

Love in the Time of Overconsumption: Why Purpose-Oriented Branding Extends Product Ownership Duration

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Cite as:

Baecker Steffen, Gonçalves Dilney, Santos Velasco David (2026), Love in the Time of Overconsumption: Why Purpose-Oriented Branding Extends Product Ownership Duration. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (134138)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

This research examines how purpose-oriented branding influences consumer behavior by shaping product perceptions and utilization. Across multiple studies, purpose-oriented brands consistently elicited “made-with-love” perceptions, symbolic inferences that a brand’s prosocial essence transfers to its products. These perceptions increased product care and extended intended ownership duration. Integrating essence transfer theory, this work identifies a previously untested psychological mechanism through which brand purpose shapes downstream product-level outcomes. By demonstrating that purpose-oriented branding can reduce premature disposal by fostering longer product lifecycles, the findings highlight how brand purpose offers a meaningful pathway for addressing societal challenges such as overconsumption.

Track: Product and Brand Management