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Dissecting Brand Love: Empirical Validation of Its Constructing Components Across Product Categories

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Abstract*— Brand Love, the concept itself speaks about the deeper relationship between brands and its consumers. The power of this relationship makes a person feel for a particular brand in a product category, passionately. Attaining this passion about one's own brand is the most desired position of the brand managers. Research works in this field have identified certain brand love constructing components. But the reliability of these components was not justified. Besides this, the validity of these items across different brands are not tested either. Thus, in the realm of brand love, no suitable measurement scale is formed. The present study is an attempt to identify the brand love constructing components, check their reliability and validity across different brands of different product categories. The findings of this study will be helpful for practitioners for developing a measurement tool of brand love and will also open further research avenues with respect to the dimensions of brand love.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Love, Brand Attachment, Brand Identity, Brand Personality.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this world of consumerism where consumers are the boss of the market, brand managers often face tremendous competition to create a differential position in the mind of the consumers. In most of the cases the competing brands have almost similar types of offerings and thus, acquiring a differentiated position in the mind of the consumers is very challenging and difficult. Development of different products related attributes through expensive R&D activities, although create differentiated positioning, the span of this differentiated position is not for long as the competing brands soon come up with similar or equal advantageous attributes, if not a higher one. Thus, besides development of the strategic advantages through R&D activities, the marketers are also involved in creating a differentiated position in the mind of the consumers through development of deeper relationship with them. As the intensity of this relationship grows, the choice of the brand becomes an obvious outcome. A higher intense relationship takes the consumers into such a state that they deny to compromise with their choice although the offerings from the other brands are higher than that of their own chosen brand. In situations, where the consumers may have to change their choice under some untamable causes, their mind always feels the bereavement, a feeling of emptiness which can only be fulfilled by their chosen brand. Given a chance, they would always return to their chosen brand irrespective of higher offerings, both qualitative and quantitative, from the competing brands. Researchers in the field of marketing have identified several stages of such attachments, such as brand loyalty, brand passion, brand trust, brand attachment and so on, but such a state of feeling of consumers about their brands is above all these attributes created by the brand managers. This psychological state of a consumer about certain brand of their choice is termed as Brand Love. This psychological positioning of a brand in the mind of the consumers is the most desired position of the brand managers. But to achieve the desired position, brand managers have to had knowledge about the constructing components of brand love. Although research works related to the concept of brand love has discussed the concept and its importance vividly, studies related to the constructing components of brand love is scarcely available and they are not properly enumerated. Moreover, empirical validity of the constructing components is not validated properly. Thus, it becomes extremely difficult for the marketing practitioners to identify the relevant brand related attributes which can address to a particular feeling of brand love in the mind of the consumers. The present study aims to meet this gap. The study attempts to provide a structured framework with the constructing components of brand love. Besides this, the study also attempts to check the validities of the items associated with the concept of brand love. The study is conducted on three different brands of three different product categories and the validity of the items were checked from the collected perceptions of the respondents about the brand.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of love itself, as stated by Loureiro & Kaufman, (2012), is complex in nature. It is an assimilation of several concepts which, according to Strongman, (1996) are positive in nature. According to Strongman, (1996), the list of these positive emotions include joy, pleasure, interest, victory, happiness and so on. Although the concept of love is

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defined by several researchers from multiple perspectives, the one which has a close connect with brand is given by Rubin, (1973). According to him, the feeling of love is an attitude. This attitude involves the activity of tendency to think, feel and behave about another person. While it was thought from the perspective of brands, the existing research works has supports in favour of humanizing the brands. The brand identity model of Aaker (1996) already conceptualized brands as human beings through its personality attributes. The same was supported by J.L Aaker (1997) through identification of the personality attributes of the brands. Thus, there is a high probability that the theories of love could be applied to the brands as well.

Studies related to the relationship between brands and their consumers have been discussed by several researchers. Research works of Levy (1959); Plummer (1985); Blackstone, (1993) and so on have discussed about the different types of characteristics of brands which assimilates human qualities. Research work of De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, (1998) identified qualities of brands which does not fall into the categories of attributes which are related to product qualities only. Researchers like Fournier, (1998); Parvatiyar & Sheth, (2001); McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, (2002) studied the relationships between consumers and their brands and found that the relationship is analogous with interpersonal relationships. the relationships between brands and their consumers.

One of the early researchers who worked on the brand and consumers' relationship was Bowlby (1979). His research observed that consumers are loyal to their brands and they have some kind of connect with the brands. This attachment can be termed as love. Sternberg's (1986) proposes the Triangular theory of love and based on this theory the passionate behaviour of love is dependent on three components. This includes intimacy, commitment or decision and passion associated with a brand. According to his research, this passion leads to several phenomena like attraction related to physical properties and romance. In a further research, Sternberg, 1997) stated that love creates intimacy which leads to feeling of closeness which is basically derived from emotion. Intimacy component of brand love is largely affective in nature, passion is the motivation element that is largely affective in nature and decision/commitment refers the cognitive component of the love emotion. Based on the three components of Sternberg (1986), Shimp and Madden (1998) suggested that eight types of consumer-object relationships could emerge. They are, non-liking, liking, infatuation, functionalism, inhibited desire, utilitarianism, succumbed desire and loyalty.

Research work of Batra et al (2012) speaks about Brand Love as a prototype. According to them, this prototype contains a list of attributes of emotions, sentiments and interpersonal love. This concept of brand love tries to reflect upon the equivalence of interpersonal love with brand love. Their study also identified the interrelationship between brand love and brand personality. They also stated theoretically about the relationship between brand emotion and brand personality. The research work of Daniel Bruns, Tobias Langer and Alexander Fischer (2017) has identified some constructs of brand love. The work identified and illustrates about the major interpersonal love components for brand love. The list includes First Love, Grown Love, Arranged Love, Inherited Love and Love at first sight. The development of brand love, according to these researchers has several stages. These stages are vividly explained across their work. Besides this, their work also highlights upon the speed of love a person falls from a brand and how the consumers actually associate with it.

In spite of such deep research works in this field, there are still certain grey areas which are required to be answered and the gaps are as follows:

Research Gaps:

RG1: Although much is discussed about the constructing components of brand love, the

validation of the components is not yet done by any research

RG2: Although it has been stated that brand love is created through the interpolation of several other components, such as interpersonal love, cognizable love, the validity of the constructs are not tested across different brands of different product categories

Research Objectives:

RO1: To identify the constructing components of brand love and validating them statistically

RO2: To identify the presence of different components of brand love across different product categories

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primarily the variables are identified from the research works of different researchers and from the identified variables a questionnaire has been formed. A five-point Likert scale has been used to collect data, where 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree". Three brands of three product categories have been identified.

The product categories include Car brands, Wrist Watch brands and Cell Phone brands. For the preparation of the list of brands, a survey was conducted among 50 respondents and based on the frequency of the mentioned brands of a particular product category, the brands are selected. The list of the brands per product category are as follows:

Table 1. Name of the Product categories and their brands

Car Brands	Wrist Watch Brands	Cell Phone Brands
Maruti	Titan	Samsung
Honda	Fastrack	i-phone
Hyundai	Rado	MI

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The elements of the brand love related questionnaires were gathered from the research works of Batra et. al. (2012) and also from the research works of Daniel et. al. (2017). Data were collected from four-hundred and fifty respondents where 50 data of each brand was collected.

To test the validity of the constructs, the values of Chronbach's alpha has been estimated. If the values of the scale items are > 0.7, the brand love attribute is considered to be reliable. The task is done for all the brands and the constructs were taken from different concepts associated with brand love, such as interpersonal love, cognizable love and so on. Thus, the validity of these attributes was also checked across different brands.

IV. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The findings related to the Chronbach's alpha value across different brands of different product categories across different brand love attributes are as follows:

Table 2: List of Factors and Variables under Passion Driven-Behaviour, Self-Brand-Integration, Positive-Emotional-Connection and Interpersonal-Love their corresponding values of Chronbach's Alpha for Car brands

Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Maruti	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Hyundai	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Honda
Passionate desire to use	0.734	Passionate desire to use	0.707	Passionate desire to use	0.777
Willingness to invest resource	0.772	Willingness to invest resource	0.763	Willingness to invest resource	0.734
Past involvement	0.718	Past involvement	0.780	Past involvement	0.989
Long-Term Relationship	0.735	Long-Term Relationship	0.840	Long-Term Relationship	0.876
Anticipated Separation Distress	0.766	Anticipated Separation Distress	0.754	Anticipated Separation Distress	845
Certainty and Confidence	0.754	Certainty and Confidence	0.915	Certainty and Confidence	0.828
Desired Self-Identity	0.776	Desired Self-Identity	0.796	Desired Self-Identity	0.829
Current self-identity	0.772	Current self-identity	0.859	Current self-identity	0.763
Life Meaning	0.718	Life Meaning	0.743	Life Meaning	0.716
Frequent Thoughts	0.735	Frequent Thoughts	0.713	Frequent Thoughts	0.944
Overall Attitude Valance	0.866	Overall Attitude Valance	0.966	Overall Attitude Valance	0.946
Intuitive Fit	0.793	Intuitive Fit	0.911	Intuitive Fit	0.831
Positive Affect	0.812	Positive Affect	0.746	Positive Affect	0.858
Emotional Attachment	0.797	Emotional Attachment	0.755	Emotional Attachment	0.746
Romantic Love	0.874	Romantic Love	0.700	Romantic Love	0.825
Relationship Foundations	0.779	Relationship Foundations	0.736	Relationship Foundations	0.843
Brand Love Measures	0.748	Brand Love Measures	0.826	Brand Love Measures	0.859

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Table 3: List of Factors and Variables under Passion Driven-Behaviour, Self-Brand-Integration, Positive-Emotional-Connection and Interpersonal-Love their corresponding values of Chronbach's Alpha

Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Titan	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Fastrack	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Rado
Passionate desire to use	0.834	Passionate desire to use	0.707	Passionate desire to use	0.956
Willingness to invest resource	0.923	Willingness to invest resource	0.829	Willingness to invest resource	0.754
Past involvement	0.937	Past involvement	0.933	Past involvement	0.989
Long-Term Relationship	0.951	Long-Term Relationship	0.834	Long-Term Relationship	0.876
Anticipated Separation Distress	0.721	Anticipated Separation Distress	0.941	Anticipated Separation Distress	0.854
Certainty and Confidence	0.852	Certainty and Confidence	0.859	Certainty and Confidence	0.759
Desired Self-Identity	0.938	Desired Self-Identity	0.724	Desired Self-Identity	0.884
Current self-identity	0.891	Current self-identity	0.736	Current self-identity	0.788
Life Meaning	0.817	Life Meaning	0.940	Life Meaning	0.822
Frequent Thoughts	0.867	Frequent Thoughts	0.776	Frequent Thoughts	0.773
Overall Attitude Valance	0.768	Overall Attitude Valance	0.811	Overall Attitude Valance	0.741
Intuitive Fit	0.739	Intuitive Fit	0.854	Intuitive Fit	0.834
Positive Affect	0.821	Positive Affect	0.799	Positive Affect	0.879
Emotional Attachment	0.990	Emotional Attachment	0.877	Emotional Attachment	0.929
Romantic Love	0.754	Romantic Love	0.819	Romantic Love	0.719
Relationship Foundations	0.925	Relationship Foundations	0.804	Relationship Foundations	0.802
Brand Love Measures	0.847	Brand Love Measures	0.702	Brand Love Measures	0.711

Table 4: List of Factors and Variables under Passion Driven-Behaviour, Self-Brand-Integration, Positive-Emotional-Connection and Interpersonal-Love their corresponding values of Chronbach's Alpha

Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Samsung	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For i-phone	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For MI
Passionate desire to use	0.841	Passionate desire to use	0.717	Passionate desire to use	0.933
Willingness to invest resource	0.930	Willingness to invest resource	0.854	Willingness to invest resource	0.825
Past involvement	0.837	Past involvement	0.761	Past involvement	0.804
Long-Term Relationship	0.870	Long-Term Relationship	0.716	Long-Term Relationship	0.877

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Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For Samsung	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For i-phone	Name of the Factor	Chronbach's Alpha For MI
Anticipated Separation Distress	0.821	Anticipated Separation Distress	0.862	Anticipated Separation Distress	0.711
Certainty and Confidence	0.837	Certainty and Confidence	0.745	Certainty and Confidence	0.957
Desired Self-Identity	0.839	Desired Self-Identity	0.873	Desired Self-Identity	0.984
Current self-identity	0.971	Current self-identity	0.736	Current self-identity	0.861
Life Meaning	0.718	Life Meaning	0.712	Life Meaning	0.808
Frequent Thoughts	0.951	Frequent Thoughts	0.776	Frequent Thoughts	0.777
Overall Attitude Valance	0.804	Overall Attitude Valance	0.846	Overall Attitude Valance	0.912
Intuitive Fit	0.731	Intuitive Fit	0.953	Intuitive Fit	0.810
Positive Affect	0.732	Positive Affect	0.931	Positive Affect	0.845
Emotional Attachment	0.959	Emotional Attachment	0.922	Emotional Attachment	0.911
Romantic Love	0.791	Romantic Love	0.803	Romantic Love	0.709
Relationship Foundations	0.902	Relationship Foundations	0.881	Relationship Foundations	0.805
Brand Love Measures	0.769	Brand Love Measures	0.714	Brand Love Measures	0.759

The findings show none of the values of Chronbach's alpha is <0.7 and thus, all of the variables are selected as measurement items of the brand love. Besides this, all the components of brand love, such as Passion Driven-Behaviour, Self-Brand-Integration, Positive-Emotional-Connection and Interpersonal-Love are valid across brands for all the different product categories and also across different brands of these product categories.

V. CONCLUSION

The study on brand personality has aimed to identify suitable constructs of brand personality to form the scale to measure brand personality. The variables are collected from the different research works of researchers in the field of brand personality. Once the identification of the variables is done data were collected to check their reliability with the values of Chronbach's alpha. The validity of the variables is checked across nine different brands of three different product categories. The research identified that all the variables are statistically significant and none of them are dropped from the scale items. Further research in this field may consider these scale items to measure brand personality of different brands. An EFA could also be run on the collected data to identify the dimensions of brand personality and also to identify the importance of different components across different brands of different product categories.

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