

## ***Are Facebook brand photos a sign of brand love?***

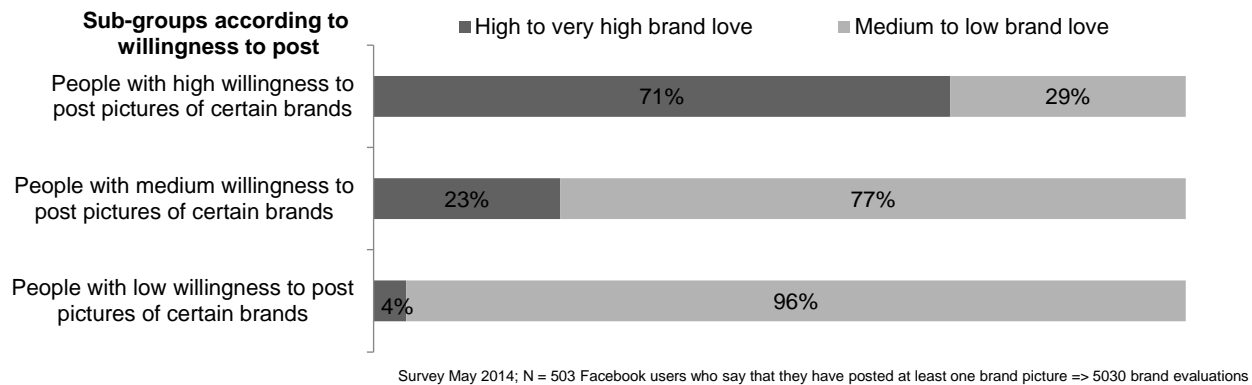
*A vast number of photos are shared on social media. Every day, an average of more than 350 million photos are uploaded to Facebook alone. These include many photos featuring products and brands. The question for market researchers is: what do these photos say about attitudes and feelings toward brands? Are these brand photos a sign of brand affection? A recent study conducted by the GfK Verein and the University of Michigan-Dearborn tackles these questions.*

A lively party with friends, a vacation on the beach, a new smartphone – all of these are captured on camera and shared via social networks. The wealth of photos is correspondingly high. For example, there are already ten billion photos on Flickr, a photo-sharing platform. Facebook's 1.39 billion users upload more than 350 million photos per day on average. Its entire photographic database totals more than 250 billion.

In capturing these moments, the social life of a Facebook user is portrayed. In some photos, products and brands can also be seen – either being used or proudly shown to the camera. The question from a market research perspective is whether these photos reflect attitudes and feelings to brands? Are brand photos posted by consumers on Facebook a sign of brand love, loyalty and endorsement?

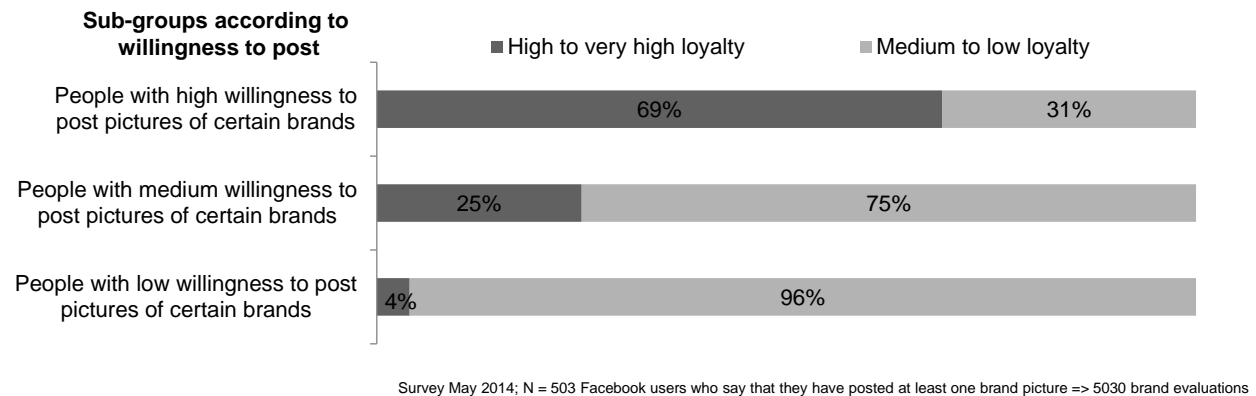
Researchers at the GfK Verein and the University of Michigan-Dearborn are looking into this question. They asked American and German Facebook users about their attitudes and feelings toward ten different brands, as well as their past behavior and future intentions in relation to posting images of these brands (willingness to post).

The results show that willingness to post is an expression of brand love (see Figure 1). There is a strong to very strong level of brand love among 71% of Facebook users who are highly willing to post images of a respective brand. This drops to just 4% of Facebook users with low willingness to post. For the group of respondents who expressed an average level of willingness to post, 23% of respondents assessed their brand love as strong to very strong.



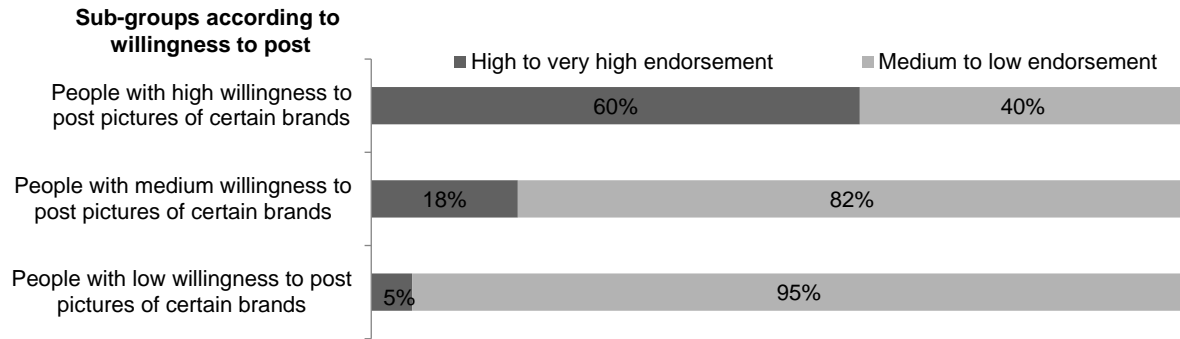
**Figure 1: Coherence between willingness to post brand photos and brand love**

Willingness to post brand images does not only go hand-in-hand with brand love, but also with a loyal attitude and buying intention (loyalty) (see Figure 2). Of the respondents who expressed a high level of willingness to post brand images on Facebook, 69% described their loyalty to this brand as high to very high. For the group with average willingness to post, 25% regard their loyalty as being high to very high. This figure declines to a mere 4% for respondents in the group with negligible willingness to post.



**Figure 2: Coherence between willingness to post brand photos and loyalty**

A similar picture emerges for reposting positive opinions and questioning negative views (endorsements) (see Figure 3). Of the Facebook users with high willingness to post brand images, 60% would be likely or very likely to endorse the brand. In contrast, just 5% of Facebook users who expressed a low level of willingness to post state the same. In the group of respondents featuring average levels of willingness to post, this figure is 18%.



Survey May 2014; N = 503 Facebook users who say that they have posted at least one brand picture => 5030 brand evaluations

### Figure 3: Coherence between willingness to post brand photos and endorsement

Facebook photos were also analyzed with the consent of respondents within the scope of the survey. This revealed that there is a positive correlation between greater brand love, loyalty and endorsement, and the number of brand photos and how positively they depict the brand in question.

As this study has shown, photos posted on Facebook do reflect the attitudes and feelings of users to brands. Facebook photos not only portray the user's social life, but can also be an expression of brand love, loyalty and endorsement.

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