

UNVEILING THE KEY DRIVERS OF BRAND LOVE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT: A STUDY AMONG APPLE USERS

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Abstract

The study investigates the interrelationships among Brand Experience, Brand Emotional Attachment, Brand Rituals and Traditions, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Trust, and Brand Love, and examines how Brand Love influences Brand Affective Commitment among professionals using the Apple brand. Utilizing a sample of 201 respondents, the research reveals significant positive correlations between all studied factors and Brand Love. Specifically, Brand and Brand Trust exhibit very strong positive correlations with Brand Love. The study further identifies a significant positive correlation between Brand Love and Brand Affective Commitment. These findings suggest that enhancing key factors such as Brand Experience, Emotional Attachment, Rituals and Traditions, Satisfaction, and Trust can substantially foster Brand Love, which in turn, strongly contributes to consumer's Affective Commitment to the brand. The insights from this research are beneficial for brand managers and marketers who seek to foster lasting, emotionally meaningful relationships with their customers.

Keywords: Brand BE-Experience, BEA-Brand Emotional Attachment-Brand Rituals and Traditions, BS-Brand Satisfaction, BT -Brand Trust, BL-Brand Love, BAC-Brand Affective Commitment

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive marketplace, the concept of "Brand Love" has emerged as a critical factor in shaping customer relationships and influencing consumer behavior. Brand love represents an intense emotional attachment that customers feel towards a brand, transcending simple loyalty or satisfaction. This emotional bond leads to several positive outcomes, including increased purchasing frequency, a higher willingness to spend, favorable word-of-mouth recommendations, and greater resistance to rival offers. Brand love comprises several key components, such as passion, affection, and a profound sense of connection to the brand. This attachment often mirrors the feelings experienced in personal relationships, where emotional engagement can drive consumer decisions. Brands that successfully cultivate this love benefit from heightened customer loyalty, advocacy, and a significant edge over competitors. To foster brand love, companies need to adopt a multifaceted approach that encompasses superior products, emotional engagement, exceptional customer service, and a compelling brand identity. Brands can create strong emotional connections through captivating storytelling that evokes positive emotions and aligns with their customers' values. Establishing trust through consistent quality and reliability is essential, as is enhancing customer satisfaction through personalized interactions and seamless experiences. Another essential factor is the incorporation of brand rituals and traditions—recurring actions and practices that create a sense of belonging and community among customers. These rituals can either arise organically from the customer base or be intentionally promoted by the brand itself. Customer satisfaction, defined as the degree to which a product or service meets or exceeds consumer expectations, plays a crucial role in fostering brand love. Satisfied customers are more likely to recommend the brand to others, enhancing its reputation and attracting new customers who may also develop a strong affection for the brand. Numerous studies support the assertion that brand love significantly influences **Brand Affective Commitment**, which is defined as an emotional attachment to a brand that goes beyond mere satisfaction or habitual purchases. This commitment reflects customers' emotional investment in the brand and their desire to remain loyal. As part of our study, we aim to explore whether individuals who express love for a brand, such as Apple, are more likely to exhibit high levels of brand affective commitment. By understanding these dynamics, brands can leverage emotional connections to foster deeper loyalty and sustain long-term relationships with their customers

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Understanding the link between brand love and affective brand commitment is essential for marketers and brand managers, especially in highly competitive markets. While previous studies have addressed various dimensions of brand loyalty, the mechanisms that transform brand love into affective commitment are not well understood. This research aims to explore how

factors such as brand experience, trust, rituals and traditions, customer satisfaction, and emotional attachment impact this relationship among professionals who use Apple products. By addressing these dynamics, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for enhancing emotional connections with users. The guiding questions for this research include:

What are the antecedents and consequences of brand love?

How does brand love affect brand affective commitment among professionals?

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

To examine the interrelationships among Brand Experience, Emotional Attachment, Rituals and Traditions, Satisfaction, Trust, and Brand Love in the context of Apple brand users.

To assess the influence of Brand Love on Brand Affective Commitment among professionals using the Apple brand.

To provide insights for brand managers and marketers on strategies to enhance Brand Love and foster long-term consumer commitment.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study "Understanding the Link Between Brand Love and Brand Affective Commitment Among Professionals: A Study on The Brand Apple" highlights the psychological factors that drive brand love, focusing on the emotional connections professionals have with Apple. By exploring the relationship between brand love and affective commitment, the research provides valuable insights for marketers to develop targeted advertising, enhance customer retention, and cultivate brand advocacy among high-value customers. Additionally, it informs product development by emphasizing features that boost emotional engagement. The study enriches theoretical frameworks on brand loyalty and assists practitioners in crafting compelling brand narratives, ultimately leading to better market positioning and competitive advantage.

5. LITERATURE REVIEWS

5.1 Brand love

Brand love is driven by five emotional dimensions: passionate behavior, commitment, affection, consumer-brand identity, and relationship (Pontinha & Coelho do Vale, 2019). It transforms satisfied customers into loyal advocates, reducing marketing costs (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020). Brand love goes beyond satisfaction, driving loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion (Unal & Aydin, 2013), especially in hedonic and self-expressive brands (Thalhath, 2022; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Linked to materialism, it correlates with the love of money and brands (Ahuvia et al., 2020). Factors like age and education influence brand love, but gender does not (Santos et al., 2024). It mediates consumer behavior by connecting antecedents to outcomes (Khan et al., 2021).

5.2 Brand Experience

Customer experience encompasses the mental, psychological, emotional, social, and material responses customers have when interacting with businesses and products (Zhang, 2019). Research shows a positive correlation between brand love, brand pride, and brand trust with brand experience (Kazmi & Khalique, 2019). A strong brand experience serves as a tactical marketing strategy to evoke memories and emotions associated with the brand (Meisenzah1, 2017). Positive interactions can foster consumer loyalty, as enjoyable experiences tend to increase brand affection (Ferreira et al., 2022). However, not all brand experience aspects equally affect brand love (Ferreira et al., 2019). Brand experiences—intellectual, behavioral, emotive, and sensory—positively impact brand authenticity, which subsequently enhances brand love (Safeer et al., 2020). Companies like Avoskin should improve their brand experience to cultivate strong customer loyalty (Angelina & Nurlinda, 2023). Emotional experiences significantly influence both brand image and love, with experiential components playing a critical role in shaping consumer affection for the brand (Choi, 2023; Biçakcioğlu et al., 2018). The introduction of a comprehensive Retail Brand Experience (RBE) measurement scale has also been linked to customer behaviors like willingness to pay more and continuous purchase intentions in the apparel retail sector (Nikhashemi et al., 2019).

H1: Brand Experience influences Brand Love

5.3 Brand emotional attachment

Bowlby defines emotional attachment as a bond between a person and an object, with stronger attachments fostering connection, affection, love, and passion. Thomson et al. (2005) identify three components in consumer research: connection, passion, and affection. Brand attachment, a precursor to brand love, involves trust and commitment, leading to loyalty (Loureiro et al., 2012). Emotional bonds enhance brand loyalty (Mujkić et al., 2020), especially for products like clothing and smartphones that meet emotional needs (Orth et al., 2010). Managers should address both functional and emotional aspects of brands (Bairrada et al., 2018). Brand attachment is tied to affection and captivation (Gómez-Suárez, 2019) and influenced by pricing, quality, and service (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). It also drives brand advocacy through brand love (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2022).

H2: Brand Emotional Attachment Influences Brand Love

5.4 Brand rituals and traditions

Brand ritual sense refers to a consumer's emotional connection with a brand during ceremonial interactions. Brand rituals are significant in four dimensions: self-concept, self-display, self-participation, and self-renewal. Self-concept refers to the consumer's understanding of self-identity, while self-display refers to how they express themselves. The term "self-participation" refers to the consumer's perception of participation in the ritual process, while "update" refers to the process of self-improvement (Abdul Kader Jilani et al., 2019). (Cruz-Ros et al., n.d.) found that shared rituals and traditions on luxury fashion brands' social media platforms not only promote integration between a consumer's self-concept and a brand, but also positively influence the consumer's brand love. Brand rituals enhance consumers' understanding of brand culture or values. Brand rituals foster a sense of belonging among consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty through brand love ("The Effect of Brand Rituals on Brand Attachment," 2023). (Yang et al., 2022) This study, one of the first to look into the relationship between online brand community rituals and customer citizenship behaviour, provides remarkable insight. All rituals and symbols are built on the idea of love as a "tie that binds" (Danesi, 2019).

H3: Brand Rituals and Traditions influence Brand Love

5.5 Brand Satisfaction

According to Kotler and Keller, satisfaction reflects a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment when comparing a product's performance to their expectations. Research shows that consumer satisfaction is the primary driver of brand love (Sallam, n.d.). Studies indicate that consumer satisfaction and brand attitude play a partial mediation role in the relationship between brand identification and social media brand love (Arghashi et al., 2021). Factors like social identity, brand image, and customer satisfaction are also significant for developing brand love (Al-Haddad, 2019). Furthermore, customer satisfaction impacts brand trust, love, and loyalty (Ferreira et al., 2019). A study on Honda motorcycle users found that customer satisfaction positively influences brand love (Meirani & Abror, n.d.). Similarly, satisfied customers are more likely to develop brand love (Mahardika & Warmika, 2021). However, some research suggests that brand satisfaction is not always necessary for brand love development (Value Dimensions of Gamification, n.d.). This study aims to explore the effects of long-term brand satisfaction on brand love.

H4: Brand Satisfaction influence Brand Love

5.6 Brand Trust

Trust is defined as an individual's belief that another will meet their needs, particularly in contexts like service provision where clients expect effective solutions from providers (Ali et al., 2022). Research indicates a transition from brand trust (cognitive) to brand love (emotional) in uncertain situations, with brand behavioral features moderating this relationship (Marmat, 2023a). While brand trust moderates the link between brand experiences and brand love, it does not directly influence brand loyalty (Bae & Kim, 2023). Additionally, both brand trust and brand love affect customers' purchase intentions, with brand love acting as a mediator (Singh et al., 2021). Higher customer trust leads to greater brand love (Mahardika & Warmika, 2021), as love enhances trust, creating a positive feedback loop (Aureliano-Silva et al., 2022; Nilowardono et al., 2020). The interplay between brand trust and love is influenced by various uncertainties, affecting customers' perceptions at individual, brand, and technology levels (Marmat, 2023b). Ultimately, increased brand love correlates with higher brand trust, as consumers expect consistent, positive experiences (Ellitan, 2023). Research shows that trust in green brands fosters love for those brands, especially in contexts like Iran (Heidari Aqagoli & Salehzadeh, 2021)

H5: Brand Trust influence Brand Love

5.7 Brand Affective Commitment

Brand commitment refers to clients' positive attitudes toward a brand and their willingness to maintain a valued relationship with it (DAM, 2020). Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three types of organizational commitment: brand affective commitment, which is driven by positive work experiences; continuance commitment, based on the costs of leaving; and normative commitment, arising from loyalty norms or reciprocal favors. Brand affective commitment reflects feelings of attachment and belonging, with emotionally invested employees making greater contributions to company goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Research indicates that brand love is a precursor to brand affective commitment (Ashforth et al., 2008). Studies show that brand love positively influences both affective and continuance commitment (A. Santos et al., 2015; Omar & Mohamad Cusairi, 2018). Leskinen (2021) found that emotional commitment to a brand, such as Wardah, increases with brand love. Garg et al. (2016) developed a model based on social exchange theory, highlighting factors influencing brand love, including consumer preference and willingness to pay a premium. Ichsan and Andriana (2023) emphasized that affective brand commitment significantly enhances brand loyalty through brand love. Additionally, Farooqi (2023) found that brand love influences various aspects, including word-of-mouth, purchase intention, brand image, brand loyalty, and brand commitment among neo-luxury brands.

H6: Brand Love influences Brand Affective Commitment

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative online survey to explore how Brand Love influences Brand Affective Commitment among Apple users, focusing on professionals in Ernakulam. The research analyzed five components of Brand Love—Brand Experience, Emotional Attachment, Rituals, Satisfaction, and Trust—as independent variables, with Brand Affective Commitment as the dependent variable and Brand Love as a mediator. A sample of 201 respondents was selected via non-probability sampling. Data

were gathered through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed with SPSS, revealing key insights into the relationship between Brand Love and commitment in the professional segment. The study employs various constructs to measure different dimensions of brand perception. Brand Experience reflects emotional responses through statements like "The brand impresses me" and "I feel happy when I buy this brand," capturing the positive feelings associated with the brand (Kazmi & Khalique, 2019). Brand Emotional Attachment assesses personal connections with items such as "I have a unique relationship with this brand" and "I feel proud to use this brand" (Hajjid et al., 2022). Brand Rituals and Traditions explores cultural significance through statements like "These traditions contribute to the culture of this brand" (Cruz-Ros et al., n.d.). Brand Satisfaction measures contentment with phrases like "I am satisfied with my decision to use this brand" (Arghashi et al., 2021). Brand Trust evaluates reliability with items such as "Brand Apple never disappoints me" (Delgado-Ballester, n.d.). Brand Love captures emotional attachment through statements like "This brand makes me feel good" (Shimul & Phau, 2023). Finally, Brand Affective Commitment measures the emotional connection with items such as "I feel emotionally attached to the brand Apple" (Leskinen, 2021).

7. Results

Data analysis and interpretation is the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implication of the findings.

7.1 Correlation Analysis between BL, BE, BEA, BRT, BS and BT

	BE	BEA	BRT	BS	BT	BL
BE	1					
BEA	0.832**	1				
BRT	0.550**	0.445**	1			
BS	0.774**	0.735**	0.525**	1		
BT	0.840**	0.815**	0.521**	0.807**	1	
BL	0.836**	0.773**	0.495**	0.757**	0.849**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows Pearson correlation coefficients between BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT, and BL, indicating strong, statistically significant positive relationships between most variable pairs. BE and BT exhibit the highest correlation, suggesting a very strong interrelationship. These results imply that increases in one variable are likely associated with increases in the others.

7.2 Correlation Analysis between BL and BAC

	BL	BAC
BL	1	
BAC	0.744**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Inference:

The correlation analysis between BL and BAC shows a correlation coefficient of 74.4%, which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This indicates a strong positive relationship between BL and BAC. This significant correlation suggests that as Brand Love increase, Brand Affective Commitment tends to increase as well, highlighting a potential link between BL and BAC.

8. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between independent variables (BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT) and the dependent variable, Brand Love (BL), in the first analysis. In the second analysis, BL served as the independent variable and Brand Affective Commitment (BAC) as the dependent variable. This method helps predict the dependent variable and assess the influence of each independent variable.

8.1 Model Summary of BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT and BL

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimation	Durbin-Watson
1	0.881 ^a	0.776	0.770	0.4453	1.761

a. Predictors: (Constant), BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT

b. Dependent Variable: BL

The regression model shows a strong relationship between Brand Love (BL) and predictors (BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT), with a high

R square of 0.776 and an adjusted R square of 0.770, confirming the model's robustness. The standard error of 0.4453 indicates a good fit, and the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.761 suggests no significant autocorrelation. Overall, the model effectively explains a substantial portion of the variability in brand love.

8.2 Model Summary of BL and BAC

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimation	Durbin-Watson
1	0.744 ^a	0.553	0.551	0.7611	1.690

a. Predictors: (Constant), BL b. Dependent Variable: BAC

Inference: The model shows a strong positive correlation between BL and BAC, with over half of the variance in BAC being explained by BL. The standard error suggests moderate prediction accuracy, and the Durbin-Watson statistic indicates that autocorrelation is likely not a significant concern. Overall, BL appears to be a significant predictor of BAC.

9. ANOVA OF REGRESSION MODEL

9.1 Table showing ANOVA Model Summary of BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT and BL

Model	Sum of square	DF	Mean Square	F	sig
Regression	134.055	5	26.811	135.192	0.000*
Residual	38.672	195	0.198		
Total	172.727	200			

a. Predictors: (Constant), BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT b. Dependent Variable: B *Correlation at 0.05 level.

The ANOVA results show that the regression model with predictors (BE, BEA, BRT, BS, BT) explains a significant portion of the variance in BL. The high F-statistic and low p-value indicate the model is highly significant, making it a good fit at the 5% significance level, though some variance remains unexplained.

9.2 Table showing ANOVA Model Summary of BL and BAC

Model	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	sig
Regression	145.545	1	145.545	246.046	0.000*
Residual	117.715	199	0.592		
Total	263.260	200			

a. Predictors: (Constant), BL b. Dependent Variable: BA *Correlation at 0.05 level.

ANOVA table showing the regression model in Table 10.3.2. The value 145.545 represents the variation in the dependent variable (BAC) that is explained by the independent variable (BL). Also, F value is 246.046. A higher F-value indicates that the model is a good fit for the data. It shows that the model is statistically significant at 5% significance level.

9.3 Multiple Regression Coefficient Analysis

Factors	Item Acronym	Standardised Coefficient	Beta	Sig. (P value)
Brand Experience	BE	0.353		0.000
Brand Emotional Attachment	BEA	0.205		0.041
Brand Rituals and Traditions	BRT	0.145		0.013
Brand Satisfaction	BS	0.252		0.042
Brand Trust	BT	0.422		0.000

a: Dependent Variable: BL

The beta coefficient gives a measure of contribution of each variable to the model, higher the beta value, greater the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable. All the independent variables (BE, BEA, BRT, BS, and BT) have positive and statistically significant effects on Brand Love (BL). Among these, Brand Trust (BT) has the

strongest effect, followed by Brand Experience (BE), Brand Satisfaction (BS), Brand Emotional Attachment (BEA), and Brand Rituals and Traditions (BRT).

9.4 Coefficient of Regression Analysis on BAC

Factors	Item Acronym	Standardised Coefficient	Beta	Sig. (P value)
Brand Love	BL	0.744		0.000

a: Dependent Variable: BAC

The regression analysis reveals that Brand Love (BL) has a strong, statistically significant effect on Brand Affective Commitment (BAC). The standardized beta coefficient of 0.744 indicates that BL is a key predictor of BAC, with a p-value of 0.000 confirming this relationship's significance. Thus, increasing Brand Love is likely to significantly enhance Brand Affective Commitment.

10. DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Table showing summary of Results

Hypothesis	Result	Action
H1: Brand Experience influence Brand Love.	$r = 0.836, \beta = 0.353, p = 0.000, (p < 0.05)$	Yes
H2: Brand Emotional Attachment Influence Brand Love	$r = 0.773, \beta = 0.205, p = 0.041, (p < 0.05)$	Yes
H3: Brand Rituals and Traditions influence Brand Love.	$r = 0.495, \beta = 0.145, p = 0.013, (p < 0.05)$	Yes
H4: Brand Satisfaction influence Brand Love.	$r = 0.757, \beta = 0.252, p = 0.042, (p < 0.05)$	Yes
H5: Brand Trust influence Brand Love.	$r = 0.849, \beta = 0.422, p = 0.000, (p < 0.05)$	Yes
H6: Brand love influence Brand Affective Commitment.	$r = 0.744, \beta = 0.744, p = 0.000, (p < 0.05)$	Yes

The study tested six hypotheses, all supported by data. H1 showed Brand Experience significantly influences Brand Love ($r = 0.836, \beta = 0.353$). H2 confirmed that Emotional Attachment impacts Brand Love ($r = 0.773, \beta = 0.205$). H3 revealed Brand Rituals enhance Brand Love ($r = 0.495, \beta = 0.145$). H4 found Brand Satisfaction strongly influences Brand Love ($r = 0.757, \beta = 0.252$). H5 showed Brand Trust is a key determinant of Brand Love ($r = 0.849, \beta = 0.422$). H6 confirmed Brand Love strongly influences Brand Affective Commitment ($r = 0.744, \beta = 0.744$). All factors were statistically significant in building brand love and commitment.

11. IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

The study reveals a strong positive relationship between Brand Love and Brand Affective Commitment among professionals using Apple products. This emotional connection can enhance customer loyalty, as loyal customers are more likely to continue purchasing and advocating for Apple. To leverage this, Apple should encourage satisfied professionals to share their positive experiences through word-of-mouth marketing, attracting new customers. Prioritizing innovation and product quality will help maintain and strengthen emotional bonds with professional users. Additionally, fostering a sense of community through exclusive events and online forums can deepen affective commitment. By understanding this connection, Apple can develop tailored marketing strategies and support professionals in advocating for their products, ultimately driving sustained business success and improving customer loyalty.

12. CONCLUSION

The study examined how Brand Experience, Emotional Attachment, Rituals, Satisfaction, Trust, and Brand Love influence Brand Affective Commitment among Apple users in Ernakulam. Data from 201 respondents were analyzed using SPSS. Results showed that Brand Trust and Brand Experience are the strongest predictors of Brand Love, followed by Emotional Attachment,

Satisfaction, and Rituals. Brand Love, in turn, strongly predicts Brand Affective Commitment, with users showing higher loyalty and emotional investment. These findings provide valuable insights for brand managers aiming to strengthen customer relationships.

13. SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Future studies could adopt a longitudinal approach to explore how Brand Love and Brand Affective Commitment evolve over time. Comparative research with users of other tech brands and across different regions would provide diverse insights. Investigating cultural factors could enhance understanding, while a larger sample size would allow for broader generalization of findings. Similar research could also be applied to other industries, like automobiles or apparel, and target different demographics, such as youth. Additionally, exploring other variables influencing Brand Love could further illuminate its broader impact.

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