

An Integrated Analysis of Emotional Determinants of Consumer Brand Affection Across Brand Categories

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Abstract

Brand love has been a core construct in understanding long-term consumer–brand relationships; however, the emotional mechanisms that build brand love across different brand categories remain fragmented. While there is evidence that emotional brand relationships are multidimensional (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012), prior studies have typically explored only one type of emotional advertising, sensory experience, or nostalgia in isolation. This study advances the literature by integrating three major emotional drivers into a single framework to examine how they collectively shape brand love. Drawing on affective processing and brand relationship theories, the model posits Emotional Attachment as the mediating mechanism through which emotional stimuli are translated into deeper relational outcomes. Further, the study includes Brand Type (heritage vs modern) as a moderator to explore whether long-standing cultural brands intensify emotional pathways more than contemporary brands. Data will be analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Expected findings include the dominant influence of sensory experience on emotional attachment, direct and indirect paths from nostalgia to brand love, and a positive influence of emotive advertising on attachment. Heritage brands are expected to magnify the emotional effects of nostalgia and advertising. By integrating emotional, sensory, and nostalgic pathways, this study presents a unified model of brand love, offering strategic implications for brands seeking to establish stronger emotional connections with consumers.

Keywords: *Brand Love, Emotional Attachment, Consumer Emotions, Nostalgia, Brand Type, Emotional Branding, Brand Relationships, Structural Equation Modelling*

Introduction

The relationship between consumers and brands has shifted significantly from a transactional kind to an emotional, symbolic, and identity-driven aspect of consumer behaviour. As brands become increasingly competitive based on emotional value rather than just functional features, the concept of brand love has emerged as an effective predictor of long-term consumer-brand relationships (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love entails great emotional attachment, affection, self-brand integration and long-term commitment. With the increasing amount of clutter in the market and the growing saturation

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of advertising among consumers, the study of the emotional processes that drive brand love has become of paramount importance to both academics and practitioners.

Although extensive research studies on emotional branding exist, there has been a high degree of fragmentation within the literature. The emotional antecedents have been recognised as emotional advertising (Holbrook and Batra, 1987), sensory experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Krishna, 2012), and nostalgia (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003; Pascal et al., 2002) even though they are frequently researched separately. Consequently, there is minimal knowledge about the relationship between the combination of these emotional routes and emotional attachment, as well as brand love. In addition, although emotional attachment is generally considered a mediating mechanism (Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005), its contribution to the consolidation of various emotional antecedents within a single model has not been thoroughly explored.

One more consistent gap relates to brand heterogeneity. Studies prove that heritage brands, which possess cultural, temporal, and symbolic continuity, evoke a greater emotional appeal due to their authenticity and familiarity (Urde et al., 2007). However, brand type is rarely used as a moderating construct in studies. The emotional routes may differ between heritage brands (e.g., Amul, Parle-G, Tata) and modern ones (e.g., Paper Boat, Epigamia, Fogg), indicating that the type of brand seems to provide a conditioning state that clarifies emotional processing.

This theoretical paper aims to fill these gaps by proposing a unified emotional framework that combines emotional advertising, sensory experience, and nostalgia to collectively predict emotional attachment, which in turn predicts brand love. Emotional attachment and brand love have a moderating effect on the type of brand.

Literature Review

The review is thematically structured to align with the constructs and paths in the conceptual model.

Emotional Brand Relationships: Theoretical Explanations

The theoretical basis of emotional brand relationships is grounded in 3 influential approaches:

- a) Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory: This theory focuses on the relationships between consumers and brands by examining both parties involved in the interactions. By stating that consumers base their relationships with brands just as they do with individuals, Fournier (1998) laid the groundwork for the relationships between consumers and brands. The aspects of a relationship include intimacy, emotional dependency, affection, and commitment. This theory justified investigations into emotional constructs such as attachment and love in marketing.
- b) Affective Processing Theory: In their belief, Holbrook and Batra (1987) suggested that affective responses were early experienced and their influence on attitudes and behaviours was more pronounced as compared to cognitive appraisals. Their model emphasised the emotional routes triggered by advertising, music, visuals, memories, and sensory stimuli. This perspective supported the concept that emotional advertising, nostalgia, and sensory experiences are effective emotional stimuli.

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c) Attachment Theory: Thomson et al. (2005) applied the attachment theory to brand settings by defining emotional attachment as an emotional bond, deep and emotional, which would be full of affection, passion, and connection. Attachment theory posits that emotional attachment serves as an intermediary between emotional stimuli and long-term relational outcomes.

A combination of these three theoretical streams provides the rationale for why emotional advertising, sense experience, and nostalgia may serve as emotional antecedents, resulting in emotional attachment and brand love.

Brand Love: Affective Relationship Outcome

One of the best-researched relational constructs of branding is brand love (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). It is characterised by:

- Passionate feelings
- Self-brand connection
- Favourable emotional attachment
- Long-term commitment
- Willingness to recommend

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined brand love as a positive, affective reaction that is distinct from satisfaction or brand attitude. Batra et al. (2012) further developed the construct as a multidimensional concept, focusing on emotional, identity-based, and relational aspects. Subsequently, other researchers (e.g. Roy et al., 2012) have affirmed that brand love is strongly predicted by emotional pathways, including nostalgia, sensory cues, and emotional attachment. Since brand love is the final stage of emotional and symbolic processing, it is a suitable dependent variable in the model that aims at emotional antecedents.

Emotional Advertising as an Emotional Stimulus

Emotional advertising is designed to evoke emotions by appealing to feelings of joy, warmth, empathy, nostalgia, and sentimentality. Emotional cues in advertising, as early as Holbrook and Batra's studies (1987), have received more emphasis on the fact that emotional evocation produces a direct response in attitudes and evaluations. The study by Sarkar and Sreejesh (2014) demonstrated that emotional advertising fosters emotional attachment empirically, indicating that emotional advertising generates associative conditioning where the emotional tone becomes associated with the brand. The latest studies (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021) position emotional advertising as a key factor in bridging consumer satisfaction and loyalty, due to its influence on the emotional bond that consumers form with a brand. These results support emotional advertising as a central antecedent of emotional attachment in the offered model.

Sensory Experience as an Emotional Determinant

Emotional branding integrates sensory experience as one of its core pillars. The multidimensional brand experience framework proposed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) uses the sensory experience as one of the primary predictors of the emotional and behavioural reactions. Their results showed that

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emotional involvement and brand judgment are achieved through sensory stimuli, including taste, smell, sound, touch, and visual identity.

This knowledge was expounded by Krishna (2012) in the context of multi-sensory marketing, demonstrating that emotional memory mechanisms are triggered by sensory input. These sensory stimuli are not only useful in evoking pleasure, but they also create associative links, which reinforce emotional attachment. This is especially true in the food, beverage, personal care, retail, and experience goods categories.

The sensory branding model developed by Hulten (2011) also underscores that sensory factors are integral to brand identity and emotional meaning. Sensual input gives rise to immersive experiences, and these experiences result in more emotional encoding, which enhances the likelihood of long-term attachment.

This is confirmed by empirical research. Hegner, Fenko, and Teravest (2017) concluded that emotional attachment and brand love are influenced by sensory experiences. The article (Shahid et al., 2022) revealed that the use of sensory stimuli in the retail setting has a strong, positive influence on emotional attachment, particularly among high-experience consumers. Taken together, these results place sensory experience as among the strongest emotional antecedents in the development of emotional attachment-explaining why it takes centre stage in the model.

Nostalgia as an Emotional Motive based on Memory

Nostalgia is a highly emotional feeling which is based on autobiographical memory. According to Holbrook and Schindler (2003), nostalgia was described as a warm, connected, and meaningful sentimental longing towards the past. These nostalgic feelings are especially strong in brand relationships since they engage what, according to the literature, is the emotional memory recall.

The initial empirical evidence was provided by Pascal et al. (2002), who demonstrated that nostalgic advertising is an effective method for boosting emotional reactions and enhancing brand-consumer relationships. This work created nostalgia as a distinct emotion-rousing force that could create emotions more profound than the usual appeal to emotions.

Merchant and Rose (2013) discovered that nostalgia has a direct connection with brand love because it does not follow through the middle emotional processes. Nostalgic stimuli produce instant emotional connection, boosting brand consideration and attachment. They also demonstrated that nostalgia is dependent on the type of brand, with heritage brands eliciting a higher nostalgic response.

The study by Youn et al. (2021) demonstrated that nostalgic brands foster a stronger emotional bond, trust, and loyalty compared to non-nostalgic brands. The conclusions warrant the modelling sometimes nostalgia as possessing: 1. A direct effect on brand love, and 2. The emotional attachment has an indirect influence on brand love. The dual influence of nostalgia is integrated into the proposed conceptual model since the antecedent and emotional shortcut directly lead to brand affection.

Central Mediator Emotional Attachment

Emotional attachment is commonly acknowledged as the principal psychological process through which emotional stimulation leads to relational results. According to Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005), emotional attachment is defined as an emotional bond characterised by affection, closeness, and connection. Their scale of attachment is still fundamental to branding studies.

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Park et al. (2010) contended that attachment to a brand develops as consumers incorporate it into their self-concept, which is influenced by the emotional significance that the brand holds. Emotional attachment foretells brand loyalty, resistance to bad news, and brand love.

Japutra et al. (2017) further showed that brand experience and brand loyalty are related through emotional attachment. These findings confirm the mediation of the emotional attachment in sensory, experience, or emotional stimuli models.

The article by Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2021) reaffirmed that attachment precedes emotional loyalty and brand love. Taken together, these results confirm emotional attachment as:

- The best mediating construct, which is theoretically appropriate
- A strong predictor of brand love
- A system of unifying various emotional antecedents

This justifies its position at the centre of the conceptual framework.

The Final Emotional State of Brand Love

The long-term result of affective and iconic processing in consumer-brand relationships is brand love. According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love refers to the level of passionate and affectionate emotional commitment that a satisfied consumer has towards a brand. Their effort focused on the emotional, rather than rational, brand love.

Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) extended brand love to a complex construct comprising:

- Passion-driven behaviors
- Favourable emotional reaction
- Self-brand integration
- Long-term intention of the relationship

Studies have shown that brand love is driven by emotional motivations rather than functional considerations (Roy et al., 2012). Thus, making brand love the dependent variable in the proposed model is consistent with its presence in the current theory, as well as its significance in predicting advocacy, loyalty, and willingness to pay.

Brand Type as a Moderating Construct (Heritage vs. Modern)

A construct that is not yet well researched is vital in emotional branding: brand type. Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007) described heritage brands as those that are culturally enduring, historical, and symbolic. Such brands often display:

- Temporal consistency
- Cultural embeddedness
- Authenticity
- Respectable emotional legitimacy
- Such features increase emotional reaction, especially nostalgia.

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Studies find that the stronger emotional connection consumers have with heritage brands stems from their ability to evoke cultural memories and a sense of familiarity. Merchant and Rose (2013) demonstrated that the emotional response is greater for heritage brands compared to modern brands, with heritage brands more effectively activating pathways of nostalgia and emotion. Although brand type theoretically is significant, it rarely appears as a moderating construct in emotional branding studies. The gap in this study is that the brand type is added as a moderator between emotional attachment and brand love.

Research Gap and Problem Statement

Despite the impressive amount of scholarly focus in the research on emotional branding, there are four core gaps in the literature:

Disconnected Emotional Precursors

Emotional advertising, emotion, and nostalgia have been researched individually (Holbrook and Batra, 1987; Brakus et al., 2009; Holbrook and Schindler, 2003).

There is no single framework that incorporates all three emotional stimuli.

Incomplete Understanding of Emotional Attachment as a Mediator

Research recognises the significance of emotional attachment (Thomson et al., 2005), and its mediation seldom occurs across a combination of multiple emotional antecedents.

Inconsideration of Brand Type as a Boundary Condition

Although heritage brands elicit a more intense emotional reaction (Urde et al., 2007), the moderating effects of the brand category are rarely examined in the context of emotional branding.

Scanty Cross-Category Emotional Branding Models

The vast majority of emotional branding research is done on a single category (luxury, retail, fashion). The literature has seldom explored the differences in emotional pathways between various brands, particularly between heritage and modern brands.

Thus, there is a need for a unified emotional branding model that examines the overall impact of emotional advertising, sensory experience, and nostalgia on emotional attachment and brand love, while also considering the moderating effect of brand type on brand categories.

Research Questions

- 1) Based on the gaps found, the following research questions are suggested:
- 2) What is the influence of emotional advertising, sensory experience and nostalgia separately and combined on emotional attachment to brands?
- 3) Is there a mediation between emotional antecedents (emotional advertising, sensory experience, nostalgia) and brand love?
- 4) Is there any direct effect of nostalgia on brand love, as well as the mediated effect of emotional attachment?

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- 5) Does the brand type (heritage vs. modern) mediate the association between the emotional attachment and brand love?
- 6) What is the difference in the emotional pathways between brand categories with brand type as a boundary condition?

Hypotheses Development

According to the theoretical basis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a positive impact of emotional advertising on emotional attachment. H2: The emotional attachment is positively influenced by sensory experience.

H3: Nostalgia positively influences the emotional attachment. H4: Nostalgia has a direct, positive influence on brand love.

H5: The association with emotion has a positive impact on brand love.

H6: The brand type will mediate the relationship between emotional attachment and brand love, whereby the relationship will be stronger for heritage brands compared to modern brands.

Conceptual and Theoretical Formulation

In this section, an integrated conceptual model is presented that combines emotional determinants, emotional attachment, brand love, and brand type. The model is based on three key theoretical foundations, including the affective processing theory, consumer-brand relationship theory, and the attachment theory. Both theoretical streams have a rationale for the emotional pathways and the relational outcomes they offer.

Introduction to the Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed model incorporates three emotional antecedents: emotional advertising, sensory experience, and nostalgia, which in turn predict brand love. The model also includes brand type (heritage vs. modern) as a moderating construct that influences the emotional attachment-brand love relationship. Brand type inclusion is considered in light of the fact that consumers respond differently to a brand based on whether it has historical, cultural, or symbolic values.

Control variables also include age, purchase frequency, and brand familiarity, based on evidence that emotional intensity varies between demographic and behavioural traits.

Theoretical Performance of the Framework

The Theory of Affective Processing

The theory of affective processing (Holbrook and Batra, 1987) describes how affective stimuli elicit affective responses, rather than evaluations and behaviours. Emotions are antecedents of cognition and determine the judgments of consumers; thus, emotional advertising, nostalgic stimuli and sensory events are the first causes of emotional processing. These emotional appeals subsequently determine brand perceptions and relationships among the consumers.

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Consumer-Brand Relationship Model

The consumer-brand relationship theory, as proposed by Fournier (1998), is based on the idea that consumers can also act as relationship partners with a brand, whose relationships are defined by intimacy, affection, trust, and emotional dependence. Emotional attachment and brand love are other levels of relationship intensity, according to this approach. According to this theory, emotional attachment and brand love are valid constructs that can be applied in the conceptual model.

Attachment Theory

The emotional attachment is the mediating psychological process in the model because it is the focus of attachment theory (Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010). Consumers develop an attachment to brands when they associate emotional meaning, identity relevance, or symbolism with the brand. This attachment then leads to affective consequences, including passion, self-brand connection, and brand love. Combined, these theories provide a conceptual explanation for the direction of pathways within the proposed model.

The Proposed Theoretical Support of Relationships

Emotional Advertising - Emotional Attachment

H1: Emotional advertising is positively related to emotional attachment.

Emotional advertising appeals evoke emotional reactions by evoking feelings of pleasure, nostalgia, sympathy, and warmth (Holbrook and Batra, 1987). Studies indicate that affective reactions of this type facilitate emotional attachment and enhance attachment through affective conditioning, a process that involves repeatedly associating emotional content with brand components (Sarkar and Sreejesh, 2014). According to recent studies, it has been demonstrated that emotional advertising fosters emotional bonds, which serve as a transition between satisfaction and loyalty (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021). Thus, emotional advertising will elicit emotional reactions and foster a sense of intimacy with the brand.

Sensory Experience - Emotional Attachment

H2: There is a positive influence of sensory experience on emotional attachment.

One of the strongest emotional triggers is sensory experience, as it directly appeals to sensory memory and affective processing. Brakus et al. (2009) demonstrated that sensory experience generates greater emotional involvement than behavioural or cognitive experience. Krishna (2012) demonstrated that emotional memory centres are triggered by sensory cues, resulting in a high likelihood of brand liking and emotional attachment.

According to the empirical evidence (Hegner et al., 2017), sensory experiences play a crucial role in emotional attachment and brand loyalty. As sensory stimuli generate immersive emotional impressions, consumers will establish a stronger attachment to brands that provide effective sensory communication.

Nostalgia- Emotional Attachment

H3: Nostalgia is positively related to emotional attachment.

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Nostalgia is also important in shaping emotional attachment because it is based on autobiographical memory. Holbrook and Schindler (2003) argue that nostalgic feelings cause warmth, familiarity, and emotional meaning. It has been demonstrated that nostalgic triggers solidify emotional reactions and improve relationships (Pascal et al., 2002).

Merchant and Rose (2013) demonstrated that the direct positive effects of nostalgic advertising include an immediate surge of emotional reactions toward brands, leading to emotional attachment and increased relational intensity. Due to the nostalgia evoking a highly personal and culturally related experience, it can be highly effective in affecting emotional attachment.

Nostalgia - Brand Love (Direct Effect)

H4: Nostalgia positively affects brand love.

Nostalgia is an exception to the emotional processing since it is capable of affecting brand love without mediation by emotional attachment. Merchant and Rose (2013) revealed that nostalgia may produce immediate brand love, as it induces personal and cultural memories that have a direct result in intense emotions and brand love.

(Youn et al., 2021) demonstrate that nostalgic brands evoke a stronger emotional connection and foster brand love. The ability of nostalgia to warm the heart and make it familiar is a feature that makes it a precursor to brand love, in addition to its mediating impact through emotional attachment.

Emotional Attention Brand Love

H5: Emotional attachment has a positive effect on brand love.

Attachment theory suggests that emotional attachment is a prerequisite for emotional consequences, such as emotional loyalty and brand love (Thomson et al., 2005). Park et al. (2010) revealed that attachment is a predictor of self-brand connection, passion and commitment- all elements of brand love.

Empirically, Batra et al. (2012) have verified that brand love strongly depends on emotional attachment as one of its key predictors. Emotional attachment enhances emotional intensity and increases a prolonged emotional bond.

Brand Type Moderating Effect

H6: Brand type has a moderating effect on the relationship between emotional attachment and brand love, so that the relationship between the two is stronger with heritage brands compared to modern brands.

There is a high likelihood that the impact of emotional attachment on brand love may vary depending on the type of brand. Heritage brands evoke stronger emotional responses due to the rise of cultural, historical, and symbolic meaning (Urde et al., 2007). Heritage brands form stronger emotional connections than modern brands, which are often associated with novelty, trendiness, or sensory pleasure.

Merchant and Rose (2013) demonstrated that differences exist between heritage and modern brands in terms of nostalgic emotional responses. Heritage brands will enhance emotional attachment due to authenticity, cultural embeddedness, familiarity, and symbolic legitimacy.

Hence, brand type is an external constraint that affects the intensity of feeling.

Conceptual Model Narrative

The given model combines several emotional forces- emotional advertising, sensory experience, and nostalgia into one emotional system. Such emotional stimuli are the Stage 1 emotional triggers, and each of them has an effect on emotional attachment. Emotional attachment is the primary emotion that translates emotional stimuli into more relational performances, i.e., brand love. Nostalgia is represented as both directly and indirectly potentially affecting brand love, given its unique ability to establish emotional significance. The final relationship is moderated by brand type, as heritage brands enhance the effect of emotional attachment on brand love. The theoretical framework is as follows:

- The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model
- Affective processing pathways.
- Moderated mediation logic
- Levels of emotional relationship formation

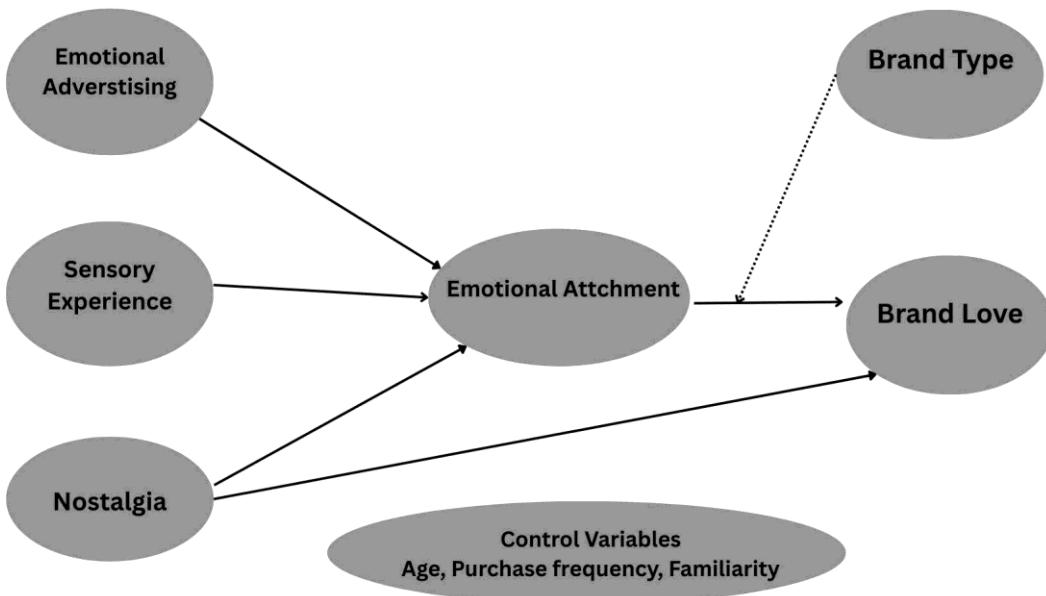


Figure 1: The Proposed Model of Variable Relationships

Research Contributions

Theoretical Contributions

Combinations of Emotional Determinants

This paper presents the earliest single system that combines emotional advertising, sensory experience, and nostalgia into one cohesive emotional brand affection. This is because there has always been a history of fragmentation.

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The Mechanism of Reinforcement is Emotional Attachment

The study enhances the theoretical concept of translating emotional stimuli into more profound emotional bonds by locating emotional attachment at the core of the mediation process.

Two-way Process of Nostalgia

It incorporates the unique inclusion of both direct and mediated effects of nostalgia, thereby extending the theory of nostalgia and considering differentiated emotional strength.

Introduction of a Type of Brand as a Moderator

This paper utilises brand type as a new boundary condition in emotional branding studies, demonstrating variations in emotional processing between heritage and modern brands.

Theoretical bridge between Emotional Marketing and Relationship Theory.

The model is a synthesis of emotional, experiential, and relational theories, offering a more comprehensive understanding of brand love development.

Practical Contributions

The Emotional Advertising Strategy

Emotional attachment can be improved by focusing on emotional storytelling, cultural cues, and warm appeals in brand messaging.

Enhancement of Sensory Brands

Emotional connections can be enhanced by modern brands through the enhancement of sensory aspects, including packaging, design, and the in-store experience.

Strategic Use of Nostalgia

Heritage brands are well-positioned to leverage nostalgia and strengthen emotional attachments, whereas modern brands can mimic the nostalgic feeling to replicate the appeal of heritage products.

Brand Type Positioning

Depending on the intended emotional approach, managers are supposed to deliberately position the business brand heritage as modern or hybrid.

Expected Outcomes

The proposed conceptual model is expected to yield several results, which are highly theoretically justified and supported by the existing literature. These expectations have been consistent with the affective processing theory, brand relationship theory, and attachment theory.

The Sensory Experience as the Best Predictor

The impact of emotional antecedents on emotional attachment is expected to be the greatest with sensory experience as one of the three emotional antecedents. This supposition is based on the immersion and memory-activating characteristic of sensory signals (Brakus et al., 2009; Krishna, 2012). Memories and physical experiences directly activated by sensory pathways are extremely powerful emotional drivers, as they are inherently laden with emotion.

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This implies that brands with high sensory appeal, such as taste (Amul), smell (Nivea), sound (Nokia), and packaging (Paper Boat), would result in high degrees of emotional attachment.

Dual Affective Role of Nostalgia

Nostalgia is intended to have a direct impact on brand love. Secondly, nostalgia creates an emotional attachment that has an indirect impact on brand love. This two-way road recognises the special, emotive force of nostalgia as a means of accessing emotional sense. Empirical research (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003; Merchant and Rose, 2013) demonstrates the immediate effect of nostalgia in fostering a warm and loving feeling, as well as boosting brand love, without the mediation of other feelings. This dual emotional impact is particularly beneficial for heritage brands (e.g., Parle-G, Tata Tea, Amul).

Emotional Advertising Improves Attachment

It is also anticipated that emotional advertising will have a significant effect on emotional attachment. Affective associations are created through emotional storytelling and narrative-based advertisements (e.g., Cadbury, Surf Excel), enhancing emotional bonding with the brand. It is a foreseeable result that affects the theory of affective conditioning (Holbrook & Batra, 1987) and the empirical data (Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014).

Emotional attachment is the motivation for brand love

According to attachment theory (Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010), emotional attachment is expected to have a significant positive impact on brand love. The process by which emotional cues are converted into more relational consequences is referred to as emotional attachment. High attachment foretells passion, dedication, and devotedness to the brand in the long term. Therefore, brand love should rank high among consumers who have an emotional attachment towards a brand.

Brand Type Moderation Effect

The group of variables that will be moderated is the brand type (heritage vs. modern). Specifically, in the case of heritage brands, brand love is highly predicted by emotional attachment. In the case of modern brands, the connection is more distant, lacking sensory intensity and novelty, or a powerful emotional advertisement. This finding is consistent with previous research, which suggests that heritage brands resonate more due to their authenticity, the memory of a particular culture, and their symbolic meaning (Urde et al., 2007).

Research Limitations

Although this work presents a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding the emotional determinants of brand affection, several limitations should be acknowledged.

The proposed study is conceptual in nature

The model is theoretical and has yet to undergo empirical testing. Future research on PLS-SEM is necessary to confirm the causality between the constructs, the moderating influences of emotional attachment, and the mediating effect of brand type. Empirical data can only be used to validate reliability, validity, and measurement precision.

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Emotional Response Subjectivity

Nostalgia, sensory experiences, emotional advertising, and other emotional constructs vary among people. Emotional reactions may depend on factors such as personality, cultural background, emotional sensitivity, and brand familiarity, which can reduce generalizability. The brand type is operationalised in terms of a binary difference between heritage and modern. Practically, the brand identity is multidimensional and can encompass hybrid or developing heritage cues. This simplification can limit the explanatory capacity of the moderating variable.

Limited Emotional Antecedents

The model is concerned with three major emotional drivers; however, other relevant constructs, such as authenticity, brand personality, self-congruity, and symbolic meaning, are absent. The further development of these dimensions can help to open new directions towards emotional attachment and brand love.

Cultural Context of Nostalgia

Nostalgic reactions are media ingrained. Interventions with high levels of nostalgia in one culture may not have similar effects in other cultures, and this could pose a limitation to cross-cultural generalisation.

Future Research Recommendations

To develop this theoretical model, several directions for future research are suggested.

Empirical Tests of Categorical Type

To determine the consistency of emotional pathways, future research should conduct empirical studies on the model across different product/brand categories (e.g., food, personal care, technology, lifestyle).

Cross-Cultural Comparative Studies

The cross-cultural comparative study can examine differences in nostalgia-stimulating factors, sensory sensitivity, and brand heritage in various cultures.

Longitudinal Study of Emotional Attachment

Longitudinal research enables the investigation of the dynamics of emotional attachment and brand love, either over time or across generational groups or various stages of a brand's lifecycle.

Inclusion of Last Minute Moderators/Mediators

Additional variables, such as trust, authenticity, self-brand connection, and brand personality, could be included in future studies to expand the knowledge base on the workings of emotions.

Discovery of the Digital and Virtual Emotional Cues

As there has been a shift towards digital brand experiences, future studies may explore the emotional reactions created by using AR/VR spaces, digital sensory stimuli, or AI-based emotional advertising.

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Conclusion

The study offers a cohesive emotional branding model that addresses a long-standing discrepancy in the literature. The model develops the knowledge on how emotional stimuli can affect emotional attachment and brand love by incorporating three fundamental emotional antecedents, such as emotional advertising, sensory experience and nostalgia into a single framework.

The position of emotional attachment as the central mediating factor aligns with the principles of attachment theory. The dual pathway concept, which encompasses both direct and mediated effects of nostalgia, expands the theory of nostalgia. Considering the brand type (heritage vs. modern) constitutes a valuable boundary condition, as emotional processing is not always similar across brands.

The suggested model combines several theoretical insights: the theory of affective processing, the theory of consumer-brand relationships, the theory of sensory, and the theory of attachment into a sensible model. The predicted results indicate that, among these variables, sensory experience will be the most predictive of attachment, heritage brands will enhance emotional connections, and nostalgia will have both direct and indirect influences on brand love.

The research provides valuable insights for brand managers seeking to cultivate rich, emotionally charged relationships with their brand, and lays the groundwork for subsequent empirical research. With the growing focus on emotional branding in the competitive market, this unified model makes a timely and powerful contribution to the theory and practice of marketing.

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