

**Review Article**

**IT'S ALL ABOUT BRAND LOVE- EXPRESSING THROUGH PURCHASE INTENTION,  
BRAND TRUST AND BRAND ATTITUDE**

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**Abstract**

Online shopping is arguably the fastest growing purchase habit of the 21st century which has changed the landscape of consumer behavior. The frenzy with which the online shopping took over the world is unmatched by any other phenomena in recent times. The growth in the telecom industry and the penetration of the internet in India has completely aided and paved way for online shopping. The entry of several companies into the e-Commerce market was to cash into this phenomenon. Indian e-commerce market is now valued at \$38.5 billion USD, it is estimated to become \$200 billion USD by 2026. With an enormous growth ahead for the Indian e-commerce market, Flipkart and Amazon are vying to be the alpha. Amazon came into India 2013 has come from behind to grab an astonishing market share of 30%, same as Flipkart which was found in 2007. This research attempts to explore the love for the brand Amazon. The study was conducted among the students from a varsity. The results revealed that brand attitude plays an important role in creating brand love. It also tested brand trust and purchase intention of the consumer using Amazon e-commerce portal. Brand love is revealed to be an integral part of consumers' online shopping behavior. The results of this study will provide new insight into e-commerce shopping behavior.

**Keywords:** Brand Attitude, Trust, Love, Purchase Intention, and Amazon.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The e-commerce industry in India is seeing phenomenal growth. In India, with a population of 1.3 billion, the growth of online shopping is unparalleled. In 2018, there are about 231.58 million shoppers and users of eCommerce in India. It is projected to hit an astounding figure of 358 million users which will only represent a mere 36 % of the population. The figure means that there are lots of potential in the Indian market. In terms of value, 2017 raked up US\$39 billion which is expected to grow at a rate of 51% annual to US\$120 billion (Eshop, 2018). India is projected to be the fastest growing e-commerce sector in the world.

The growth must be credited to the penetration of smartphones and the internet in the country. Internet usage in the country jumped from a mere 4 percent to whopping 34.42 percent which stands at 39.32 percent in 2018. In fact, Indians are consuming 12 times more of mobile data than they did in 2015. The average data consumption of 4G had now reached a staggering figure of 10.4 GB (TOI Report, 2019, February, 27). Along with a very young diverse demography, smartphone and internet penetration are key players in developing e-commerce. Government policies such as 100 percent foreign direct investment (FDI) in e-commerce has also aided the growth of the industry (IBEF, Oct 2018).

Amazon has tasted incredible success in its venture into Indian e-commerce portal. Entering into the Indian market in 2013, a full five years after the rival portal Flipkart, Amazon has since gained popularity in the country. Amazon is only behind Flipkart by a point in terms of market share (Mugdha Vaiyar, Economic Times, March 2018). Amazon has also become quite popular among the urban population than Flipkart.

Brand has been around for a long time as a strategy. The concept which differentiates one product from other product needs to be carefully designed. But as time flew, consumers were able to see through the strategies which blunted the intended purpose of branding. It was Kevin Roberts in his book Lovemarks (2006) brought in the idea of creating a love mark. Brand love as a variable came in to picture giving shape to the already existing

consumer-brand relationship. Brand love is a passionate commitment to a brand from the consumer. The emotional bond leads to a commitment that will stand the test of time.

In this study, brand love for Amazon is measured using brand attitude and brand trust. The perception of the consumers towards a particular brand is formed from experience. Brand attitude is an evaluation of the brand which can be negative or positive. Brand trust is formed as a result of satisfaction and trust that it will perform its promised functional value. It has become an integral part in consumers mind to form a close relationship with the brand. Brand love and purchase intention are interrelated as brand love increases as does the intention to purchase. The love for the brand will make sure that the consumer commits to the brand; the consumer becomes brand loyal and sticks to the brand ignoring others options in the sea.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Brand Love**

The concept of brand love was borrowed from interpersonal love theories. Love was defined as, "an attitude held by a person toward a particular another person, involving predispositions to think, feel, and behave in certain ways toward that other person" (Rubin's, 1973). In his work, Sternberg (1986) discusses the scale of triangular love and its characteristics. Sternberg's love theory components are passion, intimacy, and commitment. Later the same theory was adopted to form the consumer - object relationship which serves as a base for marketing research into brand love (Shrimp and Maden, 1988). Researchers have taken a particular interest in the brand love studies which was rightfully justified with the evolution of consumer behavior. This interest has given space for different authors to give their own twist to the definition of brand love. Brand love has been famously defined by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) as, "degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer has for a particular trade name". Ahuvia (1993) ascertains that a consumer will fall in love with a product when the "level of integration" and the

absolute desire to have it exceed a certain point of threshold. He goes on to conclude that interpersonal love and object love has more similarities than differences (Ahuvia, 2005).

Consumer creates and maintains brand relationship which is filled not only with characteristics such as love and passion but the relationship also becomes meaningful. Researches credited interpersonal love as the most important reason behind any kind of relationship we have in our life (Fournier, 1998). When a human relationship with a brand becomes liking, then it moves towards yearning which in turn forms a commitment to the brand in terms of consumption, it is called brand love (Albert et al., 2008). Also when the desire for a particular brand reaches and overlaps beyond a certain point this concept called brand love comes in to play (Ahuvia, 2006). Brand Love is multi-dimensional and allows the researchers to capture not only emotions but also the strength of the relationship, attitude valence and the duration of it. (Jiang et al., 2017). Brand love also acts as cushion against any ethical misconduct by the brand. Dalman et al (2019) proved that consumers are more forgiving if they have a romantic relationship with the brand. Brand love customers tend to become members of brand communities and promoting the brand (Coelho et al., 2019).

### Brand Attitude

Attitude is the overall picture of the perception that is a result of evaluation towards a person, a thing or product (Overbeek et al., 2006). It can be positive or negative depending on the previous experience with the certain object in question (Hawkin et al., 2007). This experience leads to a positive evaluation or a negative evaluation, favorable or unfavorable feelings, and different behavioral tendency. Positive brand attitude increases the chance of using the brand more than the brand with a negative attitude (Kotler and Keller, 2008). Brand attitude induces a liking or a kind of loathing towards a brand (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). When a consumer is inspired to develop confidence and familiarity with the brand it leads to positive brand attitude. Brand attitude is the holistic evaluation of the consumer about the brand (Ramesh et al., 2019).

Consumers analyze the functional, nonfunctional benefits of the brand and form an attitude towards it (Wilkie, 1986). This evaluation needs to be comprehensive and need to take into consideration of all the attributes of the brand. Literature divides attitude into three elements. Firstly, the cognitive element which deals with experience and knowledge about the brand. Affective element deals with emotion from the experience of the brand by consumers. Finally, conation element deals with tendency or behavior towards the brand from the consumer (Wu and Wang, 2011). Therefore, brand attitude is considered as a measure to determine potential buying behavior. (Villiers et al., 2018).

### Brand Trust

Trust has been an important factor in all of the "components of the relationship marketing" (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Brand trust has been defined as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function" (Chahudhuri and Holbrook, 2002). Brand trust is not an overnight phenomenon; it evolves from the past experiences which were gained from prior interaction with the brand (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Brand trust is determined by the consumers' expectation and how it is fulfilled by the brand. Sometimes the experience can be direct and sometimes it is through indirect experiences such as advertisement and word of mouth (Keller, 1993).

Brand trust can be considered as the emotion that was formed as a result of relationship between customer satisfaction and brand trust (Shankar et al., 2002). It is the willing belief that the customer relies on the product to fulfill its stated functional performance which was promised (Fournier and Yao 1997). Mangers need to make brand authentic and reliable which in turn will create trust among the consumers. In order to build trust brands needs to be consistent with their quality (Portal et

al., 2019). Brand trust act as a factor that protects the brand from uncertainty, negative information and fights any kind of opportunity to switch over (Carnevale et al., 2018).

### Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is formed from the assumption of future purchase which is often thought of as a key indicator for an actual purchase. If the quality of the product is low or prior experience is bad the purchase intention is low whereas if it's high the purchase intention tends to be strong (Chang and Wildt, 1994). It is an important action that needs motivation and ability (Balakrishnan and Griffiths, 2018). Mowen and Minor (2001) ascertain that decision made by consumers are a result of serious of processing that involves "perceiving problems, searching for solutions, evaluating alternatives and making decisions."

Consumer's purchase intention is based on unpredicted situations and personal preferences. Unpredicted situations involve situations which weren't foreseen or expected such as high price and unavailability. Purchase intension is considered as behavioural attitude of a consumer which acts as a plan consciously made for actions to be performed in the future (Ramesh et al., 2019). Purchase intension and brand attitude are found to be interrelated with each other (Lii and Lee, 2012).

Personal preferences include attitude towards the brand, influence of others over the consumer and meeting expectation from the product side (Kotler, 2003). Purchase intention is evaluated as a highly significant index to predict purchase intention which is highly subjective (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Purchase intention uses measurement such as "possible to buy, intended to buy and considered to buy" (Zeithaml, 1988).

### Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

1. To understand the relationship between brand attitude and brand love.
2. To explore the relationship between brand trust and brand love.
3. To assess the relationship between brand love and purchase intention.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a descriptive approach to the study of brand love for the online e-commerce giant Amazon. Data were collected through online survey forms. A self-administrated survey was used to carry out the data collection with the help of a structured questionnaire. The data collected were from those who volunteered so that the issue of nonresponse bias was eliminated.

The respondents must have purchased in Amazon e-commerce portal more than once. Thus all the respondents who participated in the survey are customers of Amazon. A total of 327 responses were collected of which 27 were discarded due to insufficient and incomplete data. A total of 300 responses were used in the final analysis. The study has a response rate of 91.74 %.

Measuring Instrument - Measurement scales for Brand Attitude brand love, brand trust, and purchase intention were adapted from different studies. All the scale items were measured using a Likert scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework consists of brand attitude, brand love, brand trust as variables. Brand attitude and brand trust are independent variables with brand love as the dependent variable. Purchase intention is the consequence of brand love.

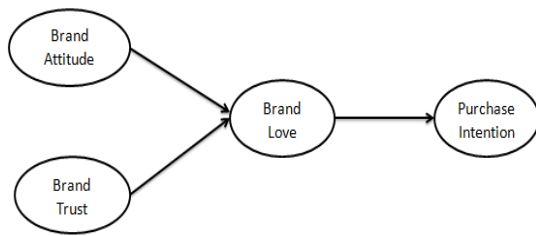


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### Hypothesis

Brand love and brand attitude when strong and positive will attribute to a better relationship with the consumers (Kotler and Keller, 2008). This research intends to study the relationship between brand attitude and brand love for Amazon to access if the strong positive feeling will result in stronger love for the brand.

- $H_1$  : There is a relationship between brand attitude and brand love  
Trust is considered as an important antecedent of brand love. With brand trust, the consumers form a relationship with the brand. Therefore there is a strong positive relationship between brand trust and brand love (Chaudhri and Holbrook, 2002)
- $H_2$  : There is a relationship between brand trust and brand love  
The relationship between brand love and purchase intention are interconnected. Brand love has a relationship with purchase intention as the brand love increases, the purchase intention also increases. (Yasin and Shamim, 2013)
- $H_3$  : There is a relationship between brand love and purchase intention.

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Reliability

Nunally's (1978) framework for reliability states that the Cronbach's alpha value must be greater than an adapted scale. The study tested the reliability of each construct of the model. The results were reported. Brand attitude has a reliability of .879 and brand trust has a value of .859. Brand love has a reliability value of .906 and finally, the reliability value for purchase intention was reported at .862. All the scales tested had reliability above .7 as per Nunally's standard (See table I). The scale is deemed reliable to be used. As per Nunally and Bernstein (1994) the composite reliability value must also be above 0.7 or more. The values satisfy the standards and are considered reliable. (See table I).

#### Validity testing

Convergent Validity- According to Hair et al (2013), the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be higher than 0.5 and all the constructs reported scores above 0.5. Brand trust has an AVE of 0.702 and purchase intention has a value of 0.645. Brand love and brand awareness has an AVE of 0.603 and 0.544 respectively. (See Table I)

Discriminant Validity - "The square rooting Average Variance Extracted values that should be greater than variance shared between and other latent construct in the model" (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The AVE meets the criteria and satisfies the condition set.

#### Structural Equation Modeling

The Smart PLS software was used to draw a structural equation model (SEM). Bootstrapping was also used to estimate the relationship between the variables. The significance level was calculated at 95% which should be above 1.96 and at 99% it should be above 2.56. The t statistics value of brand attitude and brand love is 6.034. The t - statistic value of brand trust and

brand love is 7.655. The value between brand love and purchase intention is 26.512.

Path coefficient ( $\beta$  value) of brand attitude and brand love is 0.409. The relationship value between brand trust and brand love is 0.510. Finally, the coefficient value for the relationship between brand love and purchase intention is 0.785. The relationship between brand love and purchase intention is clearly the strongest. The relationship between brand attitude and brand love is weaker than the relationship between brand trust and brand love (See table 3).

- $H_1$  : There is a relationship between brand attitude and brand love  
The T-statistics value of the relationship between brand attitude and brand love is 6.034. The path coefficient value is at 0.409. The path coefficient value and the T-statistics value indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between brand attitude and brand love. (See Table 3)  
Hence  $H_1$  is accepted
- $H_2$  : There is a relationship between brand trust and brand love  
The path coefficient value and the T-statistics value of the relationship between brand trust and brand love is 7.655 and 0.510. The values indicate a strong positive relationship between brand trust and brand love. (See Table 3)

Hence  $H_2$  is accepted

$H_3$ : There is a relationship between brand love and purchase intention

The path coefficient value of relationship between brand love and purchase intention is 0.785. The T- statistics value was recorded at 26.512. The values are indicative of positive strong relationship between brand love and purchase intention. (See Table 3).

Hence  $H_3$  is accepted.

#### R-Square Value

The R square value is defined as, "a measure of the model's predictive accuracy and its calculated as the squared correlation between a specific endogenous construct's actual and predicted values". Any  $R^2$  value less than 0.49 is considered as weak whereas the value between 0.50 - 0.75 is said to be moderate and the value above 0.75 is considered as strong power of explanatory (Henseler et al., 2009). The R-square value of effect of brand attitude and brand trust on brand love is 0.710 which is moderate and the effect of brand love on purchase intention is 0.616 which is also moderate. The research has a healthy r-square value for the study thus has a appreciable explanatory power.

#### DISCUSSION

In this study, the focus was to assess the relationship between the online e-commerce portal Amazon and its customer. The research tested for brand love, brand trust, brand attitude, and purchase intention. The study showed that brand trust influences brand love more than brand attitude. Brand attitude and brand trust have a positive significant relationship with brand love. The relationships were stronger. Brand love has a strong positive relationship with purchase intention.

Brand trust emerges as the important relationship variable with brand love as it is highly valued in the relationship. Relationship marketing has always given its due importance to brand trust as an antecedent to brand relationship (Chaudhri and Holbrook, 2001). As brand trust makes a commitment towards creating brand love for the product, it is considered as an integral part of branding strategies. Brand trust has a positive influence on brand love (Thomson et al, 2005). Larzelere and Huston (1980) in their study asserted that brand trust was proven empirically to be associated with brand love.

Brand love increases with positive brand attitude. The impact of brand attitude on the consumer will increase the use of the brand and will push the consumer towards making a commitment to the brand (Kotler and Keller, 2008). Also, consumer with strong

positive brand attitude would be willing to pay a premium for the brand (Keller, 1993). Brand attitude has an important relationship with brand love. The strongest relationship of the study was from brand love and purchase intention. Emotional consumers or emotionally connected consumers tend to get influenced by brand love to form a strong purchase intention to a particular brand (Dick and Basu, 1994). When the brand love is strong the intention to purchase the brand also becomes stronger. In literature, brand love has a considerable impact on purchase intention.

#### IMPLICATION

Brand love is influenced by brand trust and brand attitude alike. Brand trust's impact must be fully comprehended as brand trust creates a stronger bond between brand and consumer and paves way for brand love. Amazon has created a credible image among consumers. The trust that has been built slowly has become a reason for the close consumer-brand relationship. Amazon must be very careful in selecting their vendor for it is through them the customers are served. Amazon must also be cautious in their communication strategy which has been the downfall of some prominent e-retailers. Brand trust goes beyond sales as far as Amazon is considered. It involves on-time delivery, after-sales services (if assured), product quality, and customer service to name a few. Amazon has a long list of priorities they need to maintain in order to retain consumer trust. Brand attitude has a positive influence on brand love. When the brand has created a positive attitude it leads towards a positive relationship. Positive brand attitude is created through carefully developed through assurance and credibility. Amazon has always assured customers with their warm message and advertisements. This has led to the belief of trust and positive view on Amazon to become a leader in Indian e-commerce market.

Stronger brand love leads to stronger purchase intention. Our study proves that stronger the brand love the intention to purchase also increases. It is by creating brand love Amazon can assure a higher purchase intention. Amazon must concentrate on creating relationship and passion with the customer in order to survive the dynamic market. Purchase intention is paramount for the success of a brand. \

#### CONCLUSION

The study examined the importance of brand love in developing purchase intention. The relationship between brand attitude and brand love which didn't get much attention in research was tested. The results that brand attitude has a strong positive relationship with brand love is part of our contribution. The relationship between brand trust and brand love were in line with the existing literature. Brand love plays an important role in defining the consumers purchase intention and re-purchase intention. With higher brand love consumer are committed to the brand and thus the purchase intention is very high. Amazon must concentrate on maintaining positive attitude and increase trust to enhance brand love. Brand love role in attracting the consumer back in to the fold cannot be stressed enough. The study didn't go into different product categories of e-commerce shopping which may reveal different results. Future study could compare two different e-commerce portals. Future studies could also consider other variables such as brand loyalty and brand awareness.

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**Tables****Table 1: Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of the constructs**

Constructs	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Attitude	0.544	0.879	0.879
Brand Trust	0.603	0.924	0.905
Brand Love	0.702	0.904	0.859
Purchase Intention	0.745	0.901	0.865

The Cronbach's alpha value reported to be more than .700, the benchmark set by Nunnally (1978). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be above 0.5 according to Hair et al (2013)

**Table 2: Path Coefficient Values**

Constructs	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	R Square	T Statistics
Brand Attitude -> Brand Love	H1	0.409	0.710	6.034
Brand Trust -> Brand Love	H2	0.510		7.655
Brand Love -> Purchase Intention	H3	0.785	0.616	26.512

The path coefficient value was used to find the strongest relationship among the variable. T-statistics was used to find if the relationship is significant where the value should be higher than 1.96 at 95% level of significance and 2.56 at 99% level of significance.