

BRAND WONDER

by

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ABSTRACT

MICHAEL D. LEE. Brand Wonder.
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Affect is a critical construct in marketing, particularly within the area of branding. Despite the extensive body of research on affect in marketing, there appears to be a substantial and surprising gap in the literature as it relates to one type of emotion: wonder. Wonder has been referred to as “*humanity’s most important emotion*” (Prinz 2013) and as “*the first of all emotions*” (Descartes 1649). Adam Smith, often referred to the father of capitalism, considered wonder to be “*crucial for science and innovation*” (Smith 1869). Yet, despite the recognition of the importance of wonder for over 350 years, it barely has been studied. This may be because wonder is a complex, higher-order, meta-cognitive and meta-affective emotion, and hence difficult to study. The motivation of this research is to fill this substantial gap. The goal of this research is to better understand the construct of brand wonder and further understand how it could be used. By better understanding brand wonder, marketers may gain insights into how and why consumers connect with their brands and products. This study employs Hunt's indigenous theory development, inductive realist methodology to develop an initial theoretical framework. This methodology is ideal for relatively new research areas, and its rigor and relevance has been well documented in the marketing literature. This initial theoretical foundation could potentially accelerate future academic research on wonder in branding and marketing, as well as facilitate the development of more effective branding strategies. This research also includes an exploratory empirical analysis using a textual analytics methodology to further our insight on the topic. Finally, the dissertation concludes with directions for future research.

Keywords: Brand, Wonder, Emotions, Affect, Marketing

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DEDICATION

To my loving and caring wife Erin, and my awesome children Nicholas, Peyton, and Cameron, thank you all for being my “why” in this process. The long nights and stressful days were all worth seeing the happiness on your faces when I finished.

Many years ago, I declared to my two Grandmothers, Ida Evans, and Scottie Stevens, that one day I would put the title Doctor in front of my name. They were my biggest supporters, and I know they are both looking down, smiling that I was able to complete this journey. I KNOW I made them proud.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Affect is a construct that influences almost everything humans do to experience the world around them. It has been extensively examined in various fields, including psychology and philosophy. While affect was implicitly referred to in marketing literature prior to 1982, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) can be credited with specifically introducing the construct in marketing. This led to a rich body of research that has advanced knowledge on affect in marketing by exploring its importance in various marketing and consumption scenarios. For example, Chaudhuri (2001) studied the effect of brand affect on brand performance, while Thomson et al. (2005) focused on the emotional attachments consumers have with brands and how it affects their decision-making. The literature on affect in psychology, philosophy, and marketing can be considered mature.

Affect can be defined as a "general feeling state" or "like or dislike towards a particular object" (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, pp. 2, 11, 18). It includes mood and emotion, with mood having a lower intensity and not being associated with a stimulus object (Erevelles, 1998), and emotion having a higher intensity and usually is associated with a stimulus object (Cohen & Areni, 1991). Literature indicates that affect influences evaluations and judgments of objects such as brands and products.

Marketing and branding inherently involve consumer emotions. Understanding the role of affect in marketing and branding may help predict consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and intention to purchase (Chaudhuri, 2001), especially when the customer needs more knowledge or experience with the brand. There are various types of positive and negative affect, and literature

suggests that depending on the situation, affective reactions may be more instrumental than information-focused content in purchase decisions (Yeung & Wyer, 2005).

Despite four decades of research investigating affect in marketing, research has yet to examine the role that wonder plays in marketing or branding. This is surprising because (Smith, 1869, p. 365), considered the father of modern capitalism, referred to wonder as "crucial for science and innovation," and (Descartes, 1649, p. 52), considered by some as the father of all passions, referred to wonder as "the first of all emotions." Wonder's absence from research may not simply be due to being overlooked, (Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 1) helps explain its absence by stating that wonder is "difficult to research experimentally." More recently, (Prinz, 2013, p. 2) notes that "wonder might be humanity's most important emotion." Thus, the lack of research on the construct of wonder in marketing represents a substantial gap in the literature. The purpose of this research is to help fill that gap by introducing Brand Wonder.

Motivation and Research Gap

Affect was introduced as a construct to marketing by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), who outlined the theoretical basis for emotive aspects of product usage in marketing. Since then, the marketing literature has expanded its description of affect's impact on consumer behavior (Edell & Burke, 1987; Erevelles, 1998; Chaudhuri, 2001; Mende et al., 2019). For instance, researchers have explored how affect can cause consumers to remain loyal to a brand due to moral obligations, even when a better product is available (Batra et al., 2012). When consumers first engage with a product, they may base their evaluations on their immediate feelings towards it, rather than taking time to reflect (Yeung & Wyer, 2005). Despite decades of literature studying various types of affect in marketing, wonder has yet to be included. While wonder may

be a complex and challenging emotion to isolate (Shiota, 2021), studying and understanding in the marketing context could be essential.

When consumers first encounter something unfamiliar, such as the Grand Canyon's vastness (Prinz, 2013), a magician's sleight of hand (Kuhn et al., 2020), the vastness of the universe (Weger & Wagemann, 2021), or the first visit to Disney World's Magic Kingdom, they may experience wonder, which is sometimes considered a childish emotion that we eventually outgrow (Prinz, 2013).

Wonder inspires the desire to understand stimuli (Darbor et al., 2016), and early philosophers and intellectuals believed it to be the first emotion we experience, motivating us to investigate what we don't immediately understand (Descartes, 1649; Smith, 1869). Wonder reflects the mind's attempt to connect what is being observed with past experiences, despite failing to do so (Darbor et al., 2016). Furthermore, wonder arouses interest in the unknown, leading individuals to explore and engage with relevant items (Weger & Wagemann, 2021).

This gap in the marketing and branding literature is intriguing, as wonder may explain why consumers shift from indifference to interest in a product. Wonder is a complex experience that includes a series of emotional shifts culminating in bewilderment (Weger & Wagemann, 2021). These shifts may elucidate why customers prefer one brand or product over another when combined with early brand encounters.

Research Goals

This dissertation aims to develop a theoretical framework for research on wonder in branding, or Brand Wonder, as there is currently no literature on this topic. The primary objectives are to establish a conceptual basis for wonder and its impact on consumer attraction to

a brand and to identify key foundational premises that focus on the evolving paradigm of wonder in branding. Understanding wonder's role in consumer behavior can help marketing managers develop better exploratory marketing strategies and explain why consumers take action or bypass a product.

To accomplish this, the indigenous theory development methodology proposed by Hunt (2020) will be used to create theory within marketing rather than importing it from other disciplines. The inductive realist approach (IR) will be followed to construct an initial theoretical framework for Brand Wonder. First, the problem to be addressed will be identified. Secondly, the strengths and deficiencies of existing theories, models, frameworks, and empirical studies related to affect in marketing or closely connected to wonder will be evaluated. Lastly, a final set of foundational premises (FPs) will be proposed to be tested based on empirical evidence obtained through student surveys, using a two-step textual analysis process.

This dissertation aims to establish the foundations and propositions of an initial theoretical framework for future research on Brand Wonder, to enhance our understanding of wonder in the marketing and branding context.

Justification of Research Goals

In addition to the arguments made by (Smith, 1869), (Descartes, 1649), and (Prinz, 2013), other researchers have also highlighted the importance of wonder in understanding curiosity, ideation, and exploration. Wonder is often described as the emotion that initiates curiosity and the desire for knowledge of an object or phenomenon (Gottlieb et al., 2018). Parsons (1969, p. 3) similarly characterized wonder as "a strong emotional experience containing elements of ideation and disposition to act which are suppressed and undeveloped in the initial

stage." Glăveanu (2019, p. 5) posited that wonder is "the awareness (of the possible), excitement (about the possible), and exploration (of the possible)."

For instance, when a consumer has their first experience with a brand such as Tesla and is struck by its technology, style, features, and functionality, this experience can be described as the emotion of wonder. As Gottlieb et al. (2018) explained, wonder is the emotion that initiates curiosity and the desire for knowledge. While engaging with a brand, wonder may also help consumers imagine the possibilities with awareness, excitement, and exploration Field (Glăveanu, 2019). Thus, understanding how wonder can impact consumer behavior and brand perception is crucial for marketing professionals and researchers.

Chang and Tuan Pham (2013) noted that affective feelings play a significant role in decision-making, stating that "not only do people usually experience affective feelings more intensely; they rely more on those feelings." Given that wonder may motivate curiosity, the desire for knowledge, and decision-making, it is crucial to investigate its impact during the affective decision-making period of consumers and how branding can benefit from this construct. By identifying the underlying mechanisms of wonder in branding, marketers can develop effective strategies that enhance brand appeal and customer loyalty.

Potentially Seminal Nature of This Research

This research is unique in that it builds upon a non-linear area of marketing. While most academic research is incremental, this research focuses on the non-linear changes in the business world. The goal is to bridge the gap between academic research and what is needed in the business world. Specifically, this research explores the concept of Brand Wonder, which is a new and non-linear area in marketing. Brand Wonder represents a significant opportunity for growth

in marketing as emotions and affect continue to play an increasingly important role in consumer behavior. Despite the exponential growth of affect research, no research on Wonder in marketing exists. This research aims to fill this gap and contribute to the transformative growth of the field.

Conclusion

The dissertation will be structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides a literature review, including historical and modern perspectives on wonder and branding, culminating in an analysis of the positive and negative affect of marketing. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical and empirical methodologies in detail. Chapter 4 outlines the initial theoretical framework. In Chapter 5, we present the results of our empirical methodology. Finally, in Chapter 6, we discuss our findings, and in Chapter 7, we summarize our contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

This dissertation introduces Brand Wonder as a new construct in marketing. This research provides new insights into the complex nature of wonder and branding in marketing through a detailed literature review, theoretical and empirical methodologies, and a discussion of the findings. Using an indigenous theory creation, inductive realist approach, this dissertation presents the first initial theoretical framework for Brand Wonder, which has yet to be done in consumer behavior studies. This study suggests that a nuanced understanding of this construct can lead to more effective marketing strategies. While the research has limitations, we have also identified several areas for future research that will build upon our findings. Overall, this dissertation starts a new conversation around wonder and branding in marketing and offers important implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Affect has been defined in the literature as a "valenced feeling state" (Erevelles, 1998 c.f., Cohen & Areni, 1991) that encompasses a variety of emotions, including fear, anger, sadness, disgust, joy, and surprise, as explained by Ekman (1971). Holbrook and Batra (1987, p. 2) have also added to this description by stating that affect is "a unidimensional bipolar continuum (as measured by scales such as like/dislike, positive/negative, favorable/unfavorable, good/bad, or pro/con)."

The foundational literature on marketing affect is diverse and unstructured, as theories surrounding marketing are generally "imported from other disciplines" (Hunt, 2020, p. 1). However, the literature started recognizing the opportunity to develop a native theory using emotion in consumer behavior when affect was linked to consumer behavior in marketing as a "feeling state" (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Although early literature acknowledged the importance of affect in marketing (Gardner & Levy 1955 as cited in Gardner & Levy, 1999; Levy 1959 as cited in Levy, 1999), much of the research confined affect to definitions related to experiences with products (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; McAlister & Pessemier, 1982) and advertisements (Batra & Stayman, 1990; Olney et al., 1991). Although behaviors about marketing were important, much of the literature mostly focused on cognitive decision-making toward products (Zajonc & Markus, 1985; Anand et al., 1988), emotion-related advertising (Edell & Burke, 1987), and using emotions in marketing (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

As the literature on affect's role in consumer interactions with brands and marketing grew, researchers continued to explore different avenues of the connection between emotion and marketing. Some researchers focused on the internal factors of consumer decision-making related to interactions with brands and advertising, such as thinking processes and mood when engaging with a brand (Pham, 1998; Bagozzi et al., 1999). The emphasis on the impact of affect on other aspects of the consumer's product journey also gained interest from authors (Moore et al., 1995; Baker & Cameron, 1996; Desai & Mahajan, 1998).

More recent literature has focused on how affect impacts a consumer's intention to repurchase in the future. Literature has grown regarding how affect motivates various parts of the consumer journey, such as brand trust and brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Chaudhuri (2001, p. 1) explained the importance of understanding the "relationship among brand trust, brand affect, and brand performance outcomes, with an emphasis on understanding the linking role played by brand loyalty." Additionally, the literature sought to identify descriptive affect properties such as positive, negative, joyful, and pleasurable (Louro et al., 2005; Desmet, 2010; Mogilner et al., 2012).

As (Hunt, 2020) explains, most theories created in marketing came from other disciplines, such as psychology and sociology. Therefore, a considerable amount of marketing literature is based on cognitive functions (Murry & Dacin, 1996; Nyer, 1997), internal processes of choice (Garbarino & Edell, 1997), and decision-making processes (Holbrook & Gardner, 1998; McDonald, 1998). Although most of the early literature on affect is related to the consumer's internal feelings toward the brand or marketing, some have focused on the impact of the advertisement, marketing actions, and brand interactions on the consumer's immediate affect toward the object (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Pieters & de Klerk-Warmerdam, 1996). As the

literature matured, newer research started to define the characteristics of affect and how they changed based on the consumer's interactions with the brand.

With the focus on marketing literature and theories being ported from other disciplines, early research provided a broad understanding of affect. Positive affect, although broad in sentiment, can be attributed to various emotions, such as happiness, excitement, pride, freedom, and entitlement. Further explanations of positive affect are "happiness": a positive cognitive and emotional assessment of one's condition (Belanche et al., 2013, p. 80), "excitement": a feeling of tension from behaviors that cause adrenaline and pleasure (Noseworthy et al., 2014, p. 1109), and pride: an emotional response to the success achieved through effort and/or perceived superiority (Salerno et al., 2015). However, affect, like any emotion, is not always positive. Negative affect has been associated with emotions such as sadness, disgust, guilt, anger, fear, and loneliness. "Sadness": an incidental negative emotion associated with increased consumption (Garg & Lerner, 2013), "disgust": an incidental feeling that prompts strong avoidance (Galoni et al., 2020), and "guilt": a feeling of being at fault for one's own objectionable behavior (Pounders et al., 2018). Please see Tables 1 and 2 for definitions and descriptions.

In summary, the literature on marketing affect has evolved from early recognition of its importance to more recent research on its impact on loyalty and consumer behavior. The literature has grown to identify the descriptive properties of affect, such as positive and negative affect, and how they change based on the consumer's interactions with the brand. The literature has also matured to develop native theory using emotion in consumer behavior. However, there is still much to learn about the impact of affect on consumer behavior. Researchers should continue to explore this area to gain a deeper understanding of its role in marketing.

TABLE 1: Examples of Positive Affect (Erevelles et al., 2021)

Type of Affect	Definition	Description
Happiness	“the predominance of positive over negative affect and satisfaction with life as a whole” (Belanche et al., 2013, p. 80).	A positive cognitive and emotional assessment of one’s condition.
Freedom	“often defined in terms of the presence or absence of choice” (Bhattacharjee et al., 2014, p. 295).	The perception of choice, sometimes referred to as agency or autonomy.
Excitement	“an individual’s affective experience of arousal, e.g., curiosity or anxiety” (Noseworthy et al., 2014, p. 1109).	Feeling of tension from behaviors that cause adrenaline and pleasure to a consumer.
Hope	“a positively valenced emotion evoked in response to an uncertain but possible goal-congruent outcome” (MacInnis & de Mello, 2005, p. 2).	Feeling correlated with expectations of positive, goal-oriented achievement.
Inspiration	“a motivational state where new possibilities are revealed which may lead to the realization of new ideas,” (Rauschnabel et al., 2019, p. 45).	An appetitive state which drives action and positive emotion.
Love	“psychological connectedness between self and other...based on shared traits, beliefs, social memberships, common values, likes, and dislikes” (Huang et al., 2019, p. 54).	Emotional and cognitive connection to another which begets desire for even closer connection.
Pride	“a positive self-conscious emotion that results from personal achievements or the achievements of close others” (Salerno et al., 2015, p. 499).	Emotional response to success achieved through effort and/or perceived superiority.
Entitlement	“an inflated self-view stemming from an innate feeling of being special and superior”(Goor et al., 2020, p. 1032).	Feeling based on beliefs or expectations about the consumer-company relationship.

TABLE 2: Examples of Negative Affect (Erevelles et al., 2021)

Type of Affect	Definition	Description
Sadness	Feeling of “helplessness in response to [an] emotion-inducing situation” (Garg & Lerner, 2013, p. 106).	Incidental, negative emotion associated with increased consumption.
Anger	Feeling “evoked in situations appraised as unpleasant, goal incongruent, unfair, controllable, blameworthy, and certain” (Porath et al., 2010, p. 293).	Negative, unacceptable experience which can damage relationships with consumers.
Disgust	“an emotion that leads to a desire to reject and avoid potential contamination” (Galoni et al., 2020, p. 373).	Incidental feeling which prompts strong avoidance of a product.
Fear	“an emotional response to the presence or anticipation of a danger or threat” (Dunn & Hoegg, 2014, p. 152).	A threat response which centers attention and influences attitude.
Shame	“a negative emotion experienced when individuals attribute negative outcomes to global shortcomings within themselves” (Han et al., 2014, p. 1049).	Self-consciousness which falsely blames the self for undesirable events or results.
Loneliness	“a feeling of isolation or lack of companionship. . . [which] involves a lack of connectedness with other beings” (Yan & Sengupta, 2021, p. 757).	An aversive state characterized by a perceived lack of social connection.
Guilt	“an individual’s unpleasant emotional state associated with possible objections to his or her action, inactions, circumstances, or intentions” (Pounders et al., 2018, p. 831).	Feeling of being at fault for one’s own objectionable behavior.

Understanding the concept of branding is crucial to lay the foundation for the marketing emotion of brand wonder. A brand is commonly defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination thereof, that aims to identify the goods and services of a particular seller or group of sellers and distinguish them from their competitors (Keller & Swaminathan, 2019). However, branding was initially used centuries ago to indicate ownership of animals and slaves by marking their skin. For instance, the Egyptians branded oxen with hieroglyphics around 2700 BCE, while the ancient Greeks and Romans marked their livestock and slaves (Bastos & Levy, 2012). The term "brand" was used for fifteen centuries before entering marketing in 1922 when it appeared as "brand name" to describe a trade or proprietary name (Stern, 2006).

The desire to be influential, build a personal and social identity, show oneself as both like and unlike others, belong, stand out, and have a positive reputation are at the core of all branding efforts (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Brands can be symbols that create and define a consumer's self-concept or personality, according to the Consumer-Brand Theory and (Levy, 1959). Additionally, a trademark, a tangible item of intellectual property such as a logo, name, design, or image, is where a brand is placed. Brands also incorporate intangibles like identity, associations, and personality (Mercer, 2010).

The study of brands has grown gradually since the mid-1900s as their usage increased. As a result, brands began to take on human characteristics, such as having a personality, and literature began to focus on how brands could impact the human sense of self (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Brands have less to do with quality or functionality and more with social, political, subcultural, and personal meanings (Hirschman, 2010). Humans are predisposed to forming communal groups that use symbolic markers to distinguish themselves and, therefore, associate

brands and products with the particular social groups, products, and communities to which they belong or aspire to belong (Escalas, 2005). The self-concept connection, part of the consumer-brand relationship, helps explain how much a brand contributes to one's identity, values, and goals (Fournier, 1998; Swaminathan et al., 2007).

By focusing on consumers, brands can create intrinsic and extrinsic value in various ways that make consumers' lives easier, better, and more rewarding (Keller, 2021). Brands can have deeply personal and emotional connections to the consumer, including many different types of affect associated with brands.

As the relationship between emotions and branding grew, branding became more prevalent. Brands increasingly became connected to human emotions, such as memory of the past (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003). Brands can represent an ideal self (Malhotra, 1981), tell stories about those who use them (Belk, 1988), and display a sense of romanticism (Aaker et al., 2004). Brand relationships create a framework around a consumer's social identity and play an essential role in brand choice, loyalty, and consideration (Weiss, 1974; Wright, 1974).

When interacting with a product, a consumer's emotional state can impact that experience as it relates to the impact of affect on branding. For instance, consumers may have had positive or negative experiences with a brand in the past, and the affect that these experiences elicited may impact the interactions with other products from the same brand (Yeung & Wyer, 2005). Moreover, some consumers may translate their reaction to the brand as an affect that can indicate their feelings toward the brand (Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

Chaudhuri (2001) found that trust and affect have different antecedents. For example, hedonic values were significant and positively related to brand affect, while the utilitarian value of the product was significant but negatively related to brand affect. Matzler et al. (2006, p. 4)

supported these findings in their study on personality traits to brand affect, noting that extroverts perceive stronger hedonic values of a product related to brand affect. Hence, a positive indirect relationship between extraversion and brand affect has been found. The hypothesized relationship between openness to experience and hedonic value and brand affect has been confirmed empirically.

As empirical evidence of emotions building toward brand affect emerged, a better connection exists to the growing literature on a brand's personality and how consumers interact with a brand and its emotional properties. Aaker (1997) proposed three dimensions of brand personality, i.e., excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness, that are closely related to brand affect. However, brand affect can take on more direct emotions like love, community, happiness, and excitement. Brand love is essential to solid consumer-brand relationships, while brand communities are imagined communities but represent a form of the human-associated situation with like-minded consumption contexts. Brands that elicit feelings of happiness, joyfulness, or affection are often brands that consumers trust highly, and brand happiness is correlated with higher rates of consumer purchase and attitudinal loyalty. Brand excitement positively impacts consumer affective responses to a brand, but not necessarily trust in the brand. Excitement results from a brand's perceived novelty, uniqueness, or newness (Fournier, 1998; Chaudhuri, 2001; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Sung & Kim, 2010). See more examples of Brand Affect in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Affect in Branding (Erevelles et al., 2021)

Number	Affect	Key findings
1	Brand Love	Brand love is most strongly influenced by consumer self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, and attitudes of confidence or certainty in the brand. Quality of products or services contributes less to loyalty and word-of-mouth behaviors; there is resistance against negative information in brands that are highly loved due to the power of love as an emotional connection. (Batra et al., 2012)
2	Brand Happiness	Consumers' pre-purchase appraisals of a brand are stronger predictors of brand happiness than their post-purchase or situation-specific appraisals of that brand. Brand happiness, independent of industry, is key to a strong consumer-brand relationship in which consumers are more likely to engage in brand-supporting behaviors, e.g., paying more, word-of-mouth, forgiveness. (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018)
3	Brand Pride	Brand pride is directly influenced by consumers' perceptions of exclusivity and prestige related to the brand. Limiting accessibility to a brand or certain products while increasing visibility of the brand to outsiders enhances brand image, increases brand value, and improves levels of brand price in core consumers, or "insiders." (Bellezza & Keinan, 2014)
4	Brand Excitement	Brand excitement positively impacts consumer affective responses to a brand, but not necessarily trust in the brand. Excitement results from perceived novelty—uniqueness or newness—of a brand. (Sung & Kim, 2010)
5	Brand Hate (Anger + Disgust)	Typically aimed at high-value (billion-dollar) brands, brand hate ranges in intensity and works to redirect consumers to other market alternatives. Low intensity brand hate is expressed commonly through avoidance and silent protest while high intensity brand hate can manifest into violence or aggression. (Kucuk, 2019)
6	Guilt & Brands	Guilt motivates consumers to regulate their negative affective states. Connecting with ethical brands alleviates feelings of guilt in consumers, who report higher purchase intentions for ethical brands when feeling guilty. (Newman & Trump, 2017)
7	Brand Community	Brand communities are imagined communities but represent a form of human associated situations with like-minded consumption contexts (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001)

To explore the emotional connection between wonder and a brand, it is important to understand the literature on awe and wonder. For over a century, philosophers have defined awe

as the feeling of being diminished in the presence of something greater than the self (Emerson 1836 c.f., Emerson, 1920). However, defining awe outright is challenging (Rivera et al., 2020). Recent literature suggests that awe is a combination of various emotions, including wonder and amazement (Piff et al., 2015), vastness and accommodation (Shiota et al., 2007), and compassion and gratitude (Chen & Mongrain, 2021). Awe has also been associated with religion and spirituality, as experimentally induced experiences of awe can increase reported religiosity and spirituality (Gottlieb et al., 2018). However, negative awe can also arise when people are exposed to vast and threatening stimuli (Chen & Mongrain, 2021).

Given the increasing focus on emotions in marketing, it is natural to connect the highly impactful emotion of awe with branding (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) and (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Kim et al. (2021) proposed the concept of brand awe as a specific, multi-dimensional type of awe experience that includes felt vastness, positive peak emotion, and need for accommodation. They also noted that brand awe is distinct from surprise, wonder, and happiness, which are singular emotions.

Although wonder is often related to awe, the two are distinct in nature and meaning (Kim et al., 2021). Darbor et al. (2016) found that awe had more positive and negative emotional words than wonder, while wonder elicited the more cognitive need for understanding. Shiota (2021) explains that when we experience something new and important to us, the motivation to learn about it is wonder. On the other hand, Awe is the feeling we experience when we realize we will never fill in the gap of understanding that object, event, or phenomenon (Piff et al., 2015).

Wonder has been described as the "first of all emotions" (Descartes, 1649 cf., Descartes, 1989, p. 52), motivating us to engage with the world around us and inspiring many of our most

outstanding achievements (Prinz, 2013). Despite its relevance, wonder has yet to be discussed across academic fields. Glăveanu (2019) highlights the importance of understanding this emotion, which Socrates believed was the starting point for wisdom. Descartes viewed wonder as a core and simple feeling and an important gauge of our creativity and evolution (Descartes, 1649).

In a situation of wonder, there is no initial judgment of the object or event (Darbor et al., 2016). People use language suggesting they try to understand the novel stimuli rather than its causation. Descartes described wonder as happening "before we know whether the object is beneficial to us" (Descartes, 1989). Smith defined wonder as arising when something quite new and singular is presented, and memory cannot cast up any image that nearly resembles it (Prinz, 2013).

TABLE 4: Conceptualizations of Wonder

Citation	Title	Journal
Descartes (Descartes, 1649) (Smith, 1869)	The passions of the soul The theory of moral sentiments and essays on philosophical subjects	The philosophical writings of Descartes
(Parsons, 1969)	A Philosophy of Wonder	Philosophy and Phenomenological Research
(Bynum, 1997)	Wonder	The American Historical Review
(Schliesser, 2005)	Wonder in the face of scientific revolutions: Adam Smith on Newton's 'Proof' of Copernicanism	British Journal for the History of Philosophy
(Deckard, 2008) (Deckard & Losonczi, 2011)	A sudden surprise of the soul Philosophy begins in wonder	The Heythrop Journal
(Metcalf, 2013)	The Elemental Sallis: On Wonder and Philosophy's "Beginning"	The Journal of Speculative Philosophy
(Prinz, 2013)	How Wonder Works	Aeon
(Sherry, 2013)	The Varieties of Wonder	Philosophical Investigations
(Cicovacki, 2014)	The analysis of wonder: An introduction to the philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann	Bloomsbury Publishing
(Popova, 2014)	From Galileo to Sagan, Famous Scientists on the Art of Wonder, Varieties of wonder	The Marginalian 2014
(Van Dyck & Vermeir, 2014)		Historia mathematica
(Carlsen & Sandelands, 2015)	First passion: Wonder in organizational inquiry	Management learning
(Tobia, 2015)	Wonder and Value	Res philosophica
(Darbor et al., 2016)	Experiencing versus contemplating	Cognition and Emotion
(Helsing, 2016)	Uses of wonder in popular science: Cosmos: A Personal Voyage and the origin of life	International Journal of Astrobiology
(Barker, 2017)	Of Wonder: Thomas Hobbes's Political Appropriation of Thaumazein	Political Theory
(Bendik-Keymer, 2017)	The Reasonableness of Wonder	Journal of human development and capabilities
(Lamont, 2017)	A Particular Kind of Wonder: The Experience of Magic past and Present	Review of General Psychology
(Schinkel, 2018)	Wonder and moral education	Educational theory
(Washington, 2018)	Education for Wonder	Education sciences
(De Luca-Noronha, 2019)	Wonder as a metacognitive emotion	Journal of philosophy Aurora

(Crumplin, 2019)	Returning to Wonder	Heythrop journal
(Glăveanu, 2019)	Creativity and Wonder	The Journal of Creative Behavior
(Laura, 2019)	Epistemic Emotions: The Case of Wonder	Journal of philosophy Aurora
(Schinkel, 2019)	Wonder, Mystery, and Meaning	Philosophical papers
(Kuhn et al., 2020)	Forcing you to experience wonder	Consciousness and Cognition
(Erevelles & Hoffmann, 2021)	Brand wonder	Conference Presentation
(Shiota, 2021)	Awe, wonder, and the human mind	Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences
(Weger & Wagemann, 2021)	Towards a conceptual clarification of awe and wonder	Current Psychology

More Recent Conceptualizations of Wonder

Wonder is an emotion that some scholars have described as the most important emotion and one that has inspired many of humanity's greatest achievements in science, art, and religion (Prinz, 2013). When experiencing wonder, individuals may feel a sense of amazement or curiosity towards a phenomenon, but it is important to understand the triggers and subsequent feelings associated with this emotion. According to Weger and Wagemann (2021), wonder can occur when an individual interacts with a phenomenon and desires to analyze and dissect it. In contrast, awe occurs when the individual experiences a sense of the vastness of self and allows the phenomenon to exist without engagement.

Early philosophers focused on the confluence of admiration, delight, and curiosity that led to the development of wonder (Deckard, 2008). Descartes viewed emotions as reactions to unexpected occurrences but considered them to hinder scientific progress (Deckard, 2008). Thomas Hobbes reintroduced the concept of wonder as a constructive emotion that elicits hope and expectations for future understanding of the unknown (Barker, 2017). Adam Smith defined wonder as the emotion that generates newly formed knowledge rather than as a benefit derived from newly created information (Smith, 1792, c.f. Roy, 1983).

Smith's concept of wonder has served as a springboard for subsequent research. Wonder has been linked to religious interpretations that view it as a key component of a good life (Heschel, 1955) and to the pursuit of scientific knowledge (Popova, 2014). Contemporary understandings of wonder encompass cognitive and physiological components, including non-appropriative and perspectival comprehensions (Bynum, 1997).

TABLE 5: Descriptions of Wonder in Literature

Author (year)	Definition/ Description
(Descartes, 1649, p. 353 c.f., Decartes 1989)	“Wonder is the first of all passions... it merely presents its object as something novel or unusual... but produces no change in the heart or physically with movement.”
(Adam Smith, 1869, p. 325)	“We wonder at all extraordinary and uncommon objects, at all the rarer phenomena and at everything.”
(Parsons, 1969, p. 3)	“Wonder is a strong emotional experience containing elements of ideation and disposition to act which are, in the initial stage, suppressed and undeveloped.”
(Prinz, 2013)	“Wonder is the accidental impetus behind our greatest achievements. Art, science, and religion are inventions for feeding the appetite that wonder excites in us.”
(Glăveanu, 2019, p. 5)	“Wonder is the awareness (of the possible), excitement (about the possible), and exploration (of the possible).”
(Erevelles et al., 2021)	“Wonder... is a feeling of awe that causes conflict with the current and existing neural network connections of memory.”

TABLE 6: Attributes of Research in Wonder

Attributes of Wonder	Definition	Description	Area of Research
Creative	“a cyclical interplay between awareness, excitement, and exploration of the possible” (Glăveanu, 2019).	Positively experiencing what is present, through the lens of what is absent.	Behavioral Science
Magical	“awe, dismay, admiration, surprise, or curiosity, and we can think of them all as kinds of wonder” (Lamont, 2017).	The feeling we get at the beauty of a sunset or even when a train is late.	Psychology
Vastness	“the monumental nature of a phenomenon” (Weger & Wagemann, 2021).	The feeling of vastness or “small self” when experiencing a new phenomenon.	Psychology
Emotion	“the first of all emotions” (Deckard, 2008).	The first emotion we experience when seeing something new is wonder.	Philosophy
Human Experience	“basic features of wonder is needed to fulfill its promise for improving the human experience” (Shiota, 2021).	We need wonder in our lives to create a world worth living.	Psychology
Innovation	“Wonder is the beginning of all innovation” (Adam Smith c.f.) (Kim, 2012).	All innovation starts with the simple emotion of wonder.	Economics
Passion	“Wonder is the first passion in all inquiry and our reason to know” (Carlsen & Sandelands, 2015).	Wonder in inquiry unfolds as a twofold movement between receptive appreciation and self-transcendent search, and we chart wonder’s course in four stages or “moments” of arousal, expansion, immersion, and explanation.	Management

Despite the similarities between awe and wonder, awe has received extensive attention in marketing research for several decades, as evident from previous studies (Rudd et al., 2018; Hinsch et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021). In contrast, wonder has received relatively little attention in marketing research, which could be due to the challenges of operationalizing and measuring this emotion, as pointed out by Parsons (1969). However, wonder has been extensively discussed and investigated outside marketing, as highlighted in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

One possible explanation for the limited research on wonder in marketing is its perceived intangibility compared to other emotions, such as happiness or fear (Laura, 2019). Marketing research emphasizes emotions more directly linked to customer behavior (Bagozzi et al., 1999), while wonder may be viewed as more abstract and less immediately impactful. Therefore, despite awe being a well-established construct in marketing literature, wonder is conspicuously absent from the discourse.

Wonder vs Awe

Wonder and awe are often defined or discussed similarly, such as experiencing vastness (Shiota et al., 2007; Weger & Wagemann, 2021) and showing reverence (Piff et al., 2015; De Luca-Noronha, 2019). However, Darbor et al. (2016) found that awe and wonder serve unique functions. Wonder is often characterized by feelings of curiosity, surprise, and novelty (Prinz, 2013; Tobia, 2015; Weger & Wagemann, 2021); in contrast, awe is associated with feelings of transcendence and admiration (Rudd et al., 2012; Piff et al., 2015; Gottlieb et al., 2018)

Darbor et al. (2016) investigated how these two emotions were described in language. They found that awe is a perceptual emotion, allowing individuals to change their

views of the world and adapt better to new experiences. On the other hand, wonder is an emotion that concerns causation, enabling people to understand the reasons behind new experiences and optimize their interactions with the world. These differences are reflected in the language used to describe emotional experiences.

Weger and Wagemann (2021) also sought to clarify the distinctions between wonder and awe through a study. They found that awe is more reflective, making individuals unable to put things back into a familiar conceptual framework, while wonder is characterized by indulging in the phenomenon. Additionally, they found that awe includes an element of humbleness/humility, whereas wonder inspires the desire to understand.

While awe has received considerable attention in marketing research, wonder has been largely ignored despite its potential relevance to customer behavior. Understanding the unique functions and distinctions between wonder and awe could provide valuable insights into how these emotions can be utilized in marketing contexts.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY FOR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To properly develop foundational theories indigenously within a discipline, the Inductive Realist (IR) approach, which provides that development, acknowledges the limitations of existing theories. This is the start of understanding how we build upon and expand existing knowledge and research (Hunt, 2013). The IR model includes seven steps:

- i. Identify the existing issue.
- ii. Identify the problem-causing variables and the most effective means of addressing them.
- iii. Classify the aspects of unapplied theories that may be applied to the present issue.
- iv. Use the material gathered in the first three phases to build the first fundamental premises that explain the present situation, characterize existing parts of the problem, and provide relatively new theories that might fix the problem.
- v. To modernize the fundamental premises, evaluate the original premises and their constraints.
- vi. Describe the subsequent underlying assumptions and the relevant factors and develop new ideas that might aid in addressing the issue more successfully in published works.
- vii. In subsequent publications, revise the underlying premises when new restrictions are identified.

Hunt's (2000) use of the RA (resource advantage) theory illustrates the IR method, which was created based on the following: a) heterogeneous needs in a specific industry, occurring between industries with dynamic characteristics; b) incomplete information received from customers that fulfills needs of human motivation; c) organizational goals anticipating maximum advantage; d) resources that are possessed by organizations and consist of physical, financial,

legal, and human information; e) resources that are in unstable movement and are unique; and e) managing resources that are in unstable movement and are unique. Hunt (2015) decided that competition required a solid framework and basis and devised a basic assumption to support this claim. This methodology is utilized here to suggest actions, provide a basic theoretical framework for Brand Wonder, and identify the existing problem's constraints.

This first theoretical foundation aims to explain Brand Wonder by embracing concepts offered by Hunt (2015) within the context of prime theory and norm theory. The applicability of Hunt's (2020) theories will be determined in experimental and research testing by emphasizing scientific realism, truth, and qualitative approaches and examining how that theory applies in real-world circumstances for practitioners and scholars. Using this study to comprehend the feeling of wonder in branding might lead to other studies in marketing theory, competitiveness, ethics, and the philosophy of science. The goal is to establish a theoretical framework for Brand Wonder based on Hunt's (2020) IR method and to update the foundational premises.

Indigenous theory development entails the creation of an original problem- or field-specific theory. For some, using a theory from another discipline compromises the field's capacity to address issues. According to Hunt (2020), marketing lacks indigenous theories for ideas or solutions to problems and takes theories from other disciplines that do not entirely meet its objectives. The procedure employs the service-dominant methodology, which is insufficient since it lacks the algorithms necessary for successful current theories. Hunt (2020) aims to create research-based techniques and systems to establish indigenous marketing theories.

Instead of creating a hypothesis or model for addressing the issue, the IR strategy focuses on elements that support the basic premises of a structure that concisely and clearly outlines the scenario and may inspire the development of a model or models that contribute to the issue's

objective (Hunt, 2015). This method enables us to develop a theory or model unique to a certain area, such as marketing, and to construct additional theories that explain and solve comparable issues in the same field.

Similar to Hunt (2020), Vargo and Lusch (2004) designed a dominant logic that focuses more on the supply of services than on the exchange of products. A dominant logic implies that marketing is a continual social and financial process in which operant assets are crucial; that is, monetary outcomes are a test of theory and not the ultimate outcome. Vargo and Lusch claim that by revealing market assumptions, the commercial center might increase enterprises' capacity to integrate information into their operations, find better methods to service customers and strengthen their financial position.

Analyzing connections based on cause and effect is fundamental to this theoretical framework. A procedure that might modify the approach to a challenge and restructure thinking about Brand Wonder offers a greater grasp of a relatively new and original field of study from a methodological standpoint. Ideally, the data will serve as a foundation for additional research and enhance marketing advancement.

Having obtained an understanding of the concepts, the first stage is to develop the foundational premises. The next is to characterize the issue to assess whether it is worth addressing and devoting effort to (Dimitriadis & Papista, 2010). The issues will then be outlined and carefully examined to distinguish them from other studies in the same field (Azman Ng et al., 2019). After review, the theory's applicability to the area will be assessed before putting it to use and engaging critics to validate the theory to enhance its effectiveness.

Justification of Theoretical Methodology and Importance of Current Research

Although foundational literature on marketing affect is diverse, it is unstructured and is mainly “imported from other disciplines” (Hunt, 2020). It wasn’t until affect was connected to consumer behavior in marketing as a “feeling state” (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) that the literature started to recognize the importance and power of emotion in consumption. Theory needs to be developed from within the discipline to better serve marketing practitioners. The foundational premises approach addresses the challenges in developing a theory where little to no literature or research exists. While literature exists in branding and philosophy exists in wonder, there is no literature that addresses the construct of Brand Wonder. Therefore, the IR methodology is ideal for introducing the core foundational premises of Brand Wonder.

Importance of current research:

1. Strategic balance of knowledge creation
 - i. Moving knowledge forward must be based on previously known information (linear) and not on known information (non-linear). Non-linear is considered game-changing because it moves the understanding of a topic in new directions.
 - ii. Engaging in only linear research primarily defends the past. Continuing on this path builds upon the past at the expense of building the future.
 - iii. Contrarily, focusing only in a non-linear fashion does not generate the in-depth, rigorous body of research that results from building incrementally on past knowledge.
 - iv. According to Erevelles (2022, p. X), “Strategic balance is knowing when to stop defending the past to create the future.”
2. Limitations of the scientific method

- i. The scientific method started with Copernicus in 1543. From time to time, science is built incrementally, but often it is not linear. In some situations, the scientific method is not valid since it is built on tradition, precedent, and prior foundations.
 - ii. Castillo (2013) notes the reliance of the scientific method on hypothesis: “A hypothesis is a proposed explanation for observed phenomena”; that is, a theoretical framework has already been created to explain the phenomena.
 - iii. Firestein (2013) also points out that, to generate data, the scientific method is generally based on established rules and existing structures, “that it's rule-based, that scientists use this thing called the scientific method and we've been doing this for 14 generations or so now, and the scientific method is a set of rules for getting hard, cold facts out of the data.”
 - iv. To be clear, the scientific method is responsible for the progress of science over time and is extremely valuable. Although not a bad method, in certain situations it doesn't help in the progress of science.
3. Zeithaml et al. (2020) sought to further the development of marketing knowledge native to the discipline instead of importing theory from other areas by introducing Theories-in-use (TIU), a research method similar to Hunt's (2020) IR method of indigenous theory development. Zeithaml et al. (2020) highlight the popularity of these methods of theory creation, as shown in the following table.

Limitations of the Hunt (2020) Methodology

The limitations of the Hunt (2020) methodology are highlighted below. Hunt (2012, p. 9) notes that while the inductive realist model can effectively explain empirical success in medical

science, it may not apply to theories in marketing. As Hunt (2011, p. 9) further argues, the successes of a theory provide a reason to accept it but are not conclusive warrants for acceptance.

Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992, p. 83) contribute to the discussion by stating that truth is not inherently available for scientists to study. Therefore, the inductive realist model denies the view that there is an immutable truth "out there" for scientists to discover. Moreover, Hunt (2011, p. 4) highlights that critics of realism and many realists need more coherent articulation of what it would mean for a statement, hypothesis, or theory to be approximately true.

In addition, Morrison (2007, p. 210) suggests that although we can think of a model as embodying some representation of the phenomena under investigation, the inductive realist model contains a certain degree of representational inaccuracy. Furthermore, path diagram models are partial representations because they only include key constructs, as highlighted by Morrison (2007, p. 210).

Together, these quotes reveal the limitations of the Hunt (2020) methodology. While it can explain empirical success in some fields, it may only apply to others. Additionally, the successes of a theory provide a reason to accept it. Still, there is no conclusive warrant for acceptance, and the inductive realist model contains a certain degree of representational inaccuracy. Lastly, the model denies the view that there is an immutable truth for scientists to discover, and path diagram models are partial representations.

TABLE 7: Citations of Top Ten Articles Published in the Journal of Marketing.

Authors	Title	From WOS	From GS
Morgan and Hunt (1994)	The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing	7,213	26,150
Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985)	A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research	5,779	28,886
Zeithaml (1988)	Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence	4,960	19,926
Vargo and Lusch (2004)	Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing	4,885	14,721
Keller (1993)	Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity	4,099	18,070
Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996)	The Behavioral Consequences of Service Quality	3,732	13,364
Narver and Slater (1990)	The Effect of Market Orientation on Business Profitability	3,304	12,336
Cronin and Taylor (1992)	Measuring Service Quality: A Reexamination and Extension	3,215	16,350
Kohli and Jaworski (1990)	Market Orientation: The Construct, Research Propositions, and Managerial Implications	3,204	11,616
Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987)	Developing Buyer-Seller Relationships	3,150	12,949

Notes: Articles in bold employ an IR approach. WOS ¼ Web of Science Index; GS ¼ Google Scholar. (Zeithaml et al., 2020)

Theoretical Background

This dissertation relies on Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory as its theoretical foundation, with Construal-Level Theory, Regulatory Fit Theory, and Triangular Theory as supporting theories.

Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory

The relationship between a consumer and a brand relies greatly on how consumers see themselves reflected in the brand. In simple terms, Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory (CBR) holds that “consumers do not choose brands; they choose lives” (Fournier, 1998, p. 26). Although brands don’t have lives, managers often employ anthropomorphizing to establish a connection with consumers or an association with a spokesperson whose personality translates to the product or brand. CBR expresses the need of humans to identify with a brand that exemplifies the qualities and values they see in themselves. CBR also constructs the relationship themes that cut across the artificial boundaries of products and brands for purpose-driven constructs to make sense of life experiences; for example, feeling attractive by wearing a specific brand or purchasing a special product (Fournier, 1998).

At its core, CBR theory posits that the relationship between a consumer and a product or brand can be considered reciprocal, built on the trust the consumer has in the brand and the trust the brand offers a consumer with an extended relationship. For example, (Fournier, 1998) describes a situation where a consumer has been using a specific toothpaste since childhood and trusts its quality while also feeling the toothpaste has the human qualities (as a protector) necessary to maintain healthy teeth. Much of CBR is related to humans’ tendency to anthropomorphize, which deepens the relationship with the brand or product. Marketers have

known this for a long time, which is why characters are frequently included in branding and as relatable spokespersons.

Regulatory Fit Theory

Regulatory Fit Theory is based on the two forms of self-regulatory rules that push individuals to achieve their desired end-state: a focus on acquiring pleasure and/or avoiding pain or loss. These orientations are characterized by "promotion" and "preventive" emphasis or strategy. Promotion interprets the attainment of ideas, ambitions, and accomplishments as pleasure and their absence as pain. This translates to the pursuit of gain or profit in the presence of positive results or the avoidance of non-profit in the absence of positive outcomes so that people will work harder to accomplish growth in their quest to achieve success and to avoid omission mistakes.

Attachment Theory

Based on parent-child relationships, Attachment Theory continues through adulthood to romantic relationships, kinships, and friendships. Several studies suggest that emotional attachment is formed between human beings and animals, places, destinations, special objects, and brands, even human brands or celebrities. Thomson et al. (2005) identified a higher-order emotional attachment construct consisting of affection, passion, and connection. Thus, attachment reflects an emotional bond similar to love.

METHODOLOGY FOR EXPLORATORY EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Our exploratory empirical methodology is well-suited for this research as it provides a flexible data collection and analysis approach. Furthermore, since there is no theoretical foundation for Brand Wonder, an exploratory study is ideal for generating new insights into the

phenomenon. The study also aims to fine-tune the initial theoretical framework and identify the key themes of Brand Wonder in a marketing context.

One of the primary benefits of this multi-step methodology is its ability to capture the richness and complexity of the data in a more nuanced manner than a structured research design would allow. By allowing the participants to express their experiences with Brand Wonder, the study can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, which is essential for generating new theoretical frameworks. We identify the key themes that represent the construct of Brand Wonder in past consumption experiences and examine the relationships among these key themes. The insights gained from this exploratory methodology will supplement and help refine the initial theoretical framework.

The study will analyze the data using manual coding and semantic mapping techniques. Furthermore, the study will assess the associations between themes of Brand Wonder using point-wise mutual information (PMI) and perform co-occurrence analysis. By employing multiple analytical techniques, the study can ensure the rigor and validity of the findings. The study also presents a social representation showing the strength of associations between identified themes. This graphical representation will help illustrate the complex relationships among the identified themes and provide a more accessible understanding of the findings.

In sum, the methodology section outlines a rigorous and flexible approach to exploring consumer experiences with Brand Wonder in branding engagements. The exploratory empirical methodology is well-suited for generating new theoretical frameworks and comprehensively understanding the phenomenon of Brand Wonder.

Participants

The empirical study included a sample of 32 MBA and DBA business students from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte ($M_{age} = 30-39$ range; 62.5% female). The participants were recruited through convenience sampling. The MBA students were awarded course credit, and the DBA students were offered a \$10 gift card. The UNC Charlotte IRB approved all study procedures.

Materials and Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey that consisted of two open-ended questions. The first question was:

Describe, in detail, an instance when you experienced wonder. Please be as descriptive as possible. Where were you? What were you doing? How did you feel? What was it that struck you with wonder? Describe your thoughts and emotions during the experience.

The second question was:

Describe, in detail, when you experienced wonder with a product, service, brand, or any other product. Please be as descriptive as possible. How was wonder employed in that product, service, brand, etc., to “wow” consumers? How did you feel? What was it that struck you with wonder? Describe your thoughts and emotions during the experience.

Theme Creation and Coding

The process of creating overall themes involved two steps. First, each survey response was reviewed by one of two coders to create initial topics, including labeling the brand or product and identifying feelings of wonder, key concepts/ideas/themes, and emotions expressed. Second, both coders met to discuss these findings and create a consolidated list of themes reflecting the discrete and near-exhaustive list of topics. Following this discussion, which

produced eight themes, each coder independently identified whether the theme was reflected in that participant's response or was absent. The coding process was completed on an Excel spreadsheet using the pointwise mutual information process (PMI), a measure of association that compares the probability of two events occurring together to the probability of the events occurring independently. This allowed the coders to determine which words or phrases were most likely to co-occur in the data. Cohen's Kappa for agreement was 0.52 (moderate) (Landis & Koch, 1977). Disagreements were resolved through discussion.

CHAPTER 4: INITIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Foundational Premises

TABLE 8: Foundational Premises

FP #	FP Description
1	Brand Wonder is a brand-directed metacognitive emotion.
2	Brand Wonder is a brand-directed meta-affective emotion.
3	Brand Wonder is the affective result of a quest to comprehend a novel brand or product and not fully being able to do so.
4	Brand Wonder is a key source of attraction toward a brand or product.
5	Brand Wonder often results in veneration toward a brand.
6	Brand Wonder often fosters a feeling of mystery and a desire for further exploration in consumers
7	Brand Wonder is inherently positive and has no opposite marketing emotion.
8	Brand Wonder and Brand Awe are distinct marketing emotions.

FP 1: Brand Wonder is a brand-directed metacognitive emotion.

What is Metacognition?

Metacognition is “the ability to recognize one’s own successful cognitive processing” (Fleming & Lau, 2014, p. 1) and monitoring one’s cognitive system. De Luca-Noronha (2019, p. 5) explains that metacognition encompasses the ability to “represent or monitor the cognitive system.” Metacognition includes three fundamental elements: knowledge, control, and experiences (Kitchener & King, 1981). Also, according to De Luca-Noronha (2019), meta-representations occur when a person knows that they are thinking (or representing) something cognitively. De Luca-Noronha (2019, p. 5) further notes that the possession of explicit “meta-representations (i.e., representations about representations) is a necessary condition for the formation of these propositional attitudes.” In sum, wonder is metacognitive in that it leads individuals to reflect on their cognitive processes and the boundaries of their experiences.

Metacognitive emotions “reflect the appraisal of one's own cognitive processes and the associated emotions” (Schraw, 1998, p. 157) and are related to our awareness and monitoring of

our own mental state and the cognitive demands of a task or situation (Efklides, 2006). Wonder has frequently been described in metacognitive terms as the “human experience” (Shiota, 2021, p. 1), “the first passion in all inquiry and our reason to know” (Carlsen and Sandelands (2015, p. 8), and “a cyclical interplay between awareness, excitement, and exploration” (Glăveanu, 2019, p. 1).

Wonder is a higher-order emotion.

Wonder stands out among emotions in that it is metacognitive; that is, it initiates or represents a variety of other cognitive processes. This is likely the reason that Descartes (1649, p. 52) refers to wonder as "the first of all emotions," while Smith (1869, p. 365) suggests that wonder is “crucial for science and innovation.” Similarly, Prinz (2013, p. 2) notes that "wonder might be humanity's most important emotion." Further, it has been observed that wonder fosters introspection (Weger & Wagemann, 2021), ideation (Parsons, 1969), and reflection (De Luca-Noronha, 2019).

Cognitive emotions are experienced as appraisals or evaluative judgments (De Luca-Noronha, 2019). For instance, fear may arise from a belief that a threat is imminent, with the desire to avoid it. Hence, individuals who cognitively perceive something is wrong with their life may experience an emotional state. As part of the argument that wonder is a metacognitive emotion, De Luca-Noronha (2019, p. 9) concludes that “Wonder is not a cognitive emotion” and notes that wonder is an affective accommodation that occurs when an individual is confronted with new information or an unfamiliar object. Others support this description; for example, (Darbor et al., 2016, p. 3) suggests that “wonder can be used to identify the core features of experience that people consider when conveying emotions,” and (Schinkel, 2019) adds that wonder is “inquisitive” and “contemplative.” According to Silvia et al. (2015), those who

experience wonder are more likely to engage in reflective thought and to propose creative solutions. Similarly, Glăveanu (2019) suggests that wonder may lead to more diverse thought and boost creativity.

Wonder is a metacognitive object-directed emotion.

De Luca-Noronha (2019, p. 2) suggests that wonder “mobilizes attention and interest in the experienced content, which causes the individual to engage in exploratory activities concerning the relevant objects.” Thus, in marketing, Brand Wonder may lead to curiosity and inquiry, key metacognitive components, toward a brand. Kashdan et al. (2004) found that people were more likely to participate in actions motivated by curiosity and seek out new knowledge when they experienced wonder. This desire for knowledge and understanding can lead to developing marketing engagement strategies to enhance brand strength and equity.

In sum, brand wonder includes the “recognition of one’s cognitive processes” (Fleming & Lau 2014) when exposed to a novel brand or product and the “experienced content” (De Luca-Noronha, 2019) related to it.

Thus, we conclude Brand Wonder is a brand-directed metacognitive emotion.

FP 2: Brand Wonder is a brand-directed meta-affective emotion.

(The notion of “meta-affective emotions” is a new one and is being introduced for the first time in this dissertation.)

Introduction:

To our knowledge, no research thus far has highlighted the potential or use of Brand Wonder as a meta-affective emotion. Thus, in FP2, we propose that, in addition to being a metacognitive emotion, Brand Wonder is also a meta-affective emotion. Drawing from the work

of De Luca-Noronha (2019), Fleming and Lau (2014), and Kitchener and King (1981), a meta-affective emotion is defined here simply as **“an emotion that represents or recognizes a variety of other emotions.”** This definition is based on the construct of metacognitive emotions (De Luca-Noronha, 2019; Fleming and Lau, 2014; Kitchener and King, 1981), except that it refers to the recognition of other emotions rather than cognitions.

Substantial Evidence for wonder being a meta-affective emotion:

Brand Wonder as a meta-affective emotion is consistent with the notion of its being referred to as “the first of all emotions” (Descartes 1649, p. 52) and “the most important emotion” (Smith, 1869, p. 365). Wonder is often the recognition or result of “other powerful human emotional responses like admiration, fascination, delight, gratitude, and worship” (Sherry, 2013, p. 1) and has been associated with emotional responses such as amazement, astonishment, admiration, intrigue (Bendik-Keymer, 2017), and fascination (Weger & Wagemann, 2021). In other words, wonder is a higher-level “perceptual experience” (De Luca-Noronha, 2019, p. 9). (Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 7) describe wonder as “joy and gratitude for what has been experienced, sometimes even providing for a sense of reverence that remains with the beholder.”

Meta-affective emotions exist in marketing:

Meta-affective emotions lead to a greater sense of self-transcendence (Gallagher et al., 2015), whereby individuals feel connected to something larger than themselves. Experiencing Brand Wonder can promote social connections (Gottlieb et al., 2018), with consumers more likely to feel a sense of interconnectedness with other similar consumers and build stronger “brand communities.” This is more likely to increase stronger engagement with the brand and more meaningful conversations within the brand community. A meta-affective emotion such as

wonder exerts a powerful influence on consumers' perceptions and behaviors. By better understanding meta-affective emotions, brand managers can create more meaningful and memorable experiences for their consumers and connect with them in more authentic and impactful ways.

Brand wonder is a meta-affective emotion:

When consumers experience wonder with a brand, they may become more attentive to its messaging, engage in deeper processing of its meaning, and feel a greater sense of connection to something larger than themselves. In sum, by leveraging the power of wonder, brands can create memorable and meaningful consumer experiences, build stronger emotional connections, and, ultimately, drive purchasing behavior.

In sum, based on our definition of meta-affective emotions, the literature on metacognitive emotions (De Luca-Noronha, 2019; Fleming and Lau, 2014; Kitchener and King, 1981) and our understanding that wonder is a higher-order emotion that encompasses the recognition of other emotions such as admiration, fascination, delight, etc. (Sherry, 2013; De Luca-Noronha, 2019; Weger & Wagemann, 2021), brand wonder occurs when we recognize a variety of other emotions when confronted with a novel brand or product.

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder is a Meta-Affective Emotion

FP3: Brand Wonder is the affective result of a quest to comprehend a novel brand or product and not fully being able to do so.

Seminal scientific thought on wonder's existence:

While the antecedents of wonder can vary depending on the context and the individual's disposition (Valdesolo et al., 2017), novelty and unpredictability are often cited as key triggers

(Smith, 1869). Wonder is evoked when we encounter something that defies our understanding and challenges our beliefs (Goor et al., 2020), generating a cognitive dissonance that prompts us to revise our mental models and expand our knowledge (Shiota, 2021). Wonder is thus a response to the limits of our understanding and reflects the potential for discovery and the openness of the human mind (Descartes, 1649).

According to Descartes (1649, p. 56), wonder, the “first of all passions,” is a fundamental emotion that precedes all other emotions, including love, fear, and anger. He describes wonder as the initial response to an encounter with a new object, event, situation, or phenomenon before we have formed any judgment or evaluation; it is a response to the limits of our understanding and reflects the potential for discovery and the openness of the human mind.

Early thinkers further suggest:

Adam Smith (1869) describes wonder as an emotion that makes you stop momentarily, slow your breathing, and feel a flutter in your heart. When faced with an unfamiliar object or environment, one’s natural instinct is to search one’s memory and associate it with something experienced previously. Adam Smith (1869, p. 154) adds that when you experience something you cannot comprehend, your “memory cannot, from all its stores, cast up any image that nearly resembles this strange appearance.” When this happens, you cannot connect the phenomenon you are experiencing with your mental models, as there is little or nothing to rely on. Since your previous internal search attempts have come up short or failed, other internal reactions, such as curiosity, are triggered to attempt to comprehend the situation. Darbor et al. (2016) note that “The experience of wonder...reflects a need to understand something in the environment.”

Shiota (2021, p. 2) makes a similar argument:

"Despite the scope and complexity of our mental models, they can only capture a fraction of the whole of objective reality. We can usually ignore this fact, as we possess sufficient knowledge to get through the day. We are aware of some gaps—those that lie at the fringes of our current understanding. When the topic is important to us, this awareness of gaps leads to wonder."

The study of wonder thus far can help shed light on the cognitive processes associated with it, such as artistic creation and scientific discovery (Parsons, 1969; Bynum, 1997).

Encountering a new brand or product creates a cognitive challenge that requires making sense of the brand or product and its features. If the brand or product is novel or unique, this challenge can elicit the emotion of wonder as individuals explore its novelty and uniqueness and try to comprehend its value and relevance. The experience of wonder can thus play a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward the brand or product and can evoke strong positive associations and emotions that may enhance consumer engagement and loyalty.

Wonder appears when we encounter a novel object and one can't quite comprehend it:

Wonder is an affective response that may result from an encounter with a novel object or situation and is associated with curiosity, along with other reactions such as amazement and admiration (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). The experience of wonder involves a metacognitive demand for comprehension, eliciting a need to understand and make sense of an object or situation (Bynum, 1997). This demand for comprehension fuels our innate curiosity, "stimulating our cognitive development and creativity" (Darbor et al., 2016 p. 8). Wonder is thus an active metacognitive and motivational state that drives learning and exploration (De Luca-Noronha, 2019).

In sum, the literature indicates that wonder is the affective response when we encounter the “limits of our understanding” (Descartes, 1649), occurring when something “defies our understanding” (Goor et. al., 2020), involves “cognitive dissonance” or “the need to expand our knowledge” (Shiota, 2021), and occurs when our “memory cannot, from all its stores, cast up any image that nearly resembles this strange appearance.” (Adam Smith, 1869).

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder is the affective result of a quest to comprehend a novel brand or product and not fully being able to do so.

FP 4: Brand Wonder is a key source of attraction toward a brand or product.

Attraction can be defined as “the action or power of evoking interest, pleasure, or liking for someone or something.”

Wonder represents the desire to move toward a novel object:

Wonder is a phenomenon often described as being drawn toward an object, driven by curiosity or by a desire to better understand the object (Weger & Wagemann, 2021). The initial attraction toward an object can be attributed to the “basic features of wonder needed to fulfill its promises for improving the human experience” (Shiota, 2021, p. 4). It is well documented that affect plays a fundamental role in branding and the creation of brand strength and brand equity (Thomson et al., 2005; Luffarelli et al., 2019; Mafael et al., 2022). Glăveanu (2019) suggests that wonder brings about a cyclical interplay among awareness, excitement, and exploration of the possible. This interplay, as associated with wonder (Glăveanu 2019), may therefore play a critical role in consumers’ desire to interact with a brand and in their long-term relationship with that brand.

Wonder is often characterized as an emotional state of "experiencing curiosity" about a phenomenon or unknown object (Glăveanu, 2019 p. 3). Others have suggested similar actions associated with wonder, such as moving toward knowledge, dissection of an occurrence, and the desire to learn about a new object (Füller et al., 2008; Fingerhut & Prinz, 2020; Weger & Wagemann, 2021). Weger and Wagemann (2021) sought to better understand how awe and wonder differ from each other. They suggest that one of the primary distinctions between the two is that wonder is often associated with a feeling of positively valenced bewilderment, which may explain a subject's desire to analyze or dissect the object or phenomenon. With awe, a subject generally is disassociated from the object and experiences a sense of diminution, "small self," and insignificance in the face of awe-inducing experiences.

Attraction and Engagement are distinct, but similar concepts:

Engagement and attraction are two related but distinct concepts studied extensively in psychology and consumer behavior literature. Attraction refers to the positive feelings or emotions an individual experiences towards an object, while engagement reflects cognitive and behavioral involvement with an object (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

Attraction can be influenced by various factors such as aesthetics, sensory appeal, and social influence (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). For example, consumers may be attracted to a product due to its visual appeal or celebrity endorsement. Alternatively, engagement is influenced by the extent to which an individual actively interacts with the object, such as the time spent on it, the depth of attention, and the cognitive processing (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

While attraction may initially spark interest in an object, engagement is crucial for sustaining long-term involvement and commitment toward it (Hollebeek et al., 2019). Therefore,

attraction may lead to a one-time purchase or interaction, but engagement is essential for building a lasting relationship between the individual and the object.

Wonder drives interactions with the world and fosters emotional connections:

Darbor et al. (2016, p. 8) suggest that wonder is an emotion "concerned with causation that may motivate people to understand reasons behind new experiences better and thus drive their interactions with the world." Bendik-Keymer (2017) adds that expressions of wonder (surprise and amazement) are linked to open-mindedness, along with curiosity, which leads to a quest for more information about the focal object. Connecting with consumers emotionally is considered essential for branding (Robertson et al., 2022). Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) suggest that when approaching the consumer-brand relationship from a stimulation perspective, the attraction stays strong if a brand offers opportunities for a novel experience. However, "this attraction may weaken if novel experiences decline or familiarity increases" (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2013, p. 3). Emotional relationships with brands are generally associated with higher brand loyalty and customer satisfaction (Batra, 2008).

Brand Wonder attracts us to a brand or product and motivates consumer action:

Wonder has been associated with strong feelings of curiosity about novel objects or phenomena. Keller (2021 p. 3) emphasizes that affect and brand strength are closely related, noting that "emotions and feelings will continue to be a critically important branding ingredient. Emotions and feelings come in all forms and can become linked to brands." The metacognitive nature of wonder (De Luca-Noronha, 2019), along with the pre-eminent status attributed to it (see Descartes, 1649; Smith, 1869; Prinz, 2013; etc., in FP1a), is particularly important as it stimulates curiosity about and attraction toward a brand and, thus, is critically important in creating strong brands.

In sum, the literature indicates that wonder involves “being drawn toward an object” (Weger & Wagemann, 2021), “leaning in towards objects of interest” (Fingerhut & Prinz, 2020), “attraction toward an object” (Shiota 2021), and the “desire to interact” with an object (Glăveanu, 2019).

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder is a key source of attraction toward a brand or product.

FP 5: Brand Wonder may result in veneration toward a brand.

Veneration, Reverence, and Respect:

The Oxford Dictionary defines veneration as “great respect; reverence.” Wonder can lead beyond egocentrism toward embracing a broader value perspective, greater empathy, and a sense of reverence (Schinkel, 2019). The emotion of wonder has been associated with respect and reverence in research and literature (i.e., Descartes, 1649; Parsons, 1969; Weger & Wagemann, 2021). Numerous scholars and researchers have studied this emotion (i.e., Bynum, 1997; Prinz, 2013; Helsing, 2016; Shiota, 2021), and the accumulating evidence supports the notion that wonder can cause veneration toward an object.

According to the philosopher Susanne Langer, wonder is “the emotion that accompanies the perception of something novel, unpredictable, or incongruous and is accompanied by a recognition of its value” (Langer, 1957). People who experience wonder are frequently described as being filled with amazement and surprise (Sherry, 2013; Barker, 2017; Glăveanu, 2019). Schinkel (2019, p. 3) explains that “the experience of wonder is complex, comprising (usually) some mixture of surprise, bafflement, a sense of the importance of what one is contemplating... It easily develops into admiration or reverence.” Prinz (2013, p. 7) offers that “wonder is a

natural by-product of more basic capacities, such as sensory attention, curiosity, and respect, the last of which is crucial in social status hierarchies.” According to Weger and Wagemann (2021, p. 8), a noteworthy aspect of wonder is “immense respect and reverence regarding what we might call the intricate and profound creativity.”

Wonder activates the feeling of veneration:

Research demonstrates that people associate wonder with “milder feelings of beauty, admiration, astonishment, reverence, and respect” (Keltner & Haidt, 2003, p. 6). Keltner and Haidt (2003) also discovered that those who viewed photographs of natural wonders, such as the Grand Canyon or Mount Everest, reported higher levels of wonder than those who viewed photographs of urban landscapes. People can also venerate objects created by humans, such as great works of art (e.g., Michelangelo’s *David* or da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*) (Prinz, 2013), because they inspire wonder and cause individuals to view the world in novel and exciting ways.

Brand Wonder may result in veneration toward a brand:

“Branding is a process of strategically managing a customer’s entire experience with a product or company... using feelings involving affect and emotions” (Keller & Lehmann, 2006, p. 4). A brand, in this case, represents an object or product that a company creates to attract consumers. This definition of branding, when paired with the emotion of wonder, can produce a feeling of valence or reverence. Whether referring to a brand, a naturally occurring phenomenon, or a man-made object, those who experience wonder in its presence are frequently filled with amazement, surprise, respect, or veneration. This relationship between a consumer’s feeling of wonder and reverence can be observed in numerous contexts, highlighting the significance of objects through branding that inspires feelings of veneration based on Brand Wonder.

In sum, wonder is described as fostering “immense respect and reverence” (Weger &

Wagemann, 2021 p. 9), “approval, respect, and esteem” (Parsons, 1969), and “a sense of reverence” (Schinkel 2019), “respect, the last of which is crucial in social status hierarchies” (Prinz, 2013).

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder often results in veneration toward a brand.

FP 6: Brand Wonder fosters a feeling of mystery in consumers.

Mystery and Intrigue are elements of wonder:

Wonder is an emotion that can arise in the face of novelty or mystery. Glăveanu (2019) notes that when encountering something new, a person can respond in various ways, such as ignoring it or applying old thinking to the new context. However, when the situation or event is intriguing, it arouses curiosity and motivates individuals to investigate or explain it further. This feeling of intrigue can be fostered by the mystery surrounding the object or situation, as Field Washington (2018, p. 8) notes, who argues that “teaching can either aid wonder or reduce it by removing the mystery and magic of life.”

The sense of mystery surrounding an object or situation can be an essential element of wonder. It requires attending to the object and contemplating its novelty, as Tobia (2015) noted, which can lead to positive emotions such as attraction, delight, and a desire to explore further. Additionally, wonder can motivate and energize the intellect to acquire knowledge and pursue an interest in science or philosophy (Sherry, 2013). Wonder can also be a grounding force that compels us to act respectfully in the world; a “sense of wonder that allows us to see life as a beautiful mystery forces us to see life as something to which we owe respect and care” (Schinkel, 2018, p. 9).

Wonder fosters a feeling of mystery:

Contemplating the mystery of our existence in the vastness of time and space may induce anxiety or dread as much as wonder. According to Tobia (2015, p. 6), “If I feel awe at a sublime cathedral or a powerful sea storm, the primary response is often one of fear or veneration, not one of interest or intrigue.” However, Schinkel (2018, p. 16) is unsatisfied with this notion and seeks “a deeper normative muscle...that we can feel moving,” a justification of wonder grounded in its object rather than just looking forward to the mode of living that object makes possible.”

Wonder can foster a feeling of mystery and intrigue when encountering something new, prompting us to contemplate its novelty and investigate further. While wonder can induce negative emotions, it can motivate us to act respectfully in the world and pursue knowledge and exploration. However, as noted by (Schinkel, 2019), wonder's justifications are only sometimes straightforward and require a deeper understanding of its object.

In sum, wonder fosters mystery and intrigue, wonder fosters “mystery” (Washington 2018 p.8), “intrigue and desire to explore further” (Tobia, 2015), and “mystery and incomprehensibility” (Glaveanu, 2019), leading to a desire for further exploration.

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder often fosters a feeling of mystery and a desire for further exploration in consumers.

FP 7: Brand Wonder is inherently positive and has no opposite marketing emotion.

Wonder is a positively valanced affect:

Those who experience wonder are filled with enthusiasm and positive emotions. If positive emotions experienced during awe transform into negative or unpleasant emotions, wonder has vanished and been replaced by something different (Tobia, 2015). This emotional shift supports the notion that wonder is a pleasant feeling. Wonder is described as having a

positively valenced affect (Tobia, 2015) and, as a positive emotion, is typically included on lists of discrete emotions (Darbor et al., 2016). Since wonder does not have an opposite emotion Descartes (1649), we can conclude that it is a naturally positive experience. According to (Parsons, 1969, p. 5):

Wonder retains an element of detachment or ideation, a minimal curiosity, a control of emotion that gives the psychic distance to the event and permits, at least to some small degree, the play of imagination. When detached imagination is overcome by emotion, such as great fear or terror, wonder disappears.

Generally, awe is felt when the event diminishes the feeling of self; however, awe is related to both positive and negative emotions. Although many emotions consist of positive and negative versions, there is no negative feeling of wonder. However, many emotions counter each other with wonder; if a negative emotion enters the experience, wonder is no longer present. With the evaporation of wonder in the presence of negative feelings, it can be said that wonder is inherently positive.

Wonder has no opposite emotion:

Wonder is a complex and multifaceted emotion that can be difficult to define. Although boredom and cynicism might be considered as opposites, there is no direct opposite emotion to wonder; it is a unique and distinct metacognitive experience that cannot be reduced to a simple binary of positive and negative emotions (De Luca-Noronha, 2019).

According to Keltner and Haidt (2003), wonder is one of the 10 basic emotions that humans experience. Unlike other emotions, such as anger, fear, or happiness, wonder is not associated with a specific behavioral response or physiological change (De Luca-Noronha, 2019). Wonder is characterized by surprise, amazement, and curiosity in response to the world

around us (Darbor et al., 2016). Furthermore, wonder is not simply a passive emotional experience but an active and engaged state of mind (De Luca-Noronha, 2019). When we experience wonder, our attention is focused on something external to ourselves (Tobia, 2015).

Cynicism and boredom are not opposite emotions from wonder:

Cynicism is characterized by a “distrust in the sincerity of another person’s or organization’s motives and actions” (Tran et al., 2022). Boredom is typically characterized by a sense of disconnection or disengagement from one’s surroundings and is associated with negative outcomes such as apathy and decreased creativity (Barbalet, 1999). Conversely, wonder is associated with openness and receptivity to new experiences and can lead to positive outcomes such as creativity and social connection (Glăveanu, 2019). Thus, cynicism and boredom are not direct opposites to wonder, as they represent fundamentally different attitudes and perspectives toward the world around us.

Brand Wonder has no opposite marketing emotion:

Brand Wonder combines branding with wonder’s unique and distinct emotional experience. The evidence shows that wonder cannot be reduced to a binary of positive and negative emotions such as anger, fear, and happiness. Unlike other affective marketing techniques, Brand Wonder is an active and engaged state of mind associated with positive consumer outcomes such as creativity and social connection.

Thus, it is important to recognize that Brand Wonder is inherently positive and carries no opposite emotion.

FP 8: Brand Wonder and Brand Awe are distinct marketing emotions.

Wonder and awe share similarities:

The concepts of wonder and awe are sometimes incorrectly used interchangeably, synonymously, or conflated. While both wonder and awe share some similarities, in a marketing context, Brand Wonder and Brand Awe are distinct emotions that can potentially be utilized differently to influence different marketing outcomes or behaviors.

Brand Wonder and Brand Awe share several similarities. (Reinerman-Jones et al., 2013, p. 4) describes wonder and awe as “peak experiences that can be life-transforming.” Similarly, (Keltner & Haidt, 2003, p. 7) suggest that both wonder and awe involve a sense of “amazement or astonishment” at something beyond our usual understanding or experience; something vast, complex, or novel that challenges our mental structures (Shiota et al., 2007; Weger & Wagemann, 2021).

Brand Wonder and Brand Awe are distinct in numerous respects:

- (i) *Increased vs. decreased brain activity:* Wonder is generally associated with increased brain activity, while awe is generally associated with decreased brain activity (Gallagher et al., 2015; Reinerman-Jones et al., 2013). With wonder, there is increased activity in the “dorsolateral prefrontal cortex” (Reinerman-Jones et al., 2013, p. 6), an area of the brain that involves heightened attention, working memory, and more intense problem-solving. According to Shiota (2021), wonder leads to more cognition than awe. Conversely, awe is associated with activity in the default mode network, a brain network that is engaged during self-referential thought and mind wandering (Gallagher et al., 2015). This network is used when thoughts about an object or phenomena are deemed to be less worthy or feasible for further introspection, thus relegated to a position of decreased brain activity.

- (ii) *Engagement vs. smallness*: Brand Wonder is often associated with “feelings of interest” (Tobia, 2015, p. 11) and being “captivated” (Prinz, 2013, p. 2) by a brand. (De Luca-Noronha, 2019) notes that wonder “mobilizes attention and interest” and engages a person, which, in turn, drives the desire to explore further. On the other hand, Brand Awe may lead consumers to feelings of “smallness” (Kim et al., 2021), “insignificance” (Chen & Mongrain, 2021), “small-self” (Weger & Wagerman, 2021), or being “diminished” (Emerson, 1836) in the presence of an object. In most cases, none of these are likely to be considered desired marketing outcomes and may drive the consumer away from rather than closer to the brand.
- (iii) *Curiosity vs. indifference*: Brand Wonder and Brand Awe have distinct behavioral outcomes. Brand wonder is more likely to result in enhanced curiosity about the brand and trigger more exploration than Brand Awe (Shiota, 2021). Parsons (1969, p. 3) suggests that wonder often is associated with “a need to understand something” about an object or phenomenon. Thus, wonder is more likely to lead to exploratory behavior, as consumers are motivated to learn more about the brand or product (Parsons, 1969). On the other hand, (Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 8) find that awe creates the desire to “let the object shine without further examination,” suggesting that an individual is likely to remain indifferent toward the object, without any motivation for further exploration. Additionally, Weger and Wagemann (2021, p. 3) find that awe is more reflective in nature, with individuals perceiving that they would be “unable to put things back into a familiar conceptual framework” and choosing not to learn more about it.

- (iv) *Attraction vs. disassociation:* Wonder can be defined as a positive emotional response to an unexpected or novel stimulus that elicits a sense of admiration and appreciation (Schinkel, 2019). It is characterized by cognitive openness, whereby individuals are more likely to engage with the object and bond with it (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). When experiencing wonder, consumers are more likely to form connections as they feel more open and receptive to the world around them (Darbor et al., 2016). In contrast, awe is more likely to occur when encountering something vast, powerful, or overwhelming that transcends one's ordinary frame of reference (Shiota & Kalat, 2012). Awe, which is often accompanied by fear, insignificance, and disorientation, leading to social disconnection and withdrawal (Piff et al., 2015), is more likely to decrease the desire for social interaction and make individuals feel less connected to others (Stellar et al., 2017).
- (v) *Positive vs Negative Feelings:* Awe has been associated with a range of positive outcomes such as increased generosity, prosocial behavior, and well-being, it can also have negative effects under certain circumstances (Chen and Mongrain, 2021). Chen and Mongrain (2021) also suggest that awe can sometimes be associated with negative feelings, particularly when consumers are exposed to vast or threatening stimuli. For instance, a consumer may feel overwhelmed or frightened when encountering a large, imposing product or experience. In contrast, Schinkel (2018, p.9) notes that a sense of wonder allows individuals to see life as beautiful. This positive emotion is characterized by amazement, curiosity, and joy and has been linked to various benefits such as creativity, cognitive flexibility, and happiness (Keltner and Haidt, 2003; Silvia, 2010). However, Tobia (2015) adds an important

caveat, stating that if the positive emotions experienced during awe transform into negative or unpleasant emotions, wonder cannot coexist.

In sum, the literature indicates that there are substantial differences between brand awe and brand wonder in the following respects:

- i. Increased vs. Decreased Brain Activity
- ii. Engagement vs. Smallness
- iii. Curiosity vs. Indifference
- iv. Attraction vs. Disassociation
- v. Positive vs. Negative Feelings

Thus, we conclude that Brand Wonder and Brand Awe are distinct marketing emotions.

TABLE 9: Definitions of Wonder in Literature

Citation	Quote
(Barker, 2017, p. 5)	“the passion that moves a person out of this condition and sets him or her along the way out of that original ignorance and towards wisdom”
(De Luca-Noronha, 2019, p. 1)	“an emotion that is a constitutive part of a metacognitive process by which the agent becomes sensitive to the limits of her conceptual apparatus”
(Glăveanu, 2019, p. 1)	“a cyclical interplay between awareness, excitement, and exploration of the possible”
(Candiotto & Renaut, 2020, p. 8)	“primarily an experience in which the feeling is not only the one of amazement, but also the feeling of doubt, uneasiness, and the questioning is filled with uncertainty and curiosity”
(Parsons, 1969, p. 4)	“is the spark of excitation leaping across the gap between man and the world”
(Sherry, 2013, p. 1)	“a response to what is extraordinary or regarded as such, this covers a variety of things.”
(Shiota, 2021, p. 2)	“highly motivating; the search for knowledge is experienced as fun, and the sense of reward that comes from acquiring new knowledge is great”
(Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 7)	“is not overshadowed by an urge to project conceptual clarity onto it and analyze/dissect it, it gives way to another experience that emerges in the more subtle nuances of an after-image: an experience of quiet joy and gratitude for what has been experienced, sometimes even providing for a sense of reverence that remains with the beholder; the experience of wonder as such did not seem to stay, it waned relatively quickly; but the experience of quiet joy, gratitude or reverence would last”

TABLE 10: Comparing Awe and Wonder

	Awe	Wonder
Description	A feeling of spirituality (Gottlieb et al., 2018, p. 1)	A feeling of curiosity (Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 6)
Cause	Something vast or grand (Piff et al., 2015, p. 2)	Contemplative/deep (Schinkel, 2019, p. 3)
Response	Humility, respect (Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 7)	Curiosity, questioning (Noseworthy et al., 2014, p. 1109)
Example	Looking at Mountain Figures (Chen & Mongrain, 2021, p. 3)	Seeing a magician perform a trick (Kuhn et al., 2020, p. 3)
Emotional response	A feeling of fear (Keltner & Haidt, 2003, p. 9)	A feeling of surprise mingled with curiosity (Parsons, 1969, p. 5)
Positive or negative	Can be either positive or negative (Shiota et al., 2007, p. 3)	Generally positive (Descartes, 1649)

TABLE 11: Definitions of Awe in Literature

Citation	Quote
(Chen & Mongrain, 2021, p. 2)	“the outcome of two appraisals: a vastness in perception followed by a need for accommodation”
(Reinerman-Jones et al., 2013, p. 1)	“elicited by stimuli that are perceived to be greater than the self (i.e., vast), and this perceived vastness requires new mental representations to make sense of the experience (i.e., accommodation)”
(Kim et al., 2021, p. 1)	“a specific mixture of emotions that consumers feel when they encounter a luxury or premium brand that they perceive to be vast and, thus, requires a schematic accommodation”
(Piff et al., 2015, p. 1)	“an emotional response to perceptually vast stimuli that defy one’s accustomed frame of reference in some domain”
(Rivera et al., 2020, p. 13)	“anything experienced as “larger than the self, or the self’s ordinary level of experience or frame of reference”
(Shiota et al., 2007, p. 4)	“a response to vastness and need for accommodation; however, awe should lead to decreased self-focused attention”
(Stellar et al., 2017, p. 4)	“characterized by the perception of being in the presence of something vast that the individual does not immediately understand”
(Weger & Wagemann, 2021, p. 1)	“typically described as a state in which vastness and the need to adjust to new information is experienced”
(Yang et al., 2016, p. 1)	“Awe is a feeling of wonder and amazement in response to experiencing something so vast that it transcends one’s current frames of reference. Across three experiments”

TABLE 12: Awe in Marketing

Title	Citation
Nostalgia beats the wow-effect: Inspiration, awe and meaningful associations in augmented reality marketing	(Hinsch et al., 2020)
Brand Awe	(Kim et al., 2021)
Inspired to Create: Awe Enhances Openness to Learning and the Desire for Experiential Creation	(Rudd et al., 2018)
Triggers and Consequences of Awe in Online Brand Community	(Zhao et al., 2022)

TABLE 13: Awe outside of Marketing

Title	Citation
Awe and the interconnected self	(Chen & Mongrain, 2021)
The neural correlates of the awe experience: Reduced default mode network activity during feelings of awe	(Elk et al., 2019)
Awe as a Scientific Emotion	(Gottlieb et al., 2018)
Awe, the small self, and prosocial behavior	(Piff et al., 2015)
Awe and meaning: Elucidating complex effects of awe experiences on meaning in life	(Rivera et al., 2020)
Awe Expands People's Perception of Time, Alters Decision Making, and Enhances Well-Being	(Rudd et al., 2012)
The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept	(Shiota et al., 2007)
The development of the Awe Experience Scale (AWE-S): A multifactorial measure for a complex emotion	(Yaden et al., 2019)
Elicited Awe Decreases Aggression	(Yang et al., 2016)

TABLE 14: Literature Comparing Awe and Wonder

Title	Citation
Awe, wonder, and the human mind	(Shiota, 2021)
Towards a conceptual clarification of awe and Wonder	(Weger & Wagemann, 2021)
Born to be good : the science of a meaningful life	(Keltner, 2009)
Experiencing versus contemplating: Language use during descriptions of awe and wonder	(Darbor et al., 2016)
A neurophenomenology of awe and wonder: Towards a non-reductionist cognitive science	(Gallagher et al., 2015)
Neurophenomenology: an integrated approach to exploring awe and wonder	(Reinerman-Jones et al., 2013)

CHAPTER 5:

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The data analysis identified eight distinct themes of Brand Wonder: Emotions creating positive pause, emotions promoting positive engagement, innovation, experiential product/brand/service, customer-centric product/brand, high brand equity, craftsmanship, and optimism. These themes are critical to fostering consumer perceptions of wonder towards a brand. Each theme will now be explored in greater depth, along with their relationships. Please refer to Table 15 for a comprehensive themes and illustrative examples list.

TABLE 15: List of major ideas used in coding

Theme	Examples of representative words and phrases
Emotions creating positive pause	Awe, amazing, never seen before, I couldn't believe it, respect
Emotions promoting positive engagement	Excitement, surprise, happy, curios, wondering, shock, joy
Innovation	Revolutionized the world, never seen anything like it, disruptive, new technology, I've never seen this before
Experiential product/brand/service	Experienced, enjoyed, service, love this..., I used..., immersed, luxurious
Customer-centric product/ brand	Exceptional experience focused on me, changed my life, changed how I did things, level of service, level of care
High brand equity (aspirational product/brand, higher status, wanting to associate with the brand story/history)	Part of a group, VIP, better than others, more powerful, more respected, I could afford, before anyone else, superior to competitors
Craftsmanship	Design, organization, ability to exceptionally do..., cleanliness, made perfectly, looking beautiful, make me go "wow"
Optimism about future outcomes	Change the way I do business, new way to do things, I look different, will change my job, Use this in my life, can make a difference, less stress, save time

TABLE 16: Co-Occurrence Index

Theme	Frequency							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Emotions creating positive pause								
2. Emotions promoting positive engagement	4.33							
3. Innovation	4.62	3.99						
4. Experiential	4.35	4.02	3.11					
5. Customer-Centric	4.12	3.87	2.58	4.04				
6. High Brand Equity	4.49	4.01	3.72	3.43	3.07			
7. Craftsmanship	4.49	3.87	3.26	3.72	3.26	3.26		
8. Optimism about future outcomes	4.33	4.17	3.62	3.80	2.71	2.71	3.17	

Identified Themes:

Emotions creating positive pause: The description of an experience that causes one to stop and admire in reverence, respect, or amazement at the brand, object, or phenomenon.

When individuals interact with something that causes them to stop and immerse themselves in the experience, resulting in a feeling of respect or a sense of being a smaller self, they experience a pause. According to Piff et al. (2015), this feeling is characterized by reverence, respect, and humility, and it has been linked to self-enlargement, a perception of time slowing down, and a greater appreciation for life. In one survey, a participant illustrated experiencing this emotion with the following quote: (all quotes will be reported verbatim)

The palace artifacts were amazing, but nothing paled to the garden for me. It was nothing I had ever seen. The sheer attention struck me to the detail of the garden and that no one looked like they touched it at all. No one was down there, although it was not blocked off. It felt like everyone respected the space. (Female, Subject #3)

In this case, while going through a museum, the subject came upon a place that made her stop and admire the gardens and the immaculate care and maintenance of what she saw. She expresses that she had never seen anything like this garden. In other cases, this feeling may not be in such a large and breathtaking space, but it could be found in being introduced to a small device, as illustrated by the following example:

It was around the time the 3rd generation (iWatch) had been released, and every click of a button or scroll of the crown brought me to a new section of the watch. I had never seen anything like it before, with my old Casio watch telling the time and the date. It was amazing to see my heart rate on the screen or that my watch could help me with a moment of breathing to help calm me down. (Female, Subject #19)

Emotions promoting positive engagement: An experience that motivates a consumer's curiosity, excitement, surprise, and desire to learn more and gain knowledge about a brand, object, or phenomenon.

When a consumer initially interacts with an interesting brand or object, the first feeling they often experience is awe. However, awe alone does not account for the consumer's move to curiosity. On the other hand, wonder is frequently described as encompassing excitement, surprise, and curiosity and may help explain the consumer's transition from awe to a more action-oriented emotion. As noted earlier in this dissertation, Schinkel (2019) explains that

wonder is typically associated with curiosity or astonishment and directed towards something new or unfamiliar, while Weger and Wagemann (2021) add that, unlike awe, wonder is less intense and more inquisitive in nature. Finally, Killingsworth and Gilbert (2010) suggest that wonder has been linked to increased creativity and knowledge acquisition. This feeling is illustrated in the quote below:

I had an iPhone, iPad, and iPod in the past, so I was ready to purchase another Apple product to give it a try after hearing others rave about their watches. I didn't see many commercials for the product, but I did see many "cool" people that I admired wearing them. (Female, Subject #19)

The subject acknowledged feeling curious and desiring to learn more based on her previous experiences with Apple products. However, it is essential to note that consumers may also experience a desire to learn more about an object or event due to other motivating factors, as demonstrated in the following quote:

Two days ago (right after Chat GPT 4) was released, I was on LinkedIn. I came across a video that shows a person using GPT 4, and I was blown away by how powerful and "intelligent" the AI is. (Male, Subject #28)

The subject described an experience in which he stumbled upon a video demonstrating how a product worked on LinkedIn. Initially, the video made him stop in reverence, but his desire to learn more and try the product grew as it continued. This example highlights how a consumer's experience with a captivating brand or product can evolve from a feeling of reverence to an emotion that encompasses the feelings of curiosity and the desire to gain knowledge. It is an excellent demonstration of how the concept of Brand Wonder, with its components of both excitement and curiosity, can influence consumer behavior and perceptions.

Innovation: An experience of wonder that can be explained by new technology or a disruptive way to achieve outcomes that depart from how things were done previously.

A significant number of subjects reported feeling wonder when introduced to a new technology, feature, or process that enabled them to accomplish something they had been doing differently for many years. Many of these examples were expressed in ways that conveyed the subject's surprise or disbelief, as they had no prior knowledge that the task could be done in a particular way or with a specific technology. These findings highlight how Brand Wonder can be evoked by introducing new and innovative technologies that change how consumers approach and accomplish tasks and how this emotion can positively impact their perceptions of a brand or product.

When I finally got the product, I was struck by wonder when they could load many connections to my iPhone. I could do music, Calendar, Phone Contacts, Health, and other monitoring from the watch. It was a definite wow when I would get a call, and if I couldn't get to my phone fast enough, I could easily pick up the call on my watch and how clear it sounded! (Female, Subject #18)

This subject reported experiencing an overwhelming sense of wonder when using a new iWatch, which consolidated separate technologies such as music, calendar, phone, and health functions into one location and even allowed her to answer calls. This innovation motivated her to learn more about the device and drove her curiosity to explore its other features. This example demonstrates how technological innovation can evoke Brand Wonder and positively impact consumer perceptions. It is essential to note that innovation can also be described in other ways beyond technology, as illustrated in the following quote:

Years and years ago - an experimental service was offered at Orlando airport for a service now known as Clear. The sign-up was a pain, it took weeks for the card to be delivered, but the first time I was able to skip the security line completely... walk to the kiosk, hand my boarding card to the staff member, and scan my fingerprints, then walk right to the front of the TSA line was pretty magical. (Male, Subject #11)

The subject explained how the innovative nature of the Clear service made his airport travels less stressful, even though it was not a direct technology he possessed. This example illustrates how innovation does not necessarily have to be a physical product to evoke feelings of excitement and curiosity in consumers. Instead, it can manifest as a service or experience that improves the consumer's overall experience and exceeds their expectations. These findings highlight the importance of understanding how different forms of innovation can impact consumer perceptions and emotions and how brands can utilize these insights to create engaging and satisfying customer experiences.

Experiential Product, Brand, or Service: The feeling of brand wonder may be evoked when a consumer experiences a brand, service, or product that exceeds their imagination when interacting with it. This extraordinary experience can trigger the emotion of wonder, particularly when it is unexpected or exceeds the consumer's expectations. This theme is based on wonder occurring when a consumer is presently experiencing a brand, product, or service, as illustrated in the following example:

I turned up at this fine dining (CHIMA) restaurant for the very first time and was amazed as I had not experienced anything like this before. Firstly the hosts and Hostesses were all dressed up. The restaurant was adorned with high-quality décor and a well-lit

decorated space with very comfortable sofas, absolutely gorgeous flowers, and décor for the waiting area... Throughout the experience, I felt like a VIP and Royal with first-class treatment. I kept saying to myself, this is too good to be true. The experience was so amazing and full of class. (Female, Subject #1)

This subject reported experiencing brand wonder while dining at a fine restaurant, which had paid high attention to the atmosphere. The subject described being captivated by the décor, uniforms, and design of the waiting area and how the experience made her feel. This example highlights how the experiential aspect of Brand Wonder can be evoked by creating an environment in which the subject feels connected to the surroundings. It is a testament to the importance of creating engaging and immersive experiences that exceed the consumer's expectations and leaves a lasting positive impression. Another example of this phenomenon is illustrated in this quote:

Essentially the process for getting fit for clubs is the same as getting a bespoke suit; the clubs you buy are made specifically with your swing in mind. They change the head weights, shaft stiffness, any offset, the degrees of loft, and other small things to make them fit your game as perfectly as possible... This whole attention to detail and the advanced technology that went into the design process while still appealing to the eye filled me with awe and a sense of pride in their product, making me want to buy this small brand. They didn't do any fancy advertising that made me want to buy from them; it was all just brand reputation, quality, and attention to detail. (Male, Subject #20)

This subject reported feeling Brand Wonder while being fitted with golf clubs, as he was impressed by the level of care and attention he received during the process. In this example, the subject expressed how his wonder was not only motivated by the superior product he was being fitted for but also by the brand's ability to draw his attention to the product based on word-of-mouth recommendations from other golf acquaintances and the exceptional service he received when being fitted with the correct clubs. He specifically called out how long each club fitting took, which contributed to the clubs being a perfect fit for him, further reinforcing his positive perception of the brand. This example highlights how the experiential aspect of Brand Wonder can be evoked through exceptional service, personalized experiences, and attention to detail, which can leave a lasting positive impression on consumers.

Customer-centric product/brand: The experience of Brand Wonder may be evoked when a consumer perceives the product or brand to be highly focused on their success and satisfaction. Brands that demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond to ensure their customers' experiences are exceptional may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing the emotion of Brand Wonder when interacting with their brand. This theme highlights the importance of creating customer-centric strategies that prioritize the consumer's needs and desires, which can enhance their overall experience with the brand and increase the likelihood of long-term loyalty. It is a testament to the power of building strong relationships with customers, which can positively impact their emotions and perceptions of the brand. This theme is present in many of our subjects, as illustrated in this quote:

I had the pleasure of staying at The Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong, which was an experience that left me in complete wonder and awe for many reasons. From the moment I arrived,

the level of service and attention to detail was extraordinary... However, during my stay, I, unfortunately, fell ill, and it was at this moment the true level of service and care that the Hyatt provided became apparent. The staff went above and beyond to ensure that I was comfortable and had everything I needed, from bringing me tea and soup and additional blankets to constantly checking in on me to make sure that I was recovering well. (Female, Subject #14)

This subject reported a feeling of Brand Wonder was initially due to various factors that could be associated with other themes of Brand Wonder. However, only when she fell ill that she experienced the customer-centricity of the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong. The subject felt like her health and wellness were a priority for the staff, who continued to check on her and worked tirelessly to ensure her stay was valuable, even during illness. This example illustrates how customer centricity can be demonstrated by both employees' and organizational policies, making the consumer feel important and enhancing their overall brand experience. It is a testament to the power of customer-centric strategies prioritizing the consumer's needs and desires, which can positively impact their emotions and perceptions of the brand.

I bought sportswear on Dick's Sporting Goods (DSG) website during the Christmas sale at the end of last year... Unfortunately, a day later, I got 5 emails from DSG that 5 items were canceled even though I had paid for them. But to my great surprise, DSG gave me \$10 tokens per email as compensation in addition to the amount that would have been refunded to my account. It was \$10 per item; I got 5 \$10 tokens in total. I should be disappointed and angry because the product was canceled, but I am satisfied. (Male, Subject #24)

This subject shared their experience with Dick's Sporting Goods, highlighting how an organization's policies can impact customers' experience with canceled or out-of-stock items. While such situations can be unpleasant for customers, company policies that acknowledge these challenges and offer appropriate corrections and benefits can enhance the customer's experience and lead to further purchases and loyalty. This example illustrates how customer centricity can be demonstrated through organizational policies, which prioritize the customer's needs and satisfaction, and can positively impact their emotions and perceptions of the brand. It is a testament to the importance of building customer-centric strategies that prioritize the consumer's needs and desires, which can enhance their overall experience with the brand and increase the likelihood of long-term loyalty.

High Brand Equity: Brand equity is defined as the “commercial value that derives from consumer perception of the brand name of a particular product or service rather than from the product or service itself,” meaning when the consumer engages with a brand, they already have a perception of the quality or potential satisfaction based on what they’ve learned about the brand from other consumers. The experience of Brand Wonder can be evoked when a product, brand, or service creates an aspirational feeling within the consumer, which is characterized by a desire to be included in a certain group who has already purchased the product or achieve a status based on their association or purchase of the brand, product, or service. This sense of can also manifest as a desire to be a part of the brand's story or history. It can account for the esteem felt by the consumer and a feeling of differentiation from other groups due to their proximity to the brand, product, or service. The association sentiment in this theme is further supported by consumer-brand relationship theory (CBR), where Fournier (1998, p. 26) writes, “consumers do not choose

brands; they choose lives.” This theme highlights the importance of building strong brand equity, which can enhance the consumer's existing knowledge and emotional connection to the brand and increase their likelihood of long-term loyalty. It is a testament to the power of branding strategies that create a sense of aspiration and exclusivity, which can enhance the consumer's overall experience with the brand and increase their emotional investment in it. Brand equity can be a very persuasive driver for brand wonder, as illustrated by the below examples:

From the store where I purchased the iPhone, I was working with my head up high because only a few people could afford the iPhone in my country then, and those who use Apple products, including the iPhone, are regarded as a class of elites. It was a thing of joy and pride because of that class, and I enjoyed every bit of the respect it commanded.

(Male, Subject #15)

This subject's experience highlights the association of high brand equity with the feeling of wonder, as he associated himself with the elite class after being able to afford an iPhone. In his mind, owning an Apple product connected him to others who also owned the brand and bestowed a perceived respect in his home country due to his perception of the quality and status of affording this product. This example illustrates how brand equity can create a sense of aspiration and social status among consumers. Consumers often seek brands that they believe will have value and align with their self-identity, and owning products from these brands can enhance their self-esteem and sense of belonging. This highlights the importance of creating a strong brand identity that resonates with consumers and creates a sense of exclusivity and aspiration. Many times, an individual consumer doesn't have to purchase a product to immediately associate it with status among those around them, as shown in the following quote:

The first product I remember feeling wonder about was a huge flat-screen TV my parents bought for our new house when I was 10. It was a 60-inch LCD Sony flatscreen that we put in our family room. When I saw it for the first time, my mouth flew open, and I remember thinking it was the biggest and coolest thing I'd ever seen. All I wanted to do was to show my friends how big our TV was. I felt like my family had hit peak coolness at this time, and we were the richest family in the neighborhood. (Female, Subject #21)

This subject's experience exemplifies the power of brand equity to create wonder, as she felt an immediate sense of coolness and status in her neighborhood after her family purchased a 60-inch LCD television. The product's association with a prestigious brand, and the resulting perception of exclusivity and quality, created a sense of aspiration and desire among consumers. This association with a product, brand, or service defines the brand equity theme of brand wonder. The emotional connection and sense of belonging that brand equity can be key drivers of consumer behavior, influencing their decision to purchase, repurchase, and recommend the product or service to others. It emphasizes the importance of building a strong brand identity and reputation that resonates with consumers and creates a sense of exclusivity and aspiration.

Craftsmanship: Craftsmanship is a critical aspect of brand wonder, as it can inspire a sense of amazement and respect in consumers. The quality of a brand, product, or service can evoke wonder and admiration as consumers recognize the provider's ability to deliver exceptional outcomes. Many survey respondents reported feeling a sense of wonder associated with the perceived quality of an object or the outcomes of a service performed by a vendor. Craftsmanship is also vital to a brand's reputation, as it establishes a reputation for quality and excellence. By delivering outstanding products and services, brands can build a loyal following

of customers who appreciate and value their commitment to craftsmanship. This can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy, ultimately driving business growth and success.

This theme was present in many respondents, for example:

I recognize wonder more often and consistent with service. For example, the service provided by my hair stylist the very first time, and provided ever since, has always made me happy. On my first visit, a survey about my hair was completed, and a thorough discussion about my hair type and how best to manage it was completed. At that point, I knew this experience would differ from all others in the past. (Female, Subject #30)

The above quote illustrates the theme of craftsmanship in the context of brand wonder. Craftsmanship refers to the level of skill and care the provider takes to create or deliver a product or service. Consumers often experience wonder when they encounter a brand, product, or service that showcases exceptional craftsmanship. In the case of the subject in the above quote, she was amazed by the hairstylist's ability to deliver exactly what she wanted. This satisfaction can be attributed to the hairstylist's high skill level and attention to detail. Craftsmanship can also be explained with the design of a product that may also motivate the emotion of brand wonder, as illustrated in this example:

I started using an electronic notebook (ReMarkable) for note taking. The product was designed to wow by replicating the experience of writing in a physical notebook as opposed to the experience you get when you take notes on a tablet or laptop with a stylus. I felt like I was using technology while at the same time preserving some of the things that I like about manually taking notes felt professional and innovative. (Female, Subject #4)

This subject expressed a feeling of brand wonder when using the ReMarkable product, a device that combines the experience of writing on paper with the functionality of a digital tablet. The product's design, which closely replicates the experience of using a pen or pencil on paper, impressed her. She was amazed at how new technology could provide such a similar writing experience. The subject's experience demonstrates the craftsmanship theme of brand wonder, as she was impressed by the product's attention to detail and quality. This example highlights the importance of providing consumers with high-quality products that meet their needs and exceed their expectations. It also emphasizes the role of design in creating brand wonder, as the aesthetic appeal of the ReMarkable product helped to create an emotional connection with the subject.

Optimism about future outcomes: Optimism about future outcomes is a theme of Brand Wonder that is often linked to a consumer's anticipation of how a brand, product, or service will benefit them after purchase or engagement. The consumer may experience a sense of wonder at the possibilities and potential outcomes that the brand or product can offer. This sense of wonder is often accompanied by excitement and curiosity that can motivate the consumer to learn more about the brand or product and explore its potential applications. This theme was evident in 68% of survey responses, which highlights how important it is for brands to communicate the potential benefits of their products or services to their target audience. The consumer's optimism about the future outcomes of a brand can be a powerful motivator for purchasing or engaging with a brand. This theme was identified in 68% of survey responses, as exemplified by the following quote:

The brand experience that leaves to wonder for me is Anthropology. I love this brand because it speaks to my adventurous and sophisticated sides as a middle-aged woman. I

enjoy the quality of the accessories, clothing, and housewares. I've made several purchases and feel they have added value to my human experience.

This example illustrates how the emotion of brand wonder can be linked to a consumer's ability to accomplish something in the future by using a particular brand or product. In this case, the subject sees Anthropology as a brand that appeals to her idea of an adventurous and sophisticated middle-aged woman, allowing her to feel positive emotions about using the products on future adventures. This connection to a desired future self is a powerful motivator for consumers to experience the brand wonder and can result in long-term brand loyalty. Also, self-image and identity are crucial in understanding how consumers relate to brands and experience the emotion of wonder. The subject's perception of Anthropology as a brand that embodies her desired future self exemplifies how consumers use brands to construct and express their identities. This construct can be especially influential when it aligns with a consumer's values and aspirations. Some subjects saw immediate future benefits from brands, products, and services, as expressed in this example:

The time/times I was in wonder with a brand was Lulu Lemon. They consistently wow me with their brand from their comfortable and quality products to their lifetime warranty on their products. Anytime a product has picked or had any defect, I can walk in with no receipt, show them the issue, and get anything in equivalent to the value of the product that had the issue. They make it so easy and it makes me more inclined to buy from them versus other brands. (Female, Subject #27)

Brand wonder can also be motivated by optimistic expectations of the future, as illustrated by the subject's experience with Lulu Lemon. In this case, the subject associated the brand with a future outcome of stress-free product returns and replacement, which generated a

sense of wonder and excitement. This optimistic outlook towards the brand helped the subject to perceive it as a solution to a potential problem, leading to positive emotions and a stronger attachment to the brand. This example highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between brand wonder and optimism. A brand associated with positive future outcomes may trigger wonder and excitement in the consumer, leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy. Furthermore, optimistic expectations may also increase the brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers.

In sum, the concept of brand wonder has been explored through the identified themes of creating positive pause, emotions promoting positive engagement, innovation, an experiential product/brand/service, customer-centric product/brand, high brand equity, craftsmanship, and optimism. Each theme is associated with how a consumer experiences a brand, product, or service and the resulting emotions associated with that experience. For instance, innovation triggers wonder when a consumer is introduced to a new technology, feature, or process that exceeds their expectations. In contrast, high brand equity is associated with aspirational feelings and the perceived status of associating with a particular brand, product, or service. Customer-centric products/brands create a feeling of wonder by focusing on the success and satisfaction of the consumer. At the same time, craftsmanship is associated with the quality of the brand, product, or service and the provider's ability to accomplish a desired outcome. Finally, optimism is linked to wonder in how it facilitates an optimistic future outcome for the consumer. By exploring these themes, this dissertation provides insight into how brand wonder can create positive consumer experiences and increase loyalty to a particular brand or product.

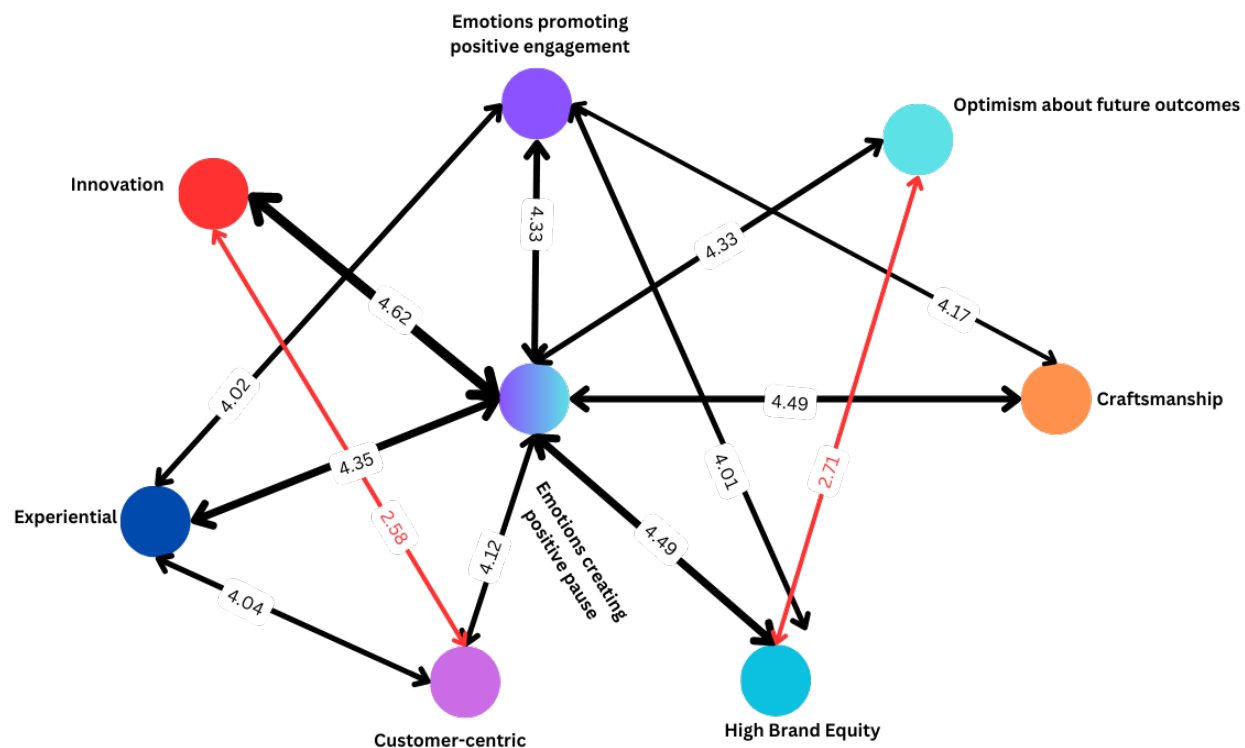


FIGURE 1: Cognitive Map (with Co-Occurrence Overlay)

TABLE 17: Themes of Brand Wonder

Theme	Description	Illustrative Response	Subject #
Emotions creating positive pause	Emotions that make us stop to reflect on the experience (i.e., Awe, Reverence, Humility, Respect, Amazement)	“It was a 60-inch LCD Sony flatscreen that we put in our family room. When I saw it for the first time, my mouth flew open, and I remember thinking it was the biggest and coolest thing I'd ever seen. All I wanted to do was to show my friends how big our TV was.” (Subject #21)	1,2,5,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,25,26, 30,31,32,
Emotions promoting positive engagement	Emotions that make us want to engage with a phenomenon (i.e., Excitement, Surprise, Curiosity, Learn More)	“In other words, sort of being able to transcend and imagine being in the magical state my kids were seeing. I also think emotions can be somewhat contagious....so the joy and happiness my kids were experiencing was also shared by my husband and myself.” (Subject #5)	2,4,5,6,7,9,10,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30,31,32
Innovation	Feelings of things that are new based on technology, or disruptive advances.	“When they first came out, it was amazing to see the different technological things that it could do.” (Subject #9)	4,6,7,9,10,11,13,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,26,28, 29,31
Experiential product/brand/service	Products, Brands, or Services that provide a novel, overwhelming, or satisfying experience	“To know that at this one airport - moving forward I would not be subject to the issues with hordes of tourists arriving at random times, with over stimulated children and	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,23,24,25,30,31,32

		overpacked carry-ons.” (Subject #11)	
Customer-centric product/ brand	Products or Brands that are focused mainly on the experience of the consumer	“But to my great surprise, DSG gave me \$10 tokens per email as compensation in addition to the amount that would have been refunded to my account.” (Subject #24)	1,2,8,11,13,14,20, 24,27, 30,31,32
High brand equity (initial perceived value, aspirational product/brand, higher status, wanting to associate with the brand story/history)	The perceived value is based on a previous understanding of the brand, including the feeling that a brand gives you access to a group or segment that you are not usually a part of. The feeling of elevation of social, environmental, or occupational status	“It was a thing of joy and pride because of that class, and I enjoyed every bit of the respect it commanded. Apple was <u>already a well-respected brand</u> , and this was reflected in users of its products and services.” (Subject #15)	2,6,10,11,12,12,1 5,18, 20,21,27,28,29,31 ,32
Craftsmanship	The quality of the brand, product, or service including how well someone completes a task or how well and object is constructed	“The palace artifacts were amazing but nothing paled to the garden for me. It was nothing I had ever seen. I was struck by the sheer attention to detail of the garden and that no one looked like they touched it at all” (Subject #3)	1,2,3,6,7,12,13,14 ,19,20, 26,27,29,30,31
Optimism about future outcomes	Ability to see a change in one’s life after interacting with a product, brand, or service	“From that day on, almost 10 years to date, every time I get up from the chair to look at my hair, it is in the best condition I've ever seen it.” (Subject #30)	2,4,6,7,10,11,13,1 6,17,18, 19,20,21,23,24,25 ,26,27, 28,29,30,31

Key Theme Associations

In the previous section, we discussed the eight identified themes of brand wonder. This section will focus on analyzing the key relationships between these themes. By examining the themes' relationships, we can better understand the underlying structure of brand wonder. Specifically, we will review five theme associations that are highlighted in the Cognitive Map (See FIGURE 1), with the thickness of the lines indicating the highest levels of cooccurrence.

The following theme associations will be analyzed: Craftsmanship & Emotions Creating Positive Pause, Innovation & Emotions Creating Positive Pause, Optimism about Future Outcomes & Experiential, and Customer-Centric & Innovation. It is worth noting that Theme 1, Emotions Creating Positive Pause, had a high frequency of cooccurrence with the other themes. This theme is central to how wonder is defined by many of our survey respondents. The positive nature of wonder allows consumers to understand better what they are feeling. The experience within this theme can be described as a meta-affective experience for consumers initially interacting with a brand.

By analyzing the relationships between the themes, we can move the marketing industry forward by introducing a new concept to branding activities and strategy.

Association between “Innovation” and “Emotions Creating Positive Pause

According to the cognitive map and co-occurrence measurement, the relationship between "innovation" and "emotions creating positive pause" had the highest co-occurrence. Survey responses suggest that consumers experience reverence, appreciation, and awe when encountering new ground-breaking technology or novel ways of accomplishing manual activities. Many responses mentioned new technologies such as iPhones, iWatches, Hybrid

Vehicles, and ReMarkable Tables, with comments like "I had never seen anything like that before!"

I remember feeling so excited about using the watch to respond to text messages without the distractions my cell phone provided or the ability not to miss any important notifications. The first time I ran with it, the watch tracked my entire workout. It was impressive and made me feel like a spy kid, like I had this crazy gadget on my arm that I could control with the swipe of my finger. (Subject #19)

Throughout this subject's response, she continued to speak about the new technology and features this new product could provide. She specifically mentioned feeling wonder each time she realized the product could do more than she thought, like text messages and automatically tracking her run.

Innovation plays a significant role in the initial and ongoing emotions of "Brand Wonder," with 56% of respondents indicating that innovation was a major reason for experiencing wonder. Regardless of the type of innovation (technical, product, or disruptive process), wonder may be triggered by surprising changes in products or brands. The consumer's feeling of wonder is experienced by feeling the emotions of positive pause, meaning being stopped in their tracks and want to learn more about a new technology they have witnessed.

Association between "Craftsmanship" and "Emotions Creating Positive Pause"

This study defines craftsmanship as the quality of a brand, product, or service, which can be applied to any physical object or creation at the hands of humans. Survey responses suggest that the appreciation of the object or service is where wonder is observed. This appreciation of craftsmanship and the associated wonder can be better described by (Prinz, 2013, p. 6) when

discussing a study on Michelangelo's Mona Lisa painting. In this study, subjects were asked to choose between seeing the ashes of the original painting or a perfect duplicate. Eighty percent of respondents chose to see the ashes, indicating that we disvalue copies and attribute almost magical significance to originals.

The feeling that Prinz's subjects experienced when imagining looking at the original's ashes instead of a duplicate helps to explain the high cooccurrence between "craftsmanship" and "emotions creating positive pause." Wonder carries a feeling of reverence for the highest levels of craftsmanship, including original works. The craftsmanship of a brand, object, or product can make a consumer stop in admiration of the object.

Survey respondents frequently used terms like "stuck with wonder" to describe experiences with craftsmanship while feeling the associated reverence and respect of positive pause. For example, Subject 3 felt that craftsmanship triggered the emotion of wonder when visiting a museum by being struck by the attention to detail in the garden and how everyone respected the space, as illustrated in her quote:

In this instance, I would say that the last impression really resonated with me because it's the last thing we saw before we left to return to the train. The palace artifacts were amazing but nothing paled to the garden for me. It was nothing I had ever seen. I was struck by the sheer attention to detail of the garden and that no one looked like they touched it at all. No one was down there although it was not blocked off. It felt like everyone respected the space - unlike how I grew up - grass was for playing, not to be marveled.

In this quote, the subject expresses how great the rest of the museum was, but nothing compared to the feeling she felt when seeing the gardens and the details the staff were able to

accomplish. She specifically says she was stuck at the attention to detail and further shows how her feeling of reference and respect grew as she recalled how everyone respected the space and grass, unlike when she was younger, the grass was meant to play on, not respected.

Marketing managers can consider the impact of craftsmanship in triggering expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for their brand or product. 47% of survey respondents expressed that the craftsmanship of an object brought forth a feeling of wonder in their experience. By understanding the importance of craftsmanship in triggering wonder, marketers can better motivate the emotion of wonder in consumers.

Association between Optimism about Future Outcomes and High Brand Equity

For this study, high brand equity is defined as an emotional connection to a brand through an aspirational product or brand associated with a higher brand and a desire to associate with the brand's story or history. This emotional connection can be characterized by knowledge, relevance, esteem, and differentiation. Overall, the feeling elicited by the high brand equity theme is a sense of connection to the brand or a community associated with the brand. Fournier (1998, p. 26) articulates this feeling excellently by stating, "consumers do not choose brands; they choose lives."

It would be expected that such aspirational connections to a brand or product would result in positive future outcomes due to involvement with the brand. Interestingly, our study's two themes of high brand equity and optimism about future outcomes received one of the two lowest co-occurrence frequencies. This finding may suggest that feeling emotionally connected to a brand or its customer base may not be sufficient to lead to loyalty or repeated purchase. This does not necessarily mean that high brand equity is of low value in future outcomes; however, it

could indicate that a product or brand must offer more than just a feeling of association to motivate consumers to view their outcomes with the brand positively. This is illustrated in the following quote from Subject 21:

When we installed the 60-inch LCD Sony flatscreen in our family room, my mouth flew open, and I remember thinking it was the biggest and coolest thing I'd ever seen. All I wanted to do was show my friends how big our TV was. I felt like my family had hit peak coolness at this time, and we were the richest family in the neighborhood.

While this subject immediately felt elevated above her neighbors, there was no mention of how this spectacular technological product would change her life. Although many identified themes could be extrapolated from this answer, she did not express how it could alter her outlook.

Association between “Customer-Centric” and “Innovation”

In this study, customer centricity is defined as the experience of Brand Wonder that may arise when a consumer perceives a brand to be highly focused on consumer satisfaction. Brands that demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond to ensure exceptional customer experiences may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing the emotion of Brand Wonder. In contrast, innovation is described as an experience of wonder that can result from new technology or a disruptive approach that departs from previous methods of achieving outcomes.

Interestingly, our study found that the association of these two themes, customer centricity and innovation, was the lowest co-occurrence frequency of all pairings. This finding was surprising, given that many responses related to innovation and the product's ability to do things for the participants. While new technologies are easier to recognize for their novelty, the

impact on making the consumer feel connected by the innovative product may have to happen over time.

It is worth noting that responses related to customer centricity mainly focused on services and products that could instantly improve the subjects' lives. Subject 14 expressed the feeling of customer centricity outside of innovation in the following quote:

When I fell ill on a recent trip, the level of care and attention to detail that the staff provided was truly remarkable, and it was a testament to the culture of service excellence that the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong has cultivated. Despite being in a foreign country, I felt incredibly taken care of and valued as a guest.

This subject explains how the staff at the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong went out of their way to care for her when she fell ill, making her feel that her experience was central to the staff's success. This immediacy of being surrounded by care in a foreign country may be why she chose this example to explain her wonder about the Grand Hyatt's exceptional customer-centric service. This care did not require innovation to motivate the feeling of wonder; it was simply about putting the customer first and focusing on the consumer's experience.

In sum, this section analyzes the theme associations that contribute to the experience of brand wonder, including craftsmanship, innovation, customer-centricity, and high brand equity. The study finds that emotions creating positive pause, innovation, and craftsmanship are central to triggering wonder. Customer-centricity is also important in creating wonder, and brands that prioritize exceptional customer experiences may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing brand wonder. The study's limitations include potential bias in survey responses

and limited generalizability to other contexts. The following insights can help marketing managers develop strategies to enhance the consumer experience and drive consumer behavior.

Insights from Empirical Study

Thematic Insights:

1. Wonder can be triggered by positive emotions associated with a brand, product, or service, which creates a sense of positive pause. Consumers experience wonder when they encounter something that exceeds their expectations, inspires awe and appreciation, and makes them feel part of something special. The positive nature of wonder allows consumers to understand better what they are feeling, leading to a meta-affective experience.
2. Innovation plays a significant role in triggering expressions of wonder, with many survey respondents citing innovation as a major reason for experiencing wonder, regardless of the type of innovation, whether technical, product, or disruptive process, wonder may be triggered by surprising changes in products or brands. Consumers may feel the emotions of positive pause, which means being stopped in their tracks and want to learn more about a new technology they have witnessed.
3. Craftsmanship triggers expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for a brand, product, or service and can make consumers stop in admiration of the object. The appreciation of the object or service is where wonder is observed. Wonder carries a feeling of reverence for the highest levels of craftsmanship, including original works.
4. Customer-centricity is an essential factor in triggering the experience of wonder. Brands that demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond to ensure exceptional customer

experiences may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing the emotion of wonder when interacting with their brand.

5. Optimism about future outcomes is linked to wonder in how it facilitates an optimistic future outcome for the consumer. A brand associated with positive future outcomes may trigger wonder and excitement in the consumer, leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy. Furthermore, optimistic expectations may increase the brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers.

TABLE 18: Wonder Insights Summary

Insight	Description
Wonder is an emotional response	The concept of brand wonder centers around the emotional response a consumer experiences when interacting with a brand, product, or service. The emotions of wonder can be triggered by a variety of factors, such as innovation, craftsmanship, and customer-centricity. Understanding the emotional aspect of wonder can help marketers create strategies that elicit positive emotions and increase consumer loyalty.
Positive pause is central to wonder	Positive pause is a theme that emerged in many survey responses as central to how consumers define wonder. Positive pause refers to the feeling of being stopped in one's tracks and wanting to learn more about a brand, product, or service. This theme is closely linked to the emotional aspect of wonder, as positive pause elicits emotions of awe, appreciation, and reverence. Marketers can use positive pause as a guide to create strategies that elicit wonder in consumers.
Innovation triggers wonder	Survey responses revealed that innovation plays a significant role in triggering wonder in consumers. Innovation can refer to new technology, product features, or disruptive processes that exceed consumers' expectations. When a consumer is introduced to an innovative product or process, they may experience emotions of awe, appreciation, and excitement, leading to a sense of wonder. Marketers can use innovation as a tool to trigger wonder and increase brand loyalty.
Craftsmanship elicits reverence and respect	Craftsmanship refers to the quality of a brand, product, or service, and the ability of the provider to accomplish a desired outcome. Survey responses revealed that consumers appreciate and respect brands that demonstrate high levels of craftsmanship, leading to a feeling of wonder. Craftsmanship elicits emotions of reverence and respect, which can be used by marketers to create brand loyalty and increase consumer advocacy.
Optimism about future outcomes leads to wonder	Survey responses revealed that consumers associate wonder with optimistic expectations of the future. Brands that can offer solutions to potential problems and facilitate positive future outcomes can trigger wonder and excitement in consumers. Optimism about future outcomes can increase a brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers. Marketers can use this insight to create strategies that elicit wonder through optimistic messaging and branding.

Branding Insights:

1. Emotions create positive pause: The concept of positive pause is central to how many survey respondents define wonder. Positive pause refers to being stopped in one's tracks and wanting to learn more about a new product, brand, or experience. Marketers should create positive pause by providing consumers with unique, innovative, and customer-centric experiences.
2. Innovation and craftsmanship are associated with reverence and respect: Innovation and craftsmanship triggered expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for a brand or product. Marketers should consider the impact of innovation and craftsmanship in triggering expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for their brand or product.
3. High brand equity is associated with aspirational feelings: High brand equity is defined as an emotional connection to a brand through an aspirational product or brand associated with a higher brand and a desire to associate with the brand's story or history. This emotional connection can be characterized by knowledge, relevance, esteem, and differentiation. Brands with high brand equity can use their status to trigger wonder and excitement in their customers.
4. Experiential marketing can generate wonder: Brands that provide experiential marketing and services can trigger wonder in their customers. Experiential marketing creates an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer and can lead to increased brand loyalty and advocacy.
5. Storytelling is a powerful tool for creating wonder. Many survey respondents expressed the importance of a brand's story and its ability to capture their imagination and create wonder. The narrative behind a brand can help to establish an emotional connection with consumers, as it allows them to relate to the brand's values and purpose. Furthermore,

storytelling can help to differentiate a brand from its competitors and create a unique brand identity that resonates with consumers. By developing a compelling brand story, marketers can create wonder and foster brand loyalty among consumers.

6. Brand wonder can be a source of competitive advantage Brand Wonder has the potential to create a competitive advantage for a brand by fostering emotional connections with consumers and increasing brand loyalty. By understanding the factors contributing to Brand Wonder, such as craftsmanship, innovation, and customer-centricity, marketers can develop strategies to enhance the consumer experience and differentiate their brand from competitors. Furthermore, brand wonder can also increase a brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers.

TABLE 19: Branding Insights Summary

Insight	Description
Brand wonder is associated with positive future outcomes	A brand associated with positive future outcomes may trigger wonder and excitement in the consumer, leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy.
Brand wonder is linked to optimism	Optimistic expectations may increase the brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers.
Craftsmanship can trigger expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for a brand or product	By understanding the importance of craftsmanship in triggering wonder, marketers can better motivate the emotion of wonder in consumers.
Storytelling is a powerful tool in creating wonder	By developing a compelling brand story, marketers can create wonder and foster brand loyalty among consumers.
Brand wonder can be a source of competitive advantage	Brand wonder has the potential to create a competitive advantage for a brand by fostering emotional connections with consumers and increasing brand loyalty.

Marketing Insights:

1. Innovation triggers wonder: Innovation plays a significant role in the initial and ongoing emotions of brand wonder, with 56% of survey respondents indicating that innovation was a major reason for experiencing wonder. Regardless of the type of innovation, whether it is technical, product, or disruptive process, wonder may be triggered by surprising changes in products or brands. The consumer's feeling of wonder is experienced by feeling the emotions of positive pause, meaning being stopped in their tracks and wanting to learn more about a new technology they have witnessed. Marketers can use innovation to generate wonder and create positive emotions toward their brand.
2. Customer-centricity can trigger wonder: Brands that demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond to ensure exceptional customer experiences may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing the emotion of brand wonder when interacting with their brand. Customer-centricity is an essential factor in triggering the experience of wonder. The immediacy of being surrounded by care and attention to detail may be why customers experience wonder about a brand or product. Marketers can develop strategies to enhance the customer experience and drive consumer behavior. For example, marketers must develop policies that put a consumer's experience at the forefront of all activities, including research and development. This customer centricity comes from direct interactions with customers, as well as functionality and ease of use of products, affording the customer the easiest path forward to find value in the product and the experience.
3. Craftsmanship triggers expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect: The craftsmanship of a brand, object, or product can make a consumer stop in admiration of

the object. Survey respondents frequently used terms like "stuck with wonder" to describe experiences with craftsmanship while feeling the associated reverence and respect of positive pause. Marketing managers should use the impact of craftsmanship to trigger expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for their brand or product.

4. Optimism can increase brand loyalty: A brand associated with positive future outcomes may trigger wonder and excitement in the consumer, leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy. Optimistic expectations may also increase the brand's perceived value, making it more appealing and desirable to consumers. Marketing managers can use optimistic messaging to increase brand loyalty and enhance the perceived value of their brand. Using optimism can come in different forms, but marketing managers must consider connecting their messaging to how consumers see themselves in the future. This type of optimism helps the consumer believe that by using the product, their lives will somehow have better life.
5. Emotional connection is necessary but not sufficient for brand loyalty: While feeling emotionally connected to a brand or its customer base may be necessary, it may not be sufficient to lead to a repeated purchase. Brands must offer more than just a feeling of association to motivate consumers to positively view their outcomes with the brand. Marketers should focus on creating a well-rounded customer experience that goes beyond emotional connection.

TABLE 20: Marketing Insights Summary

Insight	Description
Emotional engagement is crucial in creating brand wonder	Emotions play a key role in creating brand wonder, and emotional engagement is crucial in capturing consumers' attention and fostering brand loyalty.
Innovation is a significant trigger for brand wonder	New technologies, features, or processes that exceed consumers' expectations can trigger wonder and excitement, leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy.
Customer-centricity is essential in creating brand wonder	Brands that demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond to ensure exceptional customer experiences may increase the likelihood of consumers experiencing the emotion of brand wonder when interacting with their brand.
Storytelling is a powerful tool in creating wonder	The narrative behind a brand can help to establish an emotional connection with consumers, as it allows them to relate to the brand's values and purpose.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This dissertation aimed to develop an initial theoretical framework for the new marketing construct, Brand Wonder, using the (Hunt, 2020) methodology for indigenous theory development inductive realist approach. The methodology involved a seven-step theory development structure, which included creating foundational premises to describe the new theory from existing and nonexistent areas. An exploratory study was conducted with graduate students at UNC Charlotte, using the pointwise mutual information process to analyze the data. The analysis identified eight themes that revealed the presence of wonder in the daily lives of individual consumers. This discussion section focuses on these themes and their implications for developing the theoretical framework for Brand Wonder.

Key theme associations were identified as important contributors to the brand wonder experience. This concept has gained increasing attention in the marketing literature. Our findings suggest that four leading theme associations, highlighted in the Cognitive Map (see FIGURE 1), including Craftsmanship <-> Emotions Creating Positive Pause, Innovation <-> Emotions Creating Positive Pause, Optimism about Future Outcomes <-> High Brand Equity, and Customer-Centric <-> Innovation. Moreover, we found that Theme 1, “Emotions Creating Positive Pause,” had a high frequency of co-occurrence with the other themes, indicating their central role in the experience of brand wonder.

One of the study's most striking findings was the high co-occurrence between "innovation" and "emotions creating positive pause," indicating that innovation plays a significant role in triggering the experience of brand wonder. This finding aligns with literature showing that innovation is a key driver of consumer behavior, as it can lead to increased

excitement, interest, and engagement with a brand (Brodie et al., 2013). Our study further highlights that regardless of the type of innovation (technical, product, or disruptive process), wonder may be triggered by surprising changes in products or brands. Therefore, marketers should consider innovation a powerful tool for motivating the emotion of wonder in consumers.

Another important theme from our study was the relationship between "craftsmanship" and "emotions creating positive pause." The findings suggest that the appreciation of the object or service is where wonder is observed. This appreciation of craftsmanship and the associated wonder can trigger expressions of reverence, amazement, and respect for the brand or product. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that high-quality products and services are more likely to elicit positive emotions and create a lasting impression on consumers (Aaker, 1997). Therefore, marketing professionals should consider the impact of craftsmanship in triggering wonder and motivating this emotion in consumers.

Interestingly, we found that the "high brand equity" and "optimism about future outcomes" themes received one of the two lowest co-occurrence frequencies, suggesting that feeling emotionally connected to a brand or its customer base may not be sufficient to lead to loyalty or repeated engagement. Instead, it may be necessary for a product or brand to offer more than just a feeling of association to motivate consumers to view their outcomes with the brand positively. Although this finding goes contrary to Fournier (1998, p. 26) stating, "consumers do not choose brands; they choose lives" it highlights the need for marketers to focus on providing tangible benefits and value to their customers in addition to emotional connections.

In summary, this study contributes to marketing by creating a theoretical framework with empirical evidence introducing Brand Wonder. As a result, this dissertation found key theme associations that contribute to consumer experiences of brand wonder. Our findings suggest that

innovation and craftsmanship are powerful tools for motivating the emotion of wonder in consumers. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of considering the impact of brand equity and optimism about future outcomes in triggering expressions of wonder. Finally, our study has several implications for marketing managers seeking to understand the factors contributing to the experience of brand wonder and its potential impact on consumer behavior.

Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

This research makes several theoretical and managerial contributions. This dissertation begins with a foundational theoretical framework for the new construct of brand wonder. To do this, a precise definition of brand wonder is provided since practitioners and academics have never articulated it. Given that this construct has never been studied or defined, this must be completed. Moreover, even though academics have used the phrases Brand Awe, Brand Hate, and Brand Love in recent research, brand wonder does not seem to be defined.

Theoretical Contributions

TABLE 21: Theoretical Contributions

Theoretical Contribution	Key Transformational Outcomes for Academics
Indigenous theory development, inductive realist approach used in a consumer behavioral study	This dissertation represents the first application of Hunt's Indigenous Theory Development Inductive Realist approach to a consumer behavioral study. Previously, this methodology had been employed solely in traditional empirical studies.
Creation of Meta-affective definition for emotions	Bendik-Keymer (2017) suggests that typical implications of wonder include astonishment, admiration, and intrigue, while De Luca-Noronha (2019, p. 4) refers to wonder as “actions in response to interest and curiosity concerning experienced phenomena.” A meta-affective emotion results in several other emotions; (Sherry, 2013, p. 1) explains this further, “wonder is often linked closely with other powerful human emotional responses like admiration, fascination, delight, gratitude, and worship.”
Eight foundational premises defining a new construct of Brand Wonder	The dissertation employs an inductive realist approach as part of the Hunt (2020) methodology of indigenous theory development and posits eight foundational premises. These premises play a significant role in creating the initial theory for the newly introduced Brand Wonder construct by elucidating the impact of wonder on branding. The identified themes in the empirical study provide substantive support for these foundational premises.

TABLE 22: Empirical Evidence in Foundational Premises

Brand Wonder Foundational Premise	Evidence from Themes
FP 1: Brand Wonder is a brand-directed metacognitive emotion.	<p><i>Theme 2: Emotions promoting positive engagement:</i> An experience that motivates a consumer's curiosity, excitement, surprise, and desire to learn more and gain knowledge about a brand, object, or phenomenon.</p> <p><i>Theme 8: Optimism about future outcomes:</i> Optimism about future outcomes is a theme of Brand Wonder that is often linked to a consumer's anticipation of how a brand, product, or service will benefit them after purchase or engagement.</p>
FP 2: Brand wonder is a brand-directed meta-affective emotion.	<p><i>Theme 1: Emotions creating positive pause:</i> The description of an experience that causes one to stop and admire in reverence, respect, or amazement at the brand, object, or phenomenon.</p> <p><i>Theme 6: High Brand Equity:</i> The experience of Brand Wonder can be evoked when a product, brand, or service creates an aspirational feeling within the consumer, which is characterized by a desire to be included in a certain group or status based on their association or purchase of the brand, product, or service.</p> <p><i>Theme 8: Optimism about future outcomes:</i> Optimism about future outcomes is a theme of Brand Wonder that is often linked to a consumer's anticipation of how a brand, product, or service will benefit them after purchase or engagement.</p>
FP 3: Brand Wonder is a Fundamental Source of Attraction towards a Brand or Product.	<p><i>Theme 2: Emotions promoting positive engagement:</i> An experience that motivates a consumer's curiosity, excitement, surprise, and desires to learn more and gain knowledge about a brand, object, or phenomenon.</p> <p><i>Theme 6: High Brand Equity:</i> The experience of Brand Wonder can be evoked when a product, brand, or service creates an aspirational feeling within the consumer, which is characterized by a desire to be included in a certain group or status based on their association or purchase of the brand, product, or service.</p> <p><i>Theme 8: Optimism about future outcomes:</i> Optimism about future outcomes is a theme of Brand Wonder that</p>

is often linked to a consumer's anticipation of how a brand, product, or service will benefit them after purchase or engagement.

FP 4: Brand Wonder may result in veneration toward a brand. 81% of respondents

Theme 1: Emotions creating positive pause: The description of an experience that causes one to stop and admire in reverence, respect, or amazement at the brand, object, or phenomenon.

Theme 6: High Brand Equity: The experience of Brand Wonder can be evoked when a product, brand, or service creates an aspirational feeling within the consumer, which is characterized by a desire to be included in a certain group or status based on their association or purchase of the brand, product, or service.

FP 5. Brand Wonder is the affective result of a quest to comprehend a novel brand or product and not fully being able to do so

Theme 2: Emotions promoting positive engagement: An experience that motivates a consumer's curiosity, excitement, surprise, and desire to learn more and gain knowledge about a brand, object, or phenomenon.

FP 7b. Brand Wonder is inherently a positive marketing emotion.

Theme 1: Emotions creating positive pause: The description of an experience that causes one to stop and admire in reverence, respect, or amazement at the brand, object, or phenomenon.

Theme 2: Emotions promoting positive engagement: An experience that motivates a consumer's curiosity, excitement, surprise, and desires to learn more and gain knowledge about a brand, object, or phenomenon.

Theme 4: Experiential Product, Brand, or Service: The feeling of brand wonder may be evoked when a consumer experiences a brand, service, or product that exceeds their imagination when interacting with it.

Theme 6: High Brand Equity: The experience of Brand Wonder can be evoked when a product, brand, or service creates an aspirational feeling within the consumer, which is characterized by a desire to be included in a certain group or status based on their association or purchase of the brand, product, or service.

Managerial Contributions

This dissertation offers important insight to help enhance strategy and practice in branding and marketing. In addition, it creates an important construct in the customer lifecycle journey as it relates to the consumer's intention to engage with a product or brand. The findings are also useful in helping to facilitate a consumer's perception of a brand in initial and ongoing interactions. Further, the research underscores the importance of identifying when consumers feel the emotion of wonder related to branding. Marketing professionals must explore strategies that elicit curiosity, reverence, experiential innovation, brand equity, craftsmanship, and internal outcomes for consumers to gain a level of wonder towards their brand and eventually purchase. Furthermore, marketing professionals should empower to utilize the themes and strategies resulting from this research during branding strategy planning and consumer engagement opportunities and work to capture the various aspects of brand wonder.

The managerial implications of this study are significant for marketing professionals seeking to enhance their branding and marketing strategies. This research provides valuable insights into the customer lifecycle journey and the role of consumer intention in engaging with a brand. It also highlights the importance of creating positive brand perceptions in initial and ongoing interactions.

One of the most significant findings of this dissertation is the importance of wonder in branding. The research highlights the key themes and strategies that elicit wonder, including curiosity, reverence, experiential innovation, brand equity, craftsmanship, and internal outcomes. These strategies are critical for marketers to consider when planning their branding strategies and engaging with consumers to foster brand wonder and drive sales.

Moreover, this dissertation emphasizes the need for marketing professionals to identify when consumers experience the emotion of wonder related to branding. This can be accomplished by capturing the various aspects of brand wonder, including sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational aspects. By doing so, marketing professionals can better understand how to engage with consumers and create positive brand perceptions.

Incorporating brand wonder in branding strategy design can also help marketers prepare for new levels of engagement and better understand the antecedents to eventual brand loyalty and intentions to purchase and repurchase. The identified themes of brand wonder can be useful for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the company's current marketing activities from a consumer's perspective.

TABLE 23: Managerial Contributions

Practical Contribution	Key Transformational Outcomes for Marketing Professionals
Incorporate Brand Wonder in Branding Strategy Design	Marketing professionals should incorporate the concept of Brand Wonder into their branding strategy design to help them prepare for new levels of engagement and a deeper understanding of the antecedents to eventual brand loyalty and intentions to purchase and repurchase. The identified themes of Brand Wonder, including curiosity, reverence, experiential innovation, brand equity, craftsmanship, and internal outcomes, should be considered when planning branding strategies.
Identify When Consumers Experience Wonder	Marketing professionals must identify when consumers feel the emotion of wonder related to branding. By capturing the various aspects of Brand Wonder, including sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational elements, marketing professionals can better understand how to engage with consumers and create positive brand perceptions.
Utilize Brand Wonder Themes and Strategies	Marketing professionals should empower themselves to utilize the themes and strategies resulting from this research during branding strategy planning and consumer engagement opportunities. By working to capture the various aspects of Brand Wonder, marketing professionals can create effective branding strategies that resonate with consumers and drive sales.
Assess and Evaluate Brand Strategies	The identified themes of Brand Wonder could help assess and evaluate the brand strategies of the company's current marketing activities from a consumer's perspective; by considering the various aspects of Brand Wonder, marketing professionals can better understand how to engage with consumers and create positive brand perceptions.
Foster Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intentions	Brand Wonder is a critical component of fostering brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Marketing professionals should explore strategies that elicit curiosity, reverence, experiential innovation, brand equity, craftsmanship, and internal outcomes for consumers to gain a level of wonder towards their brand and eventually purchase.

In sum the managerial implications of this dissertation suggest that marketing professionals should consider the concept of Brand Wonder when planning their branding and marketing strategies. By incorporating the themes and strategies of Brand Wonder, marketers can create effective branding strategies that resonate with consumers, foster brand loyalty, and drive sales. The findings of this dissertation also provide valuable insights into the customer lifecycle journey and the role of consumer intention in engaging with a brand, emphasizing the importance of creating positive brand perceptions in initial and ongoing interactions. By considering these implications, marketing professionals can enhance their branding and marketing practices and remain competitive in the marketplace.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study comprehensively explores the concept of Brand Wonder and its potential applications for marketing professionals, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study's focus on exploring Brand Wonder as a construct from the consumer's perspective may need to be improved in providing a complete understanding of its implications in marketing practices. It is possible that marketing managers and strategists may have a different understanding of Brand Wonder or have additional insights that could impact its application in marketing campaigns.

Second, although the study provides evidence of the potential benefits of Brand Wonder in consumer engagement, it needs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms that give rise to this construct. Future research could aim to identify specific factors that can enhance or detract from the impact of Brand Wonder on consumer behavior. Such

research can help marketing professionals develop more effective strategies for leveraging this construct in their campaigns.

Third, while the current study focuses on exploring Brand Wonder in traditional experiences, such as events and attractions, there may be opportunities to extend this concept to non-traditional experiences, such as environmental phenomena or natural wonders. It would be interesting to examine how developing marketing programs around these experiences may impact consumer behavior and engagement and how this may vary across different cultural contexts and demographic segments.

Moreover, future studies could examine the impact of Brand Wonder on consumer behavior over time. For example, how does experiencing Brand Wonder impact a consumer's loyalty and willingness to continue engaging with the brand in the long term? How does the identification of Brand Wonder change the customer journey through their intention to renew or repurchase? By examining these questions, researchers can provide more comprehensive insights into the potential benefits of Brand Wonder for marketing professionals.

Finally, additional research is needed to explore how marketing professionals can effectively integrate Brand Wonder into their practices, programs, and activities. Such insight may help marketing personnel have better judgment and make better decisions in the long term to connect with consumers in marketing campaigns.

In sum, while this study provides important insights into the concept of Brand Wonder, further research is needed to address the current study's limitations and provide more comprehensive insights into the potential benefits of this construct for marketing professionals. By building on the findings of this study, researchers can deepen our understanding of Brand

Wonder and provide practical guidance on how to utilize this emotion to improve consumer engagement and drive business growth.

Conclusion

When confronted with something new, wonder is a thrilling and engrossing sensation that piques our interest and encourages us to learn more (Darbor et al., 2016). From philosophers centuries ago to academics in this decade, wonder has been an elusive, understudied emotion in many domains. Still, it has been entirely missing from marketing literature, especially its effect on consumers' desire to interact with and buy a brand. Understanding the influence of wonder on an individual's attitude toward a brand may aid in developing branding strategies and practices that enhance marketing managers' capacity to connect with consumers' innate emotions. This research provided an initial theoretical framework for further defining the concept of wonder and its effect on branding-related affect. To better identify brand wonder, themes from graduate students' remembered experiences and encounters with various brands, both theoretical and empirical methodologies, were used.

In conclusion, this study has identified a gap in the literature regarding the use of wonder in marketing and branding and has made several unique contributions to this field. By establishing an initial theoretical foundation, this research can provide valuable insights for academics and marketing practitioners, enabling them to identify research problems better and develop effective branding strategies. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to comprehend the critical constructs involved fully. However, it is reasonable to assert that this study represents a significant step towards the theoretical and practical advancement of the marketing field, which has the potential to transform the critical business function of branding in the future.

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