Research Article

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF BRAND LOVE, BRAND IMAGE, EXCITEMENT AND WORD OF MOUTH ON CONSUMERS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of the current study was to investigate the importance of the brand love concept that has not been frequently discussed before. This study aims on the effect of brand personality, brand image and brand love on word of mouth. A survey approach and sampling of 480 students of Molana University in Iran was used in this research. The results showed that excitement factor has a direct effect on brand image and word of mouth. Also the brand image has a positive relationship with brand love and word of mouth.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers in today's market expect to be satisfied with the product or brand they buy; however, customer satisfaction is not enough to establish a continuous relationship with a brand. It is necessary to establish an emotional bond beyond satisfaction in order to provide consumer loyalty. In order for such an emotional bond to be established, "zero separation" and undivided brand loyalty have to be provided (Arnold et al., 2005). Researchers in all over the world and particularly in UK are researching about branding in fashion for many years. Forexample, gaining competitive advantage in fashion retailing (Lewis and Hawksley, 1990), using from the own brand fashion (Moore, 1995), however preceding research in this subject makes many advantage but more research is needed. The important aspect of this research is loving fashion. Our target in this study is to test the relationship between those construct, became of their potential relevance the consumer – brand relationship domain. Recently, the intense bonds established with products and brands and the feelings felt have been expressed with the concept of love.

There are not many studies about brand love, but the ones who studied this issue defined love as an intense relationship between the customer and the product consumed like interpersonal love. Fournier, in his study in 1998, drew attention to the importance of brand love and expressed brand love as a long term relationship of a customer with a brand. Fournier and Mick, in their study in 1999 stated that the most intense satisfaction was experienced when the satisfaction of a consumer for a product or a brand turned into love.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

In recent decades there are incomparable research interest on love. That started with Rubin's (1973) work , he describe love as on attitude held by a person to a special other person , including predisposition for thinking and feeling toward that other person because the consumers wants to be well dressed and want to be informed with the latest style , they love their fashion brand . Fundamentally stylish fashion brand like H&M, Zara and mango that are very popular in the world are looking for young consumers markets that want to express themselves using fashion. Fashion brands transferred their personality by clothing items themselves, or by indirect wary such as advertising, store design,etc.

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Brand image is an important part of brand which enable to differentiate their products from their competitors. Agent for developing of brand image are: product signs, the firm, the marketing mix individual perceptions of the brand , personal values , experience , type of brand user and context variable. In spite of the fact that importance of brand image in marketing, there is a lack of theory development that has result in much uncertain in its relationship with brand personality.

H1. Excitement dimension of brand personality will have a positive impact on brand love

H2. Excitement dimension of brand personality will have a positive impact on brand image

H3. Brand image will have a positive impact on brand love. Consumers follow each other in learning pattern and talk to each other about that model.

WOM is the way that consumers can give their information and felling toward and away from special products, brands and services to each other (Hawkins et al., 2004). The important idea behind WOM is that one consumer to another can broadcast their product, services, stores, companies and etc. We do not know anything about the past research relationship between brand love and WOM. Yavas and Shemwell (1996 suggest WOM as one of the basic sources of image formatting. Although in this research we prove that both of brand image and brand personality will have positive effect on WOM .So we assume the following theories.

H4. Brand love will have a positive impact on WOM.

H5. Brand image will have a positive impact on WOM.

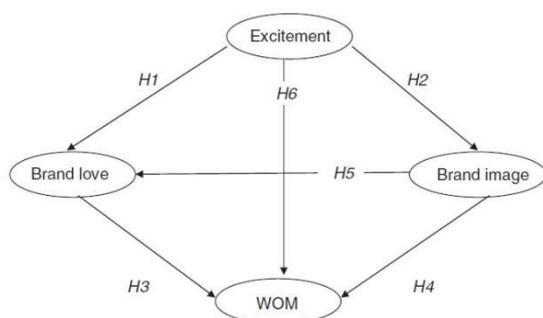**H6.** Excitement dimension of brand personality will have a positive impact on WOM

Figure 1. The Relation among the Main Research Constructs

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Measures

The hypotheses were all measured using a multiple-item and five-point Likert-type scale. Respondents were asked to rank a list of items on the Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". We have 12 questions in this questionnaire and also 3 questions for each items including WOM, brand personality, brand image, brand love.

Data Collection

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology employing a questionnaire and sampling of 480 students of Molana University in Iran. Students are good choice for this research because of the condition of age and having tendency for recognizing by brands. Before distributing the questionnaires to the students, a pretest was taken and the Cronbach's alpha of reliability ranged from 0.65 to 0.68 for different variables. Finally, 480 questionnaires were distributed among students and 430 of the returned questionnaires were usable.

RESULTS

To test the model developed we used the Structural equations model (SEM) approach. Structural model analysis LISREL was used to create the covariance-based structural equation model. Structural equations express relationships among several variables that can be either directly observed variables (manifest variables) or unobserved hypothetical variables (latent variables). LISREL also provides a number of model fit indices. Asnoted, all construct swereassessedusing 5-point Likertty pescales.

Measurement Model

Discriminant validity is shown when: (1) measurement items load more strongly on their assigned construct than on the other constructs in a CFA(see table 3); and, (2) the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct is larger than its correlations with the other constructs (see table 2). We used the factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted to assess convergence validity. The recommended values for loadings are set at > 0.5, the average variance extracted (AVE) should be > 0.5 and the composite reliability (CR) should be > 0.7. From Table 1 it can be seen that we have startup intention as first order constructs. From table 1 it can be seen that the results of the measurement model exceeded the recommended values thus indicating sufficient convergence validity. In order to assess the reliability of measurement items, we compute composite construct reliability coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha. Composite reliabilities range from 0.758 (for word of mouth) to 0.792 (for brand image), which exceed the recommended level of 0.7. The results (see table 1), therefore, demonstrate a reasonable reliability level of the measured items.

Convergent validity

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, Composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) for the model constructs. The convergent and discriminant validity of all variables were be tested by confirmatory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood estimator of LISREL 8.73. The discriminant validity of the scales was checked by the Fornell and Larker's (1981) formula. Structural model analysis LISREL was used to create the covariance-based structural equation model (SEM). Discriminant validity is the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure distinct concepts. The criterion used to assess this is by comparing the

AVE with the squared correlations or the square root of the AVE with correlations. As shown in Table 3, we have used the second method which is to compare the square root of the AVE with the correlations. The criteria is that if the square root of the AVE, shown in the diagonals are greater than the values in the row and columns on that particular construct than we can conclude that the measures discriminant. From table 3, it can be seen that the values in the diagonals are greater than the values in their respective row and column thus indicating the measures used in this study are distinct. Thus the results presented in Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate adequate discriminant and convergent validity.

designed to be provide penalties for less parsimonious models) such as the normed fit index (NFI) and non-normed fit index (NNFI or TLI), and no centrality-based indices whereby the no centrality parameter is calculated by subtracting the degrees of freedom in the model from the chi-square ($\chi^2/$ df) such as the comparative fit index (CFI), and root-mean-square error of approximation index (RMSEA). Values greater than 0.90 are desirable for IFI, RFI, CFI, NFI and NNFI while values less than 0.09 for RMSEA are acceptable. The result of model indices support a good overall model fit (Goodness fit statistics: Chi-Square=108.14, DF=48(χ^2/df=2.252), RMSEA=0.07, CFI=0.95, NFI=0.92, NNFI=0.96, GFI=0.91, RFI=0.92).

Table 1. Discriminant Validity and descriptive statistics

Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	SD
brand image	0.560	0.792	0.711	4.254	0.776
brand love	0.528	0.768	0.723	3.877	1.059
word of mouth	0.511	0.758	0.735	4.025	0.912
excitement	0.554	0.788	0.741	3.920	1.0546

Table 2. Convergent Validity (Reliability and inter-construct correlations for re ective scales)

Construct	BI	BL	WOM	EXC
brand image	0.748			
brand love	0.424	0.727		
word of mouth	0.298	0.284	0.715	
excitement	0.160	0.150	0.210	0.744

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the off-diagonals represent the correlations

Table 3. Cross loading and loading factors

	brand image	brand love	word of mouth	excitement
a1	0.736	0.321	0.225	0.100
a2	0.739	0.336	0.173	0.188
a3	0.770	0.293	0.271	0.070
b1	0.435	0.817	0.185	0.096
b2	0.236	0.752	0.135	0.148
b3	0.199	0.593	0.299	0.096
c1	0.304	0.246	0.766	0.128
c2	0.124	0.150	0.687	0.141
c3	0.168	0.193	0.689	0.189
d1	0.078	0.044	0.216	0.720
d2	0.112	0.148	0.145	0.809
d3	0.165	0.137	0.112	0.698

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	t-value	R^2	Result	Sign
Excitement→ brand image	0.19	2.01	0.04	Supported	+
Excitement→ brand love	0.06	0.73	0.43	NS	NS
brand image →brand love	0.64	5.35		Supported	+
Excitement→ word of mouth	0.23	2.19	0.25	Supported	+
brand image →word of mouth	0.40	2.19		Supported	+
brand love → word of mouth	0.01	0.02		NS	NS

|t|>1.96 Significant at P<0.05, |t|>2.58 Significant at P<0.01,

Goodness of fit statistics

LISREL provides a number of model fit indices. The incremental fit index (IFI) which tests the improvement of the model over a baseline model (usually a model of independence or uncorrelated variables), relative fit index (RFI) which compares a chi-square for the model tested to one from a baseline model, variations of RFI (which are not explicitly

Structural Model

As shown in Table 4. To evaluate the structural models' predictive power, we calculated the R^2, R^2 indicates the amount of variance explained by the exogenous variables (Barclay et al.1995). Using a T-value technique with a sampling of 259, the path estimates and t-statistics were calculated for the hypothesized relationships.
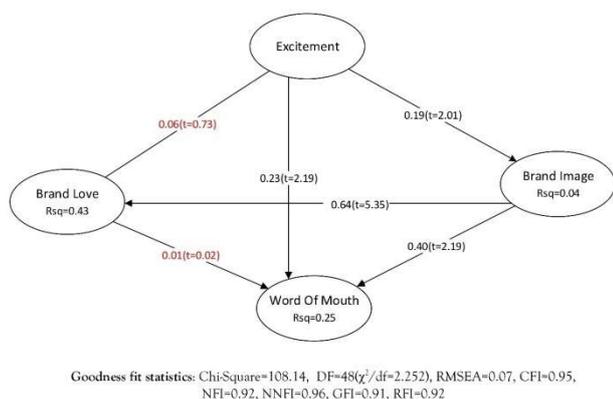
Goodness fit statistics: Chi-Square=108.14, DF=48(χ^2/df=2.252), RMSEA=0.07, CFI=0.95, NFI=0.92, NNFI=0.96, GFI=0.91, RFI=0.92

Figure 2. Research Model in Estimation and Significant situation

Two hypotheses were not supported in the testing (the effect of Brand love on Word of mouse and the effect of excitement on brand love). Three hypotheses were supported in the testing at P<0.01 and one hypothesis was supported in the testing at P<0.05: As shown in Table 4 and fig 1, the path coefficients ant result of hypotheses. In this model, we have relied on the R^2 value, computed in LISREL to determine how closely our data conform to a linear relationship. R^2 values range from 0 to 1, with 1 representing a perfect fit between the data and the line drawn through them, and 0 representing no statistical correlation between the data and a line (See result at table 4), So Approximately, 04% of the variance of brand image is explained by excitement, Approximately 43% of the variance of brand love are explained by excitement and brand image and finally 25% of the variance of word of mouth are explained by excitement, brand love and brand image.

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was exploring the relation between brand image and brand love considering the impact of excitement. Also the influence of those constructs on the word of mouth was investigated. The results generated from this research indicated that there are meaningful relationships between excitement factor, brand love, brand image and the word of mouth. Excitement has impact on brand image and also word of mouth. It is also concluded that brand image influences brand love and word of mouth. The results taken from this study can be used and utilized by different brands in order to develop their image and personality so that they can attract more customers. Further researches might be conducted in other countries and for different populations. Also in future studies, researchers may explore some other variables in relation with the constructs discussed in this study.

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