various product categories.

*Keywords:* positive emotions, consumer behavior, brands

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### The Influence of Amusement and Love on Consumers' Choice between National Brands and Private Labels

A typical local grocery store carries hundreds of products, ranging from well-known national brands (e.g. Tide detergent) to store-specific private labels (e.g. Kirkland detergent in Costco). Among such a plethora of options, how should the consumer decide what to buy?

Traditional economists might answer this question with the assumption that people are rational and would integrate all available information. For instance, a consumer would choose between two options by calculating the “utility”, or satisfaction derived, from each option (Manki, 2011). However, psychologists take into account of people's irrationalities, because people's purchase decisions are influenced by subtle factors not explained by economic models, such as product placement on the shelf, package color, and emotions (Ariely, 2009).

#### **National Brands Versus Private Labels**

Before exploring how factors like emotions influence consumers' brand choices, one needs to better understand the historic trend of brands. Nowadays, most major stores carry both national brands and private labels. Historically, private-labels were perceived as inferior than national brands (Fitzell, 1982; Goldsmith et al., 2010). However, consumers are exhibiting changing purchasing behaviors and brand perceptions: 67% of consumers believe private-label offers extremely good value for the money and 64% of consumers agree that “brand names are not [necessarily] better quality” (Tuttle, 2012; Nielsen, 2014). Despite the closing gap in quality between national brands and private-labels, brand perception still strongly influences consumers' purchase intentions (Rossi et al., 2015). The shift in perceptions of store brands makes a consumer's purchase decision more flexible and unpredictable. Although in general, private label

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consumers are more price sensitive than national brand shoppers, private label consumers have varying characteristics across different product categories (Hoch, 1996). Therefore, further research is needed to better understand the drivers behind national brand versus private label purchases, and how different types of consumers choose different brands. The purpose of this paper is to understand how a consumer's emotions might bias her/him towards store or national brands, and how national brand consumers differ from private label consumers.

### **Brand Evaluation Process**

In the context of consumer psychology, emotions and information processing are important determinants of consumers' brand preferences (Ebrahim et al., 2016). Even without their conscious awareness, emotions influence how consumers seek, process, and use information. When consumers are assessing whether the product is to their liking, their emotions could influence the likeability of a product unrelated to the product's physical features or functions. Affective-as-information research showed that positive emotions made a target object seem more desirable, and people with negative emotions interpreted the same target object as more unattractive (Shwarz & Clore, 1983). Similarly, when happiness is framed as exciting, people chose more exciting products; whereas defining happiness as calming led to the choice of more calming products (Mogilner et al., 2012). Those findings demonstrated that emotions have significant impact on consumers' product evaluation.

Moreover, the decision-making environment (e.g. in the store) can also produce emotional states that influence consumer response. For example, stores that elicited negative emotions caused consumers to provide lower rating of private label brands, but emotions elicited from the store environment did not have influence on the rating of national brands (Richardson et

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al., 1996). Since the same emotion from the same context led to divergent responses on brands, one could infer that consumers may apply different context-dependent criteria for national brands and private labels. This result calls for the need to control for the environment if researchers want to isolate the influence of emotion.

Purchase decisions could also be influenced by differences in consumers' levels of engagement (Venkatraman et al., 2012). Consumers' information processing ability is particularly influenced by incidental emotions, or emotions that decisions makers are already experiencing and that are not elicited by the decision itself (Västfjäll et al., 2016). Previous research found that people in positive affective states (e.g. happiness) were more influenced by heuristic cues (mental shortcut or "rule of thumb"; e.g. expertise, attractiveness) when compared to those in negative affective states (e.g. sadness; Bless, Mackie, & Schwarz, 1992). Furthermore, positive emotions are associated with optimistic risk perception and positively-biased information search; whereas negative emotions are related to negatively-biased information search and pessimistic risk perception (Bower, 1991; Clore et al., 1994).

### **Research on Emotions**

Although prior literature established strong evidence on emotions' influence on consumer decisions, many researchers are concerned that valence-based approach alone (i.e., positive emotions versus negative emotions) does not show the nuanced relationship between emotion and behavior (Cavanaugh et al., 2007). For instance, emotions within the same valence could have different effects on the decision makers' ability to accept risk (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Raghunathan & Pham, 1999); process information (Griskevicius et al., 2010; De Hooge, Verlegh, & Tzioti, 2014); and form temporal construal (Raska & Nichols, 2012). Such findings

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illustrated that emotions with the same valence could have divergent effect on decision making and highlighted the need to examine emotions as discrete entities, rather than as broad positive and negative categories.

How are discrete emotions differentiated? The Appraisal Tendency Framework (ATF) and the evolutionary framework are two major theories explaining how discrete emotions are categorized. ATF proposes that specific emotion-eliciting situations are appraised on dimensions such as pleasantness, arousal, novelty, certainty, and control (Lerner & Keltner, 2000). On the other hand, the evolutionary framework believes that each emotion serves a specific evolutionary goal that enhances inclusive fitness (i.e. survival, reproduction, and kin care) (Shiota et al., 2011). Those theories are not mutually exclusive, and it is important to understand multiple perspectives of discrete emotions, because they help to explain the underlying mechanisms of our decision making process.

### **Love and Amusement**

Love and amusement are commonly seen in advertisements (Weinberger & Spotts, 1989; Reichert et al., 2001). Love is defined as wanting to care for another's well-being or being taken care by others; While amusement is the positive emotion experienced during social or cognitive play (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Love and amusement both share positive valence but have different core relational themes. For instance, love is associated with high level of commitment, vulnerability, and wanting to give back; whereas amusement is associated with high awareness of incongruity and playfulness with others (Campos et al., 2013). Additionally, love is categorized as a self-transcendent positive emotion, or emotions that are "linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or agent"

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(Haidt, 2003); whereas amusement does not demonstrate the characteristics of self-transcendent positive emotions (Van Cappellen & Saroglou, 2012). Furthermore, love and amusement have direct influence on consumer behavior. Consumers are more easily persuaded by humorous advertisements, especially with low-involvement products (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992; Chung & Zhao, 2003). On the other hand, people being exposed to compassionate love are more likely to engage in long-term thinking and to choose healthier snacks (Raska & Nichols, 2012).

### **Present Study**

The present study aims to fill the gap in discrete positive emotion consumer research by testing the influence of discrete positive emotions (e.g. love and amusement) on consumers' brand preference between national brands and private labels. Based on the differences between love and amusement, we hypothesize that people feeling love are more likely to choose private labels, and people feeling amused are more likely to buy national brands. Even though consumers' underlying decision mechanism is not assessed in this study, the hypotheses are based on the link between amusement and heuristic processing. Amused consumers might be more likely to engage in heuristic processing and choose the generally more well-known national brands. On the contrary, people feeling love might be more likely to engage in systematic processing and scrutinize the brands, and purchase more private labels.

*H1*: people feeling loved are more likely to choose private labels than people feeling neutral.

*H2*: people feeling amused are more likely to buy national brands than people feeling neutral.

*H3*: people feeling loved are more likely to choose private labels than people feeling amused.

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To test the hypotheses, we conducted an online survey that primed participants with emotions and positioned participants through a simulated shopping experience which they had to choose between two brands.



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### Emotion Priming Pre-test

#### Method

The purpose of the pre-test is to ensure that the emotion priming manipulation has the intended effect of evoking the feeling of love, amusement, or neutral emotions in participants.

**Participants.** 149 participants (52% male, 74% Caucasian) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and compensated for \$0.60 per completion.

**Procedure.** After providing consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of five groups: amusement ( $n = 31$ ), media amusement ( $n = 30$ ), love ( $n = 30$ ), media love ( $n = 25$ ), and control conditions ( $n = 33$ ). Then participants were asked to describe a time when they felt the corresponding emotion in their condition (Appendix A.1). Afterwards, participants were asked to about their own emotional state at the moment by indicating how much they agree with the following six statements on a seven-point Likert Scale (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much): “I feel loved”, “I feel cared for”, “I feel appreciated by others”, “I feel amused”, “I feel silly”, and “I feel entertained” ( $\alpha = .795$ ); an adapted version of the modified Differential Emotion Scale was also used to measure participants’ emotional states ( $\alpha = .868$ ) (Appendix A.3).

#### Results

A composite love score was created by averaging the love items: “I feel loved”, “I feel cared for”, “I feel appreciated by others” ( $M = 5.057$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ); a composite amusement score was created by averaging the amusement items: “I feel amused”, “I feel silly”, “I feel entertained” ( $M = 3.837$ ,  $SD = 1.645$ ). One-way ANOVA was conducted between the emotion groups and emotion scores to assess the effectiveness of the priming procedure.

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The results of the one-way ANOVA on amusement score were significant ( $F(4, 146) = 15.343, p < .001$ ), showing that people who completed the amusement prime ( $M = 4.527, SD = 1.29$ ) and media amuse prime ( $M = 5.144, SD = 1.297$ ) felt more amused than people in the love prime ( $M = 2.678, SD = 1.579$ ), media love prime ( $M = 3.653, SD = 1.392$ ) or control conditions ( $M = 3.229, SD = 1.416$ ). Although the results in love score were not significant ( $F(4, 146) = 2.228, p = .069$ ), people who completed the love prime ( $M = 5.267, SD = 1.478$ ) and media love prime ( $M = 5.693, SD = 1.221$ ) felt more love than people in the amusement prime ( $M = 4.516, SD = 1.727$ ), media amusement prime ( $M = 5.078, SD = 1.446$ ), and neutral condition ( $M = 4.886, SD = 1.746$ ). Moreover, significant difference was found in the statement “I feel loved” ( $F(4, 146) = 2.445, p = .049$ ), indicating that the love prime was still effective.

Only the love, amusement, and the control conditions were used in the main study, because the present study aims to assess the effect of general emotion, rather than in the specific context of media.

### **Brand Perception Pre-test**

Since different people might have different exposure to and perception of various brands, the purpose of the brand perception pre-test was to assess participants' perception on different national brands and private labels. Understanding brand perceptions helps us to select brands that are as similar as possible, so that we can isolate the effect of emotion on brand preference in the main study.

**Participants.** 150 participants (68% male, 78% Caucasian) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and compensated for \$1.20 per completion.

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**Procedure.** After providing consent, participants were presented with pictures of different brand images, including national brands (Quaker, BandAid, Campell, Cheerio, Brawny, Tylenol, Tide, Oreo, and Kleenex) and private labels (CVSHealth, GreatValue, 365, Kirkland, and SimpleTruth). Then participants were asked to indicate their perception of those brands (awareness, quality, loyalty, value, sincerity, excitement, rugged, sophisticated, and competency) on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) (Appendix A.2).

### Results

Scores were averaged across all the national brands and private labels for each perception measure respectively. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with brand type (national brand or private label) as the independent variable, and perception scores as the dependent variables. The results showed significant difference between national brands and private labels across all measures, except for “exciting” and “rugged” (Table 2). This indicates that consumers have different perceptions on different types of brands despite the rising popularity of private labels.

365 and Simple Truth were removed for the main study, because those private label brands had significantly lower awareness ( $M_{365} = 2.38$ ,  $M_{SimpleTruth} = 2.23$ ) than the average awareness score in private labels ( $M = 3.907$ ) and national brands ( $M = 4.64$ ). This reduction in private label brands aims to reduce the likelihood of participants only choosing the more familiar brand.

Table 2. *Repeated measures ANOVA results for brand perception pretest.*

Brand Perception	<u>M</u>		<u>SD</u>		<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	NB	PL	NB	PL			
Awareness	4.653	3.267	.646	.832	1	294.464	.000
Quality	3.882	3.331	.749	.595	1	104.345	.000

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Loyalty	2.722	2.260	.994	.909	1	41.832	.000
Value	3.538	3.439	.770	.481	1	3.036	.083
Sincerity	3.614	3.360	.823	.631	1	30.743	.000
Exciting	2.459	2.545	1.107	.840	1	2.267	.134
Rugged	2.579	2.527	.911	.804	1	1.035	.311
Sophisticated	2.667	2.809	1.072	.753	1	6.511	.012
Competent	4.051	3.565	.709	.582	1	102.118	.000

\*NB = national brands; PL = private labels

### Study 1: Brand Preference Task

**Participants.** 201 participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and compensated for \$1.20 per completion. Six responses were removed because they were created by bots.<sup>1</sup> In the remaining 195 participants, 52% were male and 86% were Caucasian.

**Procedure.** After providing consent, participants were randomly assigned to respond to one of three primes: amusement ( $n = 65$ ), love ( $n = 58$ ), and control conditions ( $n = 72$ ) and asked to describe a time when they felt the corresponding emotions in their group (Appendix A.1). Then, participants were presented with a \$75 budget to “shop” different products. To create incentive compatibility, the participants were informed that two people would be randomly chosen to receive the products they picked and the remaining money in the \$75 shopping budget. The participants were shown nine pairs of national brand and private label products in the household category (detergent, paper towel, and tissues), food category (oatmeal, cookies, cereal, and soup), and healthcare category (pain relief and bandage). Within each category, they indicated whether they would like to choose the national or store brand. After selecting a

<sup>1</sup> To screen for bots, we included a Captcha question in the survey and eliminated responses with duplicate IP addresses.

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product, the remaining amount of money in the budget is presented on the top of the screen. The budget was sufficient to buy the most expensive (i.e., name brand) in every pairing.

The national brand and private label product pictures were screenshots from Walmart.com, Costco.com, and CVS.com. Only the product pictures, product titles, and prices were kept on the images to control for the consistency of participants' shopping experience. Afterwards, participants were asked to indicate their own emotional state at the moment via a six-statement measure and an adapted version of the modified Differential Emotion Scale, same as the measures in the Emotion Pre-test (Appendix A.3). Participants' demographic information was also collected (Appendix A.4).

### Results

**Emotion Manipulation Check.** One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess the effectiveness of emotion priming, and the detailed results are listed in Table 3. A composite Love Score ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ) was created by averaging across "I feel loved", "I feel cared for", "I feel appreciated by others", and "love, closeness, trust". And a composite Amusement Score ( $M = 3.424$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) was created by averaging across "I feel amused", "I feel silly", "I feel entertained", and "amused, fun-loving, silly". Significant difference in amusement score was found ( $F(2, 192) = 4.224$ ,  $p = .016$ ); people with amusement prime ( $M = 3.796$ ,  $SD = 1.266$ ) felt more amused than people in the love prime ( $M = 3.315$ ,  $SD = 1.289$ ) and control condition ( $M = 3.177$ ,  $SD = 1.314$ ). No significant difference in love score was found among emotion conditions ( $F(2, 192) = .212$ ,  $p = .809$ ). However, people primed with love ( $M = 4.728$ ,  $SD = 1.259$ ) felt more loved than people in the amusement prime ( $M = 4.653$ ,  $SD = 1.379$ ) and control condition ( $M = 4.573$ ,  $SD = 1.415$ ).

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Table 3. ANOVA for Emotion Manipulation Check.

	<u>Amusement</u>		<u>Love</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
I feel loved	5.2	1.606	5.47	1.635	5.22	1.77	2	.360	.698
I feel cared for	5.2	1.593	5.17	1.535	5.15	1.74	2	.014	.986
I feel appreciated	5.1	1.592	5.03	1.567	5.10	1.62	2	.037	.963
I feel amused	4.4	1.696	3.98	1.868	3.79	1.72	2	2.579	.078
I feel silly	3.2	1.979	2.67	1.690	2.65	1.72	2	2.396	.094
I feel entertained	4.6	1.727	4.17	1.645	4.06	1.71	2	2.249	.108
amused, fun-loving, silly	2.8	2.43	2.21	1.158	1.20	1.03	2	5.024	.007*
love, closeness, trust	3.0	1.323	3.24	1.144	2.82	1.24	2	1.855	.159

\*p &lt; .05

Although the feeling of love was not significantly activated, the participants in the love prime condition demonstrated greater feeling of other positive emotions than the amusement prime and control condition: significant difference was also found in “awe, wonder, amazement”, “grateful, appreciative, thankful”, “inspired, uplifted, elevated” (Table 4).

Table 4. Other Activated Positive Emotions.

	<u>M</u>			<u>SD</u>			<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	Amusement	Love	Neutral	Amusement	Love	Neutral			
Awe, wonder, amazement	1.78	2.16	1.68	1.125	1.211	.962	2	3.227	.042*
grateful, Appreciative, thankful	3.20	3.47	2.92	1.301	1.207	1.206	2	3.434	.034*

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Inspired, uplifted, elevated	2.82	2.91	2.31	1.33	1.247	1.218	2	4.478	.013*
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\* $p < .05$

**Brand Choice.** The Brand Score was created by summing each time when participants chose a national brand across each product category (food, healthcare, and household). One-way ANOVA was conducted between emotion conditions and the brand score, no significant difference was found ( $F(2, 192) = .601, p = .549$ ).

A 3 X 2 Chi-square test was performed for each product. The results showed that the relationship between emotion (amusement, love, or neutral) and product choice (national brand or private label) was not significant for any of the products. Based on these results, the emotion primes did not significantly affect product choice (Table 5).

Table 5. *Chi-square for Brand Preference Task*

	Detergent	Paper Towel	Pain Relief	Bandage	Oatmeal	Cookie	Tissues	Cereal	Soup
$\chi^2$	0.997	3.118	2.109	1.672	1.233	1.791	2.226	1.297	1.017
$p$	0.608	0.21	0.348	0.433	0.54	0.408	0.329	0.523	0.601

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Three independent-sample T tests were conducted to further evaluate the hypotheses. To test whether people feeling loved are more likely to choose private labels than people feeling neutral, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare brand choice (brand choice score, healthcare product score, food product score, and household product score) in love and neutral conditions. No significant difference was found in the overall brand choice score between love and neutral conditions (Table 6).

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Table 6. *Love and Neutral Conditions.*

	Love		Neutral		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand Choice Score	2.552	2.153	3.00	2.432	128	-1.099	.274
Food Products	1.293	1.377	1.444	1.413	128	-.614	.540
Healthcare Products	.535	.627	.528	.605	128	.062	.951
Household Products	.724	.833	1.028	1.048	128	-1.796	.075

To test whether people feeling amused are more likely to buy national brands than people feeling neutral, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare brand choice in amusement and neutral conditions. No significant difference was found in general brand choice score between the amusement and neutral condition (Table 7).

Table 7. *Amusement and Neutral Conditions.*

	Amusement		Neutral		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand Choice Score	2.80	2.326	3.00	2.432	135	-.491	.625
Food Products	1.523	1.426	1.444	1.413	135	.324	.747
Healthcare Products	.507	.687	.528	.605	135	-.182	.856
Household Products	.769	.786	1.028	1.048	135	-1.62	.108

To test whether people feeling loved are more likely to choose private labels than people feeling amused, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare brand choice in love and amusement conditions. No significant difference was found in the overall brand choice score between love and amusement conditions (Table 8).

Table 8. *Amusement and Love Conditions*

	Amusement		Love		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			



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Brand Choice Score	2.800	2.326	2.552	2.154	121	.612	.542
Food Products	1.523	1.426	1.293	1.377	121	.907	.366
Healthcare Products	.507	.687	.535	.627	121	-.225	.823
Household Products	.769	.786	.724	.833	121	.309	.758

However, because the emotion prime did not significantly affect feelings of love, I wanted to determine if there was a relationship between degrees of emotion and brand choice. A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict product choice from participants' self-reported emotions. The more love participants felt, the less likely they were to choose national brands in the household category,  $\beta = -.182$ ,  $F(2, 192) = 2.838$ ,  $p = .022$ ,  $R^2 = .029$ , indicating that participants with higher love scores are more likely to purchase private label products in the household category. Although Amusement Score did not significantly predict household product choice, the standardized coefficients  $\beta$  was positive ( $\beta = .122$ ), showing the opposite direction as  $\beta$  in Love Score. Similarly, the  $\beta$  values between Love Score and Amusement Score in the food category also showed opposite directions, hinting that love and amusement might lead to different brand choice (Table 9).

Table 9. *Linear Regression of Emotion Score and Product Category.*

			Love Score		$\beta$	Amusement Score		$\beta$
	F	p	t	p		t	p	
Food	0.747	0.475	0.33	0.742	0.026	-1.204	0.23	-0.096
Healthcare	0.005	0.995	0.061	0.952	0.005	0.048	0.962	0.004
Household	2.838	^	-2.303	0.022*	-0.182	1.548	0.123^	0.122

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\* $p < .05$ ; ^not conventionally significant ( $p$  close to  $.05$ )

**With Participant Exclusion.** Out of the 195 participants, 43 exclusively chose private labels, and three exclusively chose national brands. The private-label-exclusive participants may be motivated to have the most money leftover and the national-brand-exclusive participants may be only choosing the more familiar brands. These strong motivations may outweigh the effect of the emotional primes.

As such, I re-ran the regression analyses excluding these participants ( $n = 149$ ). In this case, only Amusement Score statistically significantly predicted Food product choice,  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $F(2, 146) = 2.504$ ,  $p = .039$ ,  $R^2 = .033$ , indicating that participants with higher amusement scores are more likely to purchase private label products in the food category (Table 10).

Table 10. *Linear Regression with Participant Exclusion.*

			<u>Love Score</u>		$\beta$	<u>Amusement Score</u>		
	F	p	t	p		t	p	$\beta$
Food	2.504	0.085 <sup>^</sup>	1.685	0.094 <sup>^</sup>	0.154	-2.081	0.039*	-0.19
Healthcare	0.759	0.47	1.161	0.248	0.107	-0.165	0.87	-0.015
Household	2.073	0.129	-1.728	0.086	-0.15	1.749	0.082	0.16

\* $p < .05$ ; ^not conventionally significant

**Demographics.** Independent-sample T-test was conducted between gender and brand choice, and results showed no significant difference between male and female participants' brand preference ( $t(193) = .074$ ,  $p = .68$ ). ANOVA was conducted between income levels and brand choice, and results showed no significant difference among various income levels ( $F(11,183) = 1.143$ ,  $p = .331$ ).

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### Discussions

Although no significant difference was found between emotion conditions and brand choice, linear regression results showed that people feeling more love predicted greater likelihood of choosing private label household products. With participant exclusion, people feeling more amusement showed greater likelihood of choosing private label food products. Such difference in results occurred may be due to the different types of independent variables in each statistical test. In Chi-squared and t tests, emotions were categorical variables (love, amusement, and neutral), whereas in linear regression, emotions were continuous variables (love score and amusement score). As shown in emotion manipulation check, participants were not significantly primed with the feeling of love, which may have contributed to the lack of significant difference in Chi-squared results. Therefore, it is important to also examine the results more granularly in terms of degree of emotions (e.g. love score and amusement score).

Linear regression results matched the predication in H1: people feeling more love are more likely to choose private label household products. Although the exact reason is unknown, consumers' information processing ability and purchase intention might have caused this phenomenon. When feeling love, consumers may engage in more systematic processing that make them examine the products in more detail. A survey showed that 61% of consumers reported efficacy as the most important attribute in a cleaning product, with value/price as the next most important attribute (Nielsen, 2016). Since those attributes characterize private labels, consumers feeling more love may choose more household products that satisfy the attributes of efficacy and value. Additionally, consumer's purchase intention for household products may also be a factor. Love is often associated with family and friends, and household products such as

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paper towels are often shared among multiple people. Therefore, love might activate the purchase-for-others mindset, and lead to more private label household product purchase.

On the other hand, although not statistically significant, people feeling more amusement showed purchase tendency towards national brand household products. People feeling amused may engage in heuristic processing and chose more well-known national brand household products without scrutinizing products' attributes, such as efficacy and value.

However, the reverse trend occurred in the food category. With participant exclusion, people feeling more amusement chose more private labels, and people feeling more love showed tendency towards national brands. Consumers may exhibit different purchase behaviors in different product categories. For example, a consumer may look for efficacy and value (attributes of private labels) in household products but scrutinize food products for variety and trust (attributes of national brands). In both categories, the consumer is engaging in systematic processing, but choosing different types of brands.

Since brand preference did not significantly vary across income levels and participants chose more private labels than national brands, we can infer that most consumers value price more than brand awareness. Interestingly, no difference in brand preference was found in the healthcare product category, again indicating that consumers may have different brand evaluation process in different product categories. Further analysis on the difference among product categories is needed, such as the frequency of product usage (e.g. every day versus occasionally), consumer engagement level, purchase intention, and price range in the category. This will help to better understand the mediating factor between emotion and brand choice.

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### **Limitations**

Limitations of the study include emotion manipulation, brand options, and ecological validity. Participants did not indicate significant feeling of love in the main study, thus may led to insignificant results. In addition, only nine types of products across three categories were used in the study, which was a limited selection. Also, it is uncertain whether the \$75 budget accurately simulated real-world online grocery shopping experience.

### **Next Steps**

Since higher Love Score correlated with more private label household product purchase, and higher Amusement Score correlated with more private label food product purchase, it is interesting to further observe how consumers exhibit different shopping behaviors across various product categories. More assessment on the different types of national brands and private labels (e.g. premium brands, store-named private labels, other-named private labels) is also recommended. Moreover, future research should evaluate the underlying difference in information processing between love and amusement in the context of consumer psychology. Beyond an online-shopping experience, additional studies could be conducted in a physical store to enhance ecological validity.

### **Implications**

The present study contributes to the growing field of discrete positive emotions, especially in the context of consumer behavior. As the retail industry is experiencing a transformative period, this study has useful application for consumers, retailers, and brands. Both national brand companies and private label retailers can better understand how emotions influence consumers' brand choice and implement design techniques that elicit the

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corresponding emotion. Moreover, consumers themselves can apply information from this paper to become more conscious of their emotions and consequent brand preferences, and to make more rational purchase choices.

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**Appendix A****1. Memory Recall Prompt (Emotion Priming)**

- a. **Amusement:** Please try to recall an event in your life when a stranger did something funny that made you smile or laugh. Please recall a specific event that was funny, rather than a general period of time.
- b. **Media Amusement:** Please try to recall a scene in a TV show or movie that was funny and made you laugh or smile. Please recall a specific scene that was funny, rather than a general episode or movie.
- c. **Love:** Please try to recall an event in your life when you took care of an animal or another person, or they took care of you. The other person (or animal) might have been a pet, a baby or child, a friend, or anyone else. Please recall a specific event in which you took care of this animal or person or they took care of you, rather than a general period of time.
- d. **Media Love:** Please try to recall a scene in a TV show or movie that made you feel loved and taken care of. Please recall a specific scene that was loving, rather than a general episode or movie.
- e. **Neutral/control condition:** Please try to recall the last time you did the laundry.

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**2. Brand Perception**

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
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**DIRECTIONS:** Please view the brand logos below and rate how much you agree with the below statements.

**BAND-AID<sup>®</sup>**

a.

1. I am aware of Band-aid
2. I think Band-aid offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Band-aid
4. I think Band-aid provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Band-aid as sincere
6. I perceive Band-aid as exciting
7. I perceive Band-aid as rugged
8. I perceive Band-aid as sophisticated
9. I perceive Band-aid as competent



b.

1. I am aware of Campbell's
2. I think Campbell's offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Campbell's
4. I think Campbell's provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Campbell's as sincere
6. I perceive Campbell's as exciting
7. I perceive Campbell's as rugged
8. I perceive Campbell's as sophisticated
9. I perceive Campbell's as competent

**Cheerios<sup>®</sup>**

c.

1. I am aware of Cheerios
2. I think Cheerios offers high-quality products



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3. I am loyal to Cheerios
4. I think Cheerios provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Cheerios as sincere
6. I perceive Cheerios as exciting
7. I perceive Cheerios as rugged
8. I perceive Cheerios as sophisticated
9. I perceive Cheerios as competent



d.

1. I am aware of CVSHealth
2. I think CVSHealth offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to CVSHealth
4. I think CVSHealth provides good value for the money
5. I perceive CVSHealth as sincere
6. I perceive CVSHealth as exciting
7. I perceive CVSHealth as rugged
8. I perceive CVSHealth as sophisticated
9. I perceive CVSHealth as competent



e.

1. I am aware of GreatValue
2. I think GreatValue offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to GreatValue
4. I think GreatValue provides good value for the money
5. I perceive GreatValue as sincere
6. I perceive GreatValue as exciting
7. I perceive GreatValue as rugged
8. I perceive GreatValue as sophisticated
9. I perceive GreatValue as competent



f.

1. I am aware of Kirkland Signature
2. I think Kirkland Signature offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Kirkland Signature
4. I think Kirkland Signature provides good value for the money

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5. I perceive Kirkland Signature as sincere
6. I perceive Kirkland Signature as exciting
7. I perceive Kirkland Signature as rugged
8. I perceive Kirkland Signature as sophisticated
9. I perceive Kirkland Signature as competent



g.

1. I am aware of Kleenex
2. I think Kleenex offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Kleenex
4. I think Kleenex provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Kleenex as sincere
6. I perceive Kleenex as exciting
7. I perceive Kleenex as rugged
8. I perceive Kleenex as sophisticated
9. I perceive Kleenex as competent



h.

1. I am aware of Oreo
2. I think Oreo offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Oreo
4. I think Oreo provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Oreo as sincere
6. I perceive Oreo as exciting
7. I perceive Oreo as rugged
8. I perceive Oreo as sophisticated
9. I perceive Oreo as competent



i.

1. I am aware of Quaker
2. I think Quaker offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Quaker
4. I think Quaker provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Quaker as sincere

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6. I perceive Quaker as exciting
7. I perceive Quaker as rugged
8. I perceive Quaker as sophisticated
9. I perceive Quaker as competent



j.

1. I am aware of Simple Truth
2. I think Simple Truth offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Simple Truth
4. I think Simple Truth provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Simple Truth as sincere
6. I perceive Simple Truth as exciting
7. I perceive Simple Truth as rugged
8. I perceive Simple Truth as sophisticated
9. I perceive Simple Truth as competent



k.

1. I am aware of Tide
2. I think Tide offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Tide
4. I think Tide provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Tide as sincere
6. I perceive Tide as exciting
7. I perceive Tide as rugged
8. I perceive Tide as sophisticated
9. I perceive Tide as competent



l.

1. I am aware of Tylenol

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2. I think Tylenol offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Tylenol
4. I think Tylenol provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Tylenol as sincere
6. I perceive Tylenol as exciting
7. I perceive Tylenol as rugged
8. I perceive Tylenol as sophisticated
9. I perceive Tylenol as competent



m.

1. I am aware of 365
2. I think 365 offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to 365
4. I think 365 provides good value for the money
5. I perceive 365 as sincere
6. I perceive 365 as exciting
7. I perceive 365 as rugged
8. I perceive 365 as sophisticated
9. I perceive 365 as competent



n.

1. I am aware of Brawny
2. I think Brawny offers high-quality products
3. I am loyal to Brawny
4. I think Brawny provides good value for the money
5. I perceive Brawny as sincere
6. I perceive Brawny as exciting
7. I perceive Brawny as rugged
8. I perceive Brawny as sophisticated
9. I perceive Brawny as competent

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### 3. Emotion Manipulation Check

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much).

I feel loved
I feel cared for
I feel appreciated by others
I feel amused
I feel silly
I feel entertained

**DIRECTIONS:** Please take the time now to reflect on how you currently feel, and to rate your current emotional state below.

Participants answered the following questions based on the following scale

1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Moderately	4 Mostly	5 Extremely
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<b>VARIABLE NAME</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<i>DES_AMUSE</i>	I felt amused, fun-loving, silly.
<i>DES_ANGRY</i>	I felt angry, irritated, annoyed.
<i>DES_ASHM</i>	I felt ashamed, humiliated, disgraced.
<i>DES_AWE</i>	I felt awe, wonder, amazement.
<i>DES_SCARE</i>	I felt scared, fearful, afraid.
<i>DES_CONT</i>	I felt content, serene, peaceful.
<i>DES_DISG</i>	I felt disgust, distaste, revulsion.
<i>DES_EMB</i>	I felt embarrassed, self-conscious, blushing.
<i>DES_GLAD</i>	I felt glad, happy, joyful.
<i>DES_GRATE</i>	I felt grateful, appreciative, thankful.
<i>DES_HOPE</i>	I felt hopeful, optimistic, encouraged.
<i>DES_INSP</i>	I felt inspired, uplifted, elevated.
<i>DES_INTER</i>	I felt interested, alert, curious.
<i>DES_LOVE</i>	I felt love, closeness, trust.
<i>DES_PROUD</i>	I felt proud, confident, self-assured.
<i>DES_REPEN</i>	I felt repentant, guilty, blameworthy.
<i>DES_SAD</i>	I felt sad, downhearted, unhappy.
<i>DES_SCORN</i>	I felt contemptuous, scornful, disdainful.
<i>DES_STRE</i>	I felt stressed, nervous, overwhelmed.

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