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## Article

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## MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Does brand anthropomorphism and brand intimacy matter to assess consumers' engagement successfully?

Thanh Nguyen Ngoc Dan<sup>1\*</sup> and Phuc Ngo Trong<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the impact of Brand Anthropomorphism and Intimacy on the attachment between consumers and the Samsung electronic technology brand. Data were collected by convenience sampling from 357 respondents through an internet survey, using SPSS 25 and AMOS 25 software along with CB-SEM (Covariance-based SEM) analysis technique to evaluate the relationship between structures. Research results show that Brand Anthropomorphism has a direct impact on Intimacy and Brand Engagement, and Intimacy is the mediator between Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Engagement. In addition, the research results show that in Vietnam, specifically, Ho Chi Minh City, the Brand Anthropomorphism factor in the Samsung technology brand market consists of only three components instead of four components like other brands' previous research. In addition, this study demonstrates the role of Brand Anthropomorphism in the context of the electronic technology market, which marketing managers can deploy to achieve effective engagement between consumers and brands.

**Subjects:** Consumer Psychology; Consumer Behaviour; Brand Management;

**Keywords:** brand anthropomorphism; intimacy; brand engagement; electronic technology brand

## 1. Introduction

In today's modern society, with the changing trend, it is not easy for a technology brand to establish contact with consumers and make them loyal customers. Especially with the intensification of competition in multiple markets and the outbreak of the battle for customer attention, corporate brands have become an important factor in today's business activities (Loken et al., 2023). In recent years, the electronic technology market in Vietnam seems to be heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nguyen Ngoc Dan Thanh is a Ho Chi Minh City Open University lecturer. She educates students about marketing communication and academics in marketing research. Before being a Ph.D. student at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, she received her MBA certificate from Assumption University in Thailand after working for two years as a marketing executive at the bank. She also has experience in participating Erasmus + project named KNOTS transdisciplinary research and teaching as the leader of the field trip and planning the summer school activities from 2018 to 2019. Her research centers on the customer's engagement through their perception of the brand. Her research interests include leadership transformation and entrepreneurship, and her papers have been published in international journals and international conference proceedings. Phuc Ngo Trong is currently a student majoring in business administration at the Open University of Ho Chi Minh City, VietNam.

However, there is one technology brand that continues to grow strongly and accounts for half of the market share in the Vietnamese market, which is the electronic technology brand Samsung. By the end of 2021, Samsung owns its own six large-scale manufacturing plants in Vietnam in Bac Ninh, Thai Nguyen, and Ho Chi Minh City respectively with a total investment of up to billions of dollars and creating more than 100,000 jobs for Vietnamese people. So, what factors have helped the Samsung technology brand continue to grow and outperform its competitors?

In the past few decades, many articles about brands have been published, discussing many aspects of brands, and emphasizing the importance of brands in business practice (Hulberg, 2006). In addition, some researchers have tried to analyze the role of brands in the electronic technology environment. In 2003, Venkatesh and Morris built on previous studies that developed and supplemented attitudes, intentions, and behavior conditions to accurately describe technology-related factors considered useful. When the functional attributes of the product no longer affect the brand, the emotional value of consumers determines the differentiated positioning of the brand in the market (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). Besides, Sawhney (2005) believed that the success of brands in the electronic technology environment can only be achieved by providing an emotional brand experience, building trust and emotion, and the long-term relationship between brands and consumers. Because the brand is a stable anchor between the volatility, uncertainty, and chaos of the electronic technology market. However, technology companies still difficult to accept the importance of brands, and many electronic technology companies still believe that the success of the electronic market depends on technological innovation, product function enhancement, and improvement of price factors (Lambin & Schuiling, 2012). However, fierce competition, rising marketing costs, and changing technology force brands to consider participating in efforts to make the relationship with consumers easier to maintain (Kamboj, 2020). In addition, Oh et al. (2020) believe that the biggest development affecting brands is the impact of technology on brands and how consumers interact with brands. According to the research of Bhat and Reddy (1998), brand success must not only meet functional needs but also most important is to meet emotional needs the Brand Anthropomorphism factor is completely relevant and can enhance the feelings and emotions of consumers (Agrawal et al., 2020). Tuškej and Podnar (2018) defined Brand Anthropomorphism as a consumer cognitive process, attributed human-like characteristics to the brand, and regarded it as an entity with its motivation, perception, intention, and emotion. Furthermore, Fournier and Alvarez (2012) believed that to make brands an important bridge between consumers and brands, brands must be personified, which means that brands have human qualities and can conduct behaviors, loves, and emotions.

Studies have explored the effects of brand anthropomorphism on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. For instance, a study by Valette- Florence (2011) examined the effects of anthropomorphic brand characters on consumer attitudes and brand equity. They found that using anthropomorphic brand characters can positively influence consumer responses, leading to more favorable brand attitudes and improved brand equity. However, this study focused on consumer attitudes and brand equity rather than long-term brand engagement. Scholars have emphasized the importance of fostering emotional connections and building brand communities to drive engagement (Wu et al., 2023). However, there is limited direct research investigating the role of anthropomorphism in this process (Sharma & Rahman, 2022).

In Vietnam, most of the world's leading brands in the field of electronics and technology exist, such as Samsung, Intel, Nokia, Mingzi, Apple, etc. This shows that Vietnam's electronic technology market has great potential. Ho Chi Minh City is a place that plays a leading role in the fields of finance, economy, trade, and science and technology and is also the direction of developing Vietnam's leading digital economy. In July 2021, the population will exceed 9 million, which is very important because the development trend of the digital economy means that HCMC consumers have an increasing demand for electronic technology brands to serve their work, study, and life. Recognizing that the research on the impact of Brand Anthropomorphism, especially in the field of electronic technology brands, especially Samsung technology brands in Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City, is an important and necessary issue for enterprises, In this way, Samsung brands, especially other technology brands, can better understand the impact of Brand

Anthropomorphism and use the suggestions in the research paper to improve the effectiveness of brand positioning strategy in the future.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between brand anthropomorphism, consumer intimacy, and brand engagement in the context of the Samsung electronic technology brand. Specifically, we aim to explore whether brand anthropomorphism influences consumer intimacy and subsequently affects brand engagement.

While previous research has examined the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumer attitudes and brand equity, there is a notable research gap concerning its specific effect on consumer intimacy and brand engagement. Additionally, limited research has directly explored the relationship between consumer intimacy and brand engagement, especially in the context of anthropomorphism and consumer electronics brands like Samsung. Understanding these relationships is critical for marketing professionals seeking to develop effective branding strategies that enhance consumer engagement and loyalty.

This study holds several implications for both academia and industry. From an academic perspective, it contributes to the emerging body of literature on brand anthropomorphism and its effects on consumer behavior. By examining the relationship between brand anthropomorphism, consumer intimacy, and brand engagement, the study offers valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive consumer-brand connections. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study will provide valuable guidance to marketers and brand managers at Samsung and similar electronic technology brands. Understanding how brand anthropomorphism influences consumer intimacy and brand engagement will help develop more targeted and effective branding strategies. Strengthening consumer engagement and loyalty can ultimately lead to increased market share and sustainable competitive advantage in the fiercely competitive consumer electronics industry.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

### 2.1. Theory of planned behavior

The theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was proposed by Ajzen in 1991 as an extended version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), whose main goal is to predict planned and intentional behaviors. Specifically, TPB predicts intention based on three main factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control where each factor assigns its weight to the importance of that factor to the behavior and interests of the individual. Compared with TRA, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) added a new independent variable—perceived behavioral control. TPB has been widely accepted and used in studies of individuals' behavior. Empirical studies have shown the suitability of this model in studying consumer behavior in the context of needing to use electronic technology brands. According to TPB, preference attitude, high level of subjective norm, and perceived good behavioral control influence individual intentions. This intention will influence actual behavior.

In general, according to the TPB, perception will influence emotions and thereby lead to the behavioral intentions of consumers. According to Tuškej and Podnar (2018), Brand Anthropomorphism is described as a process of consumer perception of a brand, and once consumers have cognitive influence, they identify themselves with emotional connection and brand satisfaction (Choi et al., 2019). Based on the above statements, the author decided to use Brand Anthropomorphism as a cognitive factor in this study. According to TPB, intention represents an individual's motivation or a conscious decision to perform a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, behavioral intention is mainly expressed through the attitude of the individual. Besides, behavioral intention is also influenced by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, the interaction of these factors informs the behavior of individuals and in the case of this study is the factor of Brand Engagement.

## 2.2. Brand anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism has its roots in Ancient Greece, the word anthropomorphism is derived from the Greek words “Anthropos” (man) and “Morphe” (shape or form). Anthropomorphism refers to the individual’s tendency to perceive inanimate objects as human-like entities. Epley et al. (2007) described this phenomenon as the process of assigning characteristic human characteristics, motives, behaviors, emotions, and baseline states to objects and agents that are not human. Scholars (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012; Kim & McGill, 2011) have studied anthropomorphism to branded products, also known as Brand Anthropomorphism. Brand Anthropomorphism is an important bridge in consumer and brand relationships (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Similar to Puzakova et al. (2018) defined Brand Anthropomorphism as “a brand is an actual person with a variety of emotional states, thoughts, souls, and conscious behaviors that can function in parallel like other members of society”. Besides, Guido and Peluso (2015) argue that Brand Anthropomorphism is the degree to which a branded product is perceived as an actual person in our minds. At the same time, also assert that consumers can perceive and evaluate brands as a person. According to Tuškej and Podnar (2018), Brand Anthropomorphism is described as a cognitive process that represents a consumer’s tendency to attribute human-like characteristics to a brand and treat them as dynamic entities own muscles, perceptions, intentions, and feelings. There are two different consumer dimensions to Brand Anthropomorphism (Guido & Peluso, 2015; MacInnis & Psychology, 2017). First, Brand Anthropomorphism is activated when consumers perceive a similarity between a brand and a person in appearance. Second, Brand Anthropomorphism occurs when consumers perceive similarities between personified brands and their concepts of self (MacInnis & Psychology, 2017). In this research, the authors will use the definition of Brand Anthropomorphism by Tuškej and Podnar (2018). It can be said that this concept has covered the previous definitions, not denied but expanded and made more complete. At the same time, to have a more comprehensive and detailed view of brand personification, the author has divided Brand Anthropomorphism into four main aspects according to Artyom Golossenko et al. (2020) which are: Appearance, Moral Virtue, Cognitive Experience, and Conscious Emotionality.

In Appearance aspect, which describes the similarities between the brand and the person, is easily seen by the naked eye. In the next aspect, Cognitive Experience is the perception of a brand having the mental states necessary to be human (Kim & McGill, 2011; Puzakova et al., 2018). For a brand to virtue as an individual, it must demonstrate that it has virtues such as kindness, honesty, and dependability, which constitute Moral Virtue (Sapontzis, 1981). In addition, Brand Anthropomorphism requires the brand to be aware of human Conscious Emotionality of humans (Epley et al., 2007; Puzakova et al., 2018) which is the way of looking at the perception of feeling.

## 2.3. Intimacy

Intimacy is referred to as an attitude with the desire to talk about something, as well as to share one’s own story with others in the most detailed way (Lauren Berlant, 1998). In addition, Reis and Shaver (1988) suggest that Intimacy is also related to feelings, behaviors, verbal, and nonverbal communication processes as well as personality traits. In marketing research, Sternberg (1997) states that Intimacy is the closeness, interaction, and attachment of consumers to a brand. Intimacy is also characterized by a detailed understanding of the brand and its meaning to the consumers (Fournier, 1998). Therefore, Almubarak et al. (2018) assess the level of Intimacy between consumers and brands based on the degree of interpersonal Intimacy, which is specifically expressed as positive emotions of the consumer for the brand. At the same time, Intimacy will motivate consumers to establish an emotional connection with the brand (Almubarak et al., 2018). Cho et al. (2015) suggest that Intimacy is a factor that tends to focus on consumers’ attitudes about brand image and is largely shaped by positive emotions such as excitement, happiness, and joy. Along with other expressions such as support, trust, satisfaction, connection, and brand loyalty.

During the past decade, researchers have been interested in the relationship between consumers and brands. Shimp and Madden (1988) have applied Sternberg’s (1987) love triangle theory to study the relationship between consumers and brands, and an important component is described by Shimp and Madden (1988). The emphasis in this relationship is on Intimacy. Along with that, Miller and Lefcourt (2010) emphasize that one of the characteristics of the relationship between consumers and brands is



Intimacy. In addition, Huaman-Ramirez et al. (2022) put forward the view that brands are personified in the minds of consumers and consumers tend to build relationships with brands as with people. Since then, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Brand Anthropomorphism has a positive effect on consumer Intimacy towards the Samsung electronic technology brand.

#### **2.4. Brand engagement**

Regardless of the field, the concept of engagement includes three characteristics (Hollebeek, 2011). The first is positive manifestations regardless of the form of engagement, such as social engagement in the field of psychology or communication engagement in marketing. The second characteristic of coherence is high coherence, and the third characteristic of coherence is the multidimensionality of the concept. Or Brand Engagement is considered as the consumer's interactive experience with the brand, which then reflects the nature of that relationship (Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). In summary, Brand Engagement can be viewed as a multidimensional psychological state, which is a consequence of interacting with a brand, including Emotional, Cognitive, and Social aspects (So et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Hollebeek et al. (2014) defined the emotional aspect of Brand Engagement as referring to how active consumers are in interacting with the brand. The cognitive dimension of Brand Engagement refers to an individual's degree of cognitive investment in specific interactions with a brand (Vivek et al., 2014). More specifically, Hollebeek et al. (2014) found that cognitive refers to the level of consumer interest in using a brand, that is, the time it takes to learn, pay attention, and build thoughts related to a brand regarding the brand. The social aspect refers to enhancing interaction by bringing others into the relationship between brand and brand consumers (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010). In general, previous studies agree that Brand Engagement is the interaction between a brand and a consumer, expressed through emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. Depending on the context as well as research objectives, the definition of each author has certain differences. For consumers to engage with a certain brand, they must first experience emotional satisfaction with the brand, then receive the attention of those around them, and finally, brand self-awareness. Therefore, in line with the research context, the authors have defined Brand Engagement as the interaction between the brand and the consumer through emotional, cognitive, and social aspects (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014).

In 2011, Brodie and Hollebeek suggested that engagement has emotional and emotional aspects. In addition, Brand Engagement is viewed as the consumer's interactive experience with the brand, which then reflects the nature of that relationship (Brodie et al., ; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Brand Intimacy improves consumer engagement and interaction, enhances the relationship between consumers and brands, and ensures that these relationships take place successfully. In addition, in the research of Graffigna and Gambetti (2015), Intimacy has been included in the emotional engagement of the factor of attachment between consumers and brands. In addition, Yim et al. (2008) found that intimate relationships with brands are defined as a component of emotions and a bond between consumers and brands.

In addition, Brand Engagement is defined as the interaction between a brand and a consumer through emotional, cognitive, and social aspects (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Cesario et al. (2008) observe that consumers tend to view brands similarly to themselves in their interpersonal relationships. In the study of Lim et al. (2021), the author proposed that Brand Anthropomorphism is a necessary element to build brand engagement. At the same time, in a research paper, authors Chen et al. (2015) mentioned that consumers perceive anthropomorphized brands to bring Intimacy and engagement with them and when consumers have a Brand Anthropomorphism, they are likely to be enthusiastic about using the brand and building strong brand-consumer relationships (Lim et al., 2021). For consumers, personality, and interest in the brand are two aspects that contribute to the creation of their special feelings and impressions towards the brand, thereby forming the degree of connection between the brand and the consumers. In other words, consumers' emotional responses can correspond to the extent to which consumers perceive brand interest and personality through Brand Anthropomorphism (Chen

et al., 2015). Besides, based on the research report of Tuškej (2018), pro-brand behavior is the highest and most effective result to demonstrate the level of consumer engagement with the brand. For these reasons, the author proposes the following two hypotheses:

**H2:** Intimacy has a positive effect on consumers' Brand Engagement to Samsung electronic technology brand.

**H3:** Brand Anthropomorphism has a positive influence on consumers' Brand Engagement to the Samsung electronic technology brand.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Data

The quantitative method was mainly used in this study. However, to ensure the validity of the content of the scale of the variables in the research model, the observed variables after synthesizing from the document have been qualitatively applied to contextualize the research situation research to be thoroughly examined. This is done by an expert who is a lecturer at the Open University of Ho Chi Minh City. This expert confirmed the inclusiveness, relevance, and relevance of the questionnaires related to each research variable. The wording of the observed variables was adjusted to clarify the meaning and the respondents understood correctly to answer.

The questionnaire is used to collect data. The first part of the questionnaire is to collect data on some characteristics of survey respondents such as gender, age, occupation, income, and status of having or using Samsung electronic technology brand. The second part of the questionnaire is designed to include 37 observed variables of seven factors in the research model, which are measured by a 5-level Likert scale, from 1 (Completely disagree) to 5 (Completely agree). The questionnaire before the official survey was pre-tested by five respondents. No further changes.

These data were collected through online surveys on Google Forms from August 2022 to October 2022. Through the Internet, questionnaires were sent to 500 respondents, and then 500 responses were received. The data from 357 responses were determined to be effectively included in the analysis. Data analysis was performed with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the scales of the research variables in the model, the hypotheses, and the research model. All analyses were performed on SPSS 25 and AMOS 25 software.

#### 3.2. Measurement of variables

The study used three variables: Brand Anthropomorphism dimensions, Intimacy, and Brand Engagement. Brand Anthropomorphism dimensions (Appearance, Moral Virtue, Cognitive Experience, and Conscious Emotionality) were adapted from the scale used by Golossenko et al. (2020). The intimacy scale was developed by Cho et al. (2015), and the Brand Engagement dimensions (Emotional, Cognitive, and Social) were developed by Hollebeek et al. (2014), Vivek et al. (2014). Table 1 shows descriptive statistics along with details of dimensions and indicates the values of reliability and construct validity. The calculated values are above the minimum threshold level for all the variables.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Sample profile

For the gender of the surveyed respondents, the majority are male and female, accounting for 41.5% and 40.6% respectively, and the remaining gender accounts for 17.9%. Regarding the age of the respondents, 1.4% is the X gene, 16.2% is the Y gene and 82.4% is the Z gene. Next is the profession with 54.1% being students, 15.1% self-employed and office workers, over 10% being housewives, and the rest 5.6% are other occupations. Regarding income, 26.9% of the respondents



**Table 1. Descriptive statistical results**

Element	Observed variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	148	41.50%
	Female	145	40.60%
	Other	64	17.90%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	X gene (1965–1979)	5	1.40%
	Y gene (1980–1994)	58	16.20%
	Z gene (1995–2012)	294	82.40%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
Profession	Students	193	54.10%
	Self-employed	54	15.10%
	Office workers	54	15.10%
	Housewives	36	10.10%
	Other	20	5.60%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
Income	Less than 3.000.000 VNĐ	63	17.60%
	From 3.000.000 to 5.000.000 VNĐ	75	21.00%
	From 5.000.000 to 10.000.000 VNĐ	96	26.90%
	From 10.000.000 to 15.000.000 VNĐ	69	19.30%
	More than 15.000.000 VNĐ	54	15.10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author's calculation.

have an income from 5.000.000 VNĐ to 10.000.000 VNĐ, more than 20% of the respondents have an income from 3.000.000 VNĐ to 5,000,000 VNĐ, 34.4% of the respondents have income from 10.000.000 VNĐ to more than 15.000.000 VNĐ. The result is shown in Table 1.

#### 4.2. Check scale reliability - Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Except for the Appearance factor with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient  $< 0.6$  (Cronbach's Alpha of Appearance =  $0.544 < 0.6$ , Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq 0.6$  conditions), as shown in Table 2. The remaining observed variables have high reliability because the Corrected Item—Total Correlation of all variables is greater than 0.3 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is greater than 0.6. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was also performed. KMO coefficient = 0.862, so factor analysis is appropriate, sig (Bartlett's Test) = 0.000 (sig  $< 0.05$  condition). The load factors of all factors are greater than 0.5, except for the observed variable BEE5 with factor loading coefficient  $< 0.5$  (Factor loading of BEE5 = 0.458). The total variance extracted is 56.134% (greater than 50%). All indicators meet the testing standards.

#### 4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The analysis results show that the main index of relevance shows that the Chi-square value is 955.047,  $df = 486$  (Chi-square/ $df = 1.965$ ), CFI index = 0.918, TLI = 0.91, GFI = 0.867 are both greater than 0.8 and RMSEA = 0.052 is less than 0.06, so according to Hair (2009), the evaluation indexes of the model are all compared to the acceptable threshold, so this is a suitable model.

From the results of the CFA analysis, the composite reliability (CR) indicators, and the convergence value indexes were analyzed through AMOS 25 software. The results show that the composite reliability

**Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha analysis results**

Variable	Scales	Items Retained	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Cronbach's alpha
Appearance	BAA	3	0.396	0.375	0.544
			0.292	0.535	
			0.386	0.392	
Moral Virtue	BAM	3	0.605	0.650	0.756
			0.519	0.746	
			0.635	0.615	
Cognitive Experience	BACE	3	0.715	0.653	0.801
			0.622	0.759	
			0.615	0.764	
Conscious Emotionality	BACY	4	0.648	0.728	0.798
			0.540	0.779	
			0.609	0.748	
			0.644	0.730	
Intimacy	IN	9	0.670	0.897	0.906
			0.671	0.897	
			0.665	0.897	
			0.648	0.898	
			0.715	0.894	
			0.695	0.895	
			0.649	0.898	
			0.692	0.895	
			0.740	0.892	
Emotional	BEE	5	0.783	0.845	0.884
			0.746	0.854	
			0.742	0.855	
			0.723	0.859	
			0.619	0.884	
Cognitive	BEC	4	0.673	0.729	0.805
			0.579	0.776	
			0.576	0.777	
			0.655	0.740	
Social	BES	6	0.774	0.844	0.88
			0.604	0.872	
			0.664	0.863	
			0.800	0.840	
			0.714	0.854	
			0.579	0.878	

Source: Author's calculation.

indexes are all greater than 0.7, and the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5. In addition, the Standardized weight is greater than 0.7 or the minimum is greater than 0.5. The test results (Table 3) show that the scale of research concepts meets the standards of reliability and convergence value. In addition, after achieving the weighted average of the two elements of Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Engagement, Tables 4 and 5 show mean scores, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among constructs (sig < 0.05 shows that the variables are correlated with each other).

Table 3. Result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)				
Element	Author	Standardized weight	CR	AVE
Moral Virtue				
BAM1: This brand is trustworthy.	Golossenko et al. (2020)	0.746	0.769	0.530
BAM2: This brand is honest.		0.615		
BAM3: This brand is principled.		0.787		
Cognitive Experience				
BACE1: This brand can engage in a great deal of thought.	Golossenko et al. (2020)	0.846		
BACE2: This brand can imagine things on its own.		0.721		
BACE3: This brand is capable of reasoning.		0.722		
Conscious Emotionality				
BACY1: This brand can experience remorse over actions which it deems to be shameful.	Golossenko et al. (2020)	0.788		
BACY2: This brand can experience compassion for people who feel down.		0.588		
BACY3: This brand can experience guilt when it hurts someone with its behaviour.		0.664		
BACY4: This brand can experience shame when people have negative views and judgements about it.		0.756		
(Continued)				

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)				
Element	Author	Standardized weight	CR	AVE
<b>Intimacy</b>				
IN1: I feel happy when I use the products of this brand.	Cho and Fiore (2015)	0.706	0.907	0.521
IN2: I have fun with this brand.		0.71		
IN3: I feel satisfied with this brand.		0.709		
IN4: I really enjoy using this brand.		0.682		
IN5: I have solid support for this brand.		0.758		
IN6: I like looking at the products of this brand.		0.736		
IN7: I can rely on this brand.		0.684		
IN8: I feel connected to this brand.		0.722		
IN9: I would stay with this brand.		0.785		

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)				
Element	Author	Standardized weight	CR	AVE
<b>Emotional</b>				
BEE1: I feel excited about this brand.	Brodie et al. (2011)	0.84	0.818	0.601
BEE2: I am heavily into this brand.		0.795		
BEE3: I am passionate about this brand.		0.806		
BEE4: I am enthusiastic about this brand.		0.796		
<b>Cognitive</b>				
BEC1: I like to learn more about this brand.	Hollebeek et al. (2014)	0.782		
BEC2: I pay a lot of attention to anything about this brand.		0.66		
BEC3: Anything related to this brand grabs my attention.		0.668		
BEC4: I think about the brand a lot.		0.748		
<b>Social</b>				
BES1: I love talking and using products of the brand with my friends.	Vivek et al. (2014)	0.858		
BES2: I enjoy talking and using products of the brand more when I am with others.		0.661		
BES3: Talking and using products of the brand are more fun when other people around me do it too.		0.735		
BES4: I feel good about sharing my experiences with the products of the brand with others.		0.846		
BES5: I feel fellowship with other people who use the products of the brand.		0.744		
BES6: I like recommending the products of the brand to others.		0.621		

Source: Author's calculation.

**Table 4. Result of mean and standard deviations**

Element	Mean	Std. Deviation
BA_m	3.34	0.39
BE_m	3.38	0.37
IN_m	3.20	0.42

Source: Author's calculation.

Notes: BA\_m: Average of Brand Anthropomorphism, IN\_m: Average of Intimacy, BE\_m: Average of Brand Engagement.

**Table 5. Result of bivariate correlations**

		BA_m	IN_m	BE_m
BA_m	Pearson Correlation	1	0.176**	0.208**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001	0.000
IN_m	Pearson Correlation	0.176**	1	0.188**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001		0.000
BE_m	Pearson Correlation	0.208**	0.188**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

Source: Author's calculation.

**Table 6. Results of testing the research hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Standardized weight	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Statistical significance
H1	0.225	0.12	3.197	.001	Accepted
H2	0.19	0.054	2.913	.004	Accepted
H3	0.166	0.105	2.212	.027	Accepted

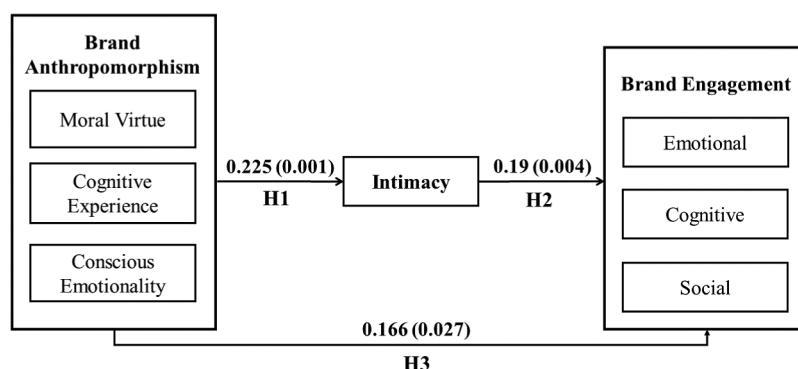
Source: Author's calculation.

#### 4.4. Hypothesis testing

To test the research hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed. The model includes the values Chi-square/df = 1.965 (less than 5), CFI = 0.918, TLI = 0.910, GFI = 0.867 (greater than 0.8), and RMSEA = 0.052 (less than 0.06). The results show that the model fit indicators are guaranteed according to the criteria of Hair (2009). The initial research hypotheses were approved with a significant level of P-value less than 0.05. The analysis results show that hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are accepted with a P-value less than 0.05. The results of the study are shown in Table 6 and Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Analysis results.**

Source: Author's calculation.





## 5. Conclusion and implications

The quantitative research method was carried out with 357 survey samples to test Cronbach's Alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and SEM model analysis to test research hypotheses. In particular, the results of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient analysis have excluded the BAA factor, the remaining factors have high reliability and the EFA analysis has extracted seven separate factors, ensuring their significance in terms of reliability content as well as the concept of the scales, however, observed variable BEE5 was excluded during EFA analysis (factor loading factor  $< 0.5$ ). Moreover, the SEM model test results show that the research data is completely consistent with the market and 3/3 of the hypotheses of the research model are accepted, this result also answers the research objective original research of the topic.

Besides, research results have shown that Brand Anthropomorphism has a direct influence on Intimacy and an indirect effect on Brand Engagement, and Intimacy has a direct effect on consumers' Brand Engagement. Moreover, another remarkable finding of this study is that in the Vietnamese market, specifically Ho Chi Minh City, the Brand Anthropomorphism factor in the electronic technology brand market, specifically Samsung electronic technology brand, consists of only three components instead of four as in the previous studies, specifically the accepted components are Moral Virtue, Cognitive Experience, and Conscious Emotionality. Therefore, this study contributes to strengthening the concept of Brand Anthropomorphism which is lacking in the theoretical and practical background in the Vietnamese electronic technology brand market, specifically Samsung electronic technology brand in Ho Chi Minh City.

The research makes a significant contribution by addressing the research gap between brand anthropomorphism and brand engagement. While prior studies have explored the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumer attitudes and brand equity, this research investigates its specific effect on consumer intimacy and brand engagement, especially in the context of consumer electronics brands like Samsung in Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City. By examining the relationship between brand anthropomorphism, consumer intimacy, and brand engagement, the study provides valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive consumer-brand connections. These findings offer practical guidance to marketers and brand managers in developing effective branding strategies to enhance consumer engagement and loyalty, crucial for success in the competitive digital economy.

According to the research results, three out of four factors of Brand Anthropomorphism: Moral Virtue, Cognitive Experience, and Conscious Emotionality are all factors that directly affect Intimacy and Brand Engagement. The following are suggestions that can help electronic technology brands in general and Samsung technology brands to build and enhance Brand Anthropomorphism and achieve consumer Brand Engagement. The findings of this research have practical implications for marketers and brand managers, particularly those working in the consumer electronics industry like Samsung in Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City. Understanding the positive impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumer intimacy and brand engagement can guide managers in designing effective branding strategies. By incorporating anthropomorphic elements into brand communication and experiences, marketers can strengthen emotional connections with consumers, leading to increased brand engagement and loyalty. This knowledge is especially valuable in the competitive digital economy, where consumer-brand relationships are essential for sustaining a strong market position and outperforming competitors. Adopting anthropomorphic branding strategies can help technology brands like Samsung foster lasting consumer relationships and achieve long-term success in the dynamic and evolving consumer electronics market.

In addition, brands need to enhance Intimacy to achieve Brand Engagement by conducting customer sentiment analysis. What factors are positively evaluated by consumers, are they satisfied with the service, or are they willing to prove their value and connect with others through the brand ... Based on those factors, the brand will quickly find an emotional and emotional connection point to create a premise for a close relationship in the future.

## 6. Limitations and future research

The study has met the stated objectives but still reveals some limitations. The research sample was collected based on the convenient sampling method, there was no balance between the groups of subjects in the survey. Most of the study sample focused on two main age groups, Gen Y and Gen Z. In addition, the generalizability of the results is limited because the study was conducted only in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Due to time and geographical constraints, the data collection is done online. There may be some questions from the respondents, but they are not clarified. Therefore, the collected data may have some deviations.

Therefore, in subsequent studies, these limitations can be overcome by expanding the scope of the research, not only in one city but also in both Vietnamese destinations and public brands of other electronic technology. The data collection method should be combined with the direct interview method to answer the questions arising from the respondents thoroughly. At the same time, the authors should focus on probabilistic sampling to ensure the balance between brands in the same field.

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