Impact of Brand Love on Brand Loyalty: The Moderating Role of Self-Esteem and Social Influences

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of brand love on brand loyalty, examining the moderating roles of self-esteem and susceptibility to normative influence (SNI) within the context of consumer behavior in Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Chitwan, Nepal. Utilizing a descriptive and causal comparative research design, the study employs a structured questionnaire survey, gathering primary data from 218 respondents through purposive sampling. The research aims to elucidate how brand love fosters brand loyalty and how self-esteem and social influences modulate this relationship. The findings reveal that respondents exhibit a moderate level of brand love, self-esteem, and susceptibility to normative influence, with brand loyalty also being moderately present. Correlation analysis indicates a significant, albeit weak, positive relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, suggesting that while emotional attachment to a brand enhances loyalty, other factors are also influential. SNI shows a weak positive correlation with brand loyalty, but this relationship is not statistically significant. Self- esteem, on the other hand, significantly negatively impacts brand loyalty. Regression results further highlight that brand love is a significant positive predictor of brand loyalty, whereas self-esteem negatively affects it. SNI does not significantly influence brand loyalty. These findings underscore the critical role of brand love in fostering loyalty and suggest that higher self-

esteem may reduce brand loyalty, potentially due to overconfidence or differing consumer priorities. The study contributes to understanding the dynamics of brand loyalty and the nuanced effects of psychological and social factors on consumer-brand relationships.

Keywords: Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, Role of Self-Esteem and Social Influences

Introduction

Locations can build brand love by generating experiences that are both memorable and unique, and that elicit strong emotional responses from visitors. This can result in increased rates of customers returning to the destination, positive word-of-mouth, and resilient loyalty among tourists (Aro et al. 2018). (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010) emotional connection is strengthened when there is trust in the trustworthiness and integrity of the brand, while when there are hedonic benefits, sentiments of love for the brand are enhanced.

Consumers who love a brand are more likely to exhibit repeated purchase behavior and to resist switching to competitors. This greater brand loyalty is a direct result of the love that people have for a brand. Consumers who love a brand are more forgiving of occasional faults or negative characteristics, and they continue to keep their loyalty and commitment despite minor challenges (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010).

Love for a brand is the second factor that contributes to favorable word-of-mouth. When a customer loves a luxury brand, there is a greater chance that they will tell their friends and family about their positive experiences with the brand and act as brand ambassadors. These individuals are motivated to advocate for the brand because of the profound emotional connection they have with it and the satisfaction it offers them. A person's love for a brand also makes them more resistant to information that is unfavorable as well. Strong brand love consumers are more tolerant of minor flaws or negative experiences, and they continue to remain with the brand in spite of intermittent problems. The origins of this resilience include the strong emotional commitment to the brand as well as the favorable general opinion of the brand.

Through the course of the past several years, the idea of "love for the brand" has emerged

as an essential component in the formation of brand loyalty. According to Albert and Merunka (2013), this idea has the potential to influence both the emotional attachment that consumers have to companies and their intention to remain loyal to such brands over the long term. Love for a brand can transform into loyalty to that brand through mechanisms that are not fully understood, particularly when moderating elements such as self-esteem and environmental influences are present. According to Liu et al. (2012), the effects of self-esteem and social factors have not been investigated, despite the fact that earlier research has established a connection between brand love and brand loyalty. It is required to perform an in-depth inquiry into the ways in which these moderating variables can either increase or hamper the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. This is because there is a gap in understanding, which is why it is necessary to conduct this investigation.

The findings of Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) indicate that social effects have a substantial impact on the behavioral patterns of consumers as well as their opinions of brands. A few examples of these impacts are social norms and the influence of peers. Social effects play a significant moderating role in the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, despite the fact that very little is known about this specific aspect of the relationship. These social variables have the potential to either raise or lessen the effect that brand love has on loyalty, depending on the social situation and the dynamics of the group. Positive social reinforcement, for instance, may promote brand loyalty among consumers who care deeply about a particular brand, whereas negative social pressure may have the opposite effect and reduce this relationship. This study intends to address the knowledge gap and make suggestions for enhancing brand management strategies by investigating the ways in which social influences and brand love combine to impact brand loyalty. Specifically, the ways in which these two factors interact are examined.

- How do self-esteem and social influence moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty?
- In what ways do social to normative influence affect the mediation role of brand love in the consumer-brand relationship?

· What is the impact of brand love on brand loyalty, considering the moderating effects of self-esteem and social influences?

Literature Survey

Specifically, (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006), who identified brand love as a key predictor of brand loyalty, were the ones who brought this concept to widespread attention. The characteristics that define brand love include characteristics such as passion-driven behaviors, self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, and expected separation distress (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012).

The development of brand love is influenced by a number of factors, including the personality of the brand, the level of customer happiness, and the trust that consumers have in the brand (Japutra, Ekinci, and Simkin 2014).

Narang (2016) concluded the complex dynamics of consumer attitudes of Chinese products and stresses the need of marketers considering these factors when targeting customers. Alnawas & Altarifi (2016) found that brand identification and brand-lifestyle generates a powerful emotional experience with hotel brands and cultivates attachment and passion for that brand. On the other hand, these intense sentiments of emotion serve as a significant foundation around which hotel brand loyalty is built.

Bandyopadhyay (2016) concluded that the research underscores the need of considering psychological and social factors when studying impulsive buying. It also provides valuable information for creating focused marketing tactics to mitigate these effects.

Salem (2019) concluded that social internet marketing has a significant influence on the level of brand love that consumers have for brands. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that social media has a positive and indirect influence on the various stages of brand loyalty through the medium of brand love. The findings of this study lend credence to the idea that social media plays an essential part in marketing and advertising, which will be of great assistance to online marketers in completely realizing the love and loyalty towards their brands.

Davis et. al, (2020) concluded that marketers can gain useful insights into how to capitalize on brand love and grasp the role that individual and social elements play in the process of cultivating brand loyalty. Kumar and Kumar (2020) found that the brand community management must focus on trust, dedication, and engaging activities to maintain and increase customer involvement. Brand managers can use the study's findings to build successful brand communities.

Smith et. al, (2021) research makes a significant contribution to the understanding of emotional branding and provides insights that can be utilized by marketers in the development of strategies that capitalize on brand love while taking into consideration both individual and social variables. There is a positive and significant influence of brand love, brand trust, and brand image on brand loyalty. This research lends credence to the findings of other studies, which found that brand loyalty is positively influenced by factors such as brand image, brand love, and brand trust through the analysis of the data (Astuti, 2023).

Asiyah & Irfayanti (2024) found that the brand love has a direct influence on both brand loyalty and brand trust, however brand trust does not have any direct influence on brand loyalty. Furthermore, the relationship between liking a brand and remaining loyal to that brand cannot be mediated by trust in the brand. After conducting this study, the researchers came to the conclusion that there is no correlation between trust in a brand and loyalty to that brand. This suggests that even if a brand has a high level of trust, it is not feasible to develop brand loyalty if it is not accompanied by the capacity to purchase the brand. The second discovery is that a high level of affection for a brand will result in the development of brand loyalty to that brand.

Widiyantoro & Kuswati (2024) The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that brand love can potentially operate as a mediator between the influence of brand experience and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the field of brand loyalty by providing insights into brand love, brand satisfaction, and brand experience. Prihatiningrum and Khadafi (2024) concluded a favorable word-of-mouth marketing strategy can be influenced by a number of aspects, including self-congruity, brand love, brand loyalty, and

brand experience.

There is a lot of research on brand love and how it affects brand loyalty, but there are still some gaps. For example, there isn't much research on how self-esteem and social factors affect brand love. Studies that have already been done mostly look at the straight link between loving a brand and being loyal to it, without considering how personal factors like self-esteem might affect this link. For example, it is known that high self- esteem can make people more confident and loyal to a brand, but not much is known about how high self-esteem affects the link between love and loyalty to a brand (Huang, 2017). In addition, social factors like peer pressure, social norms, and internet word-of- mouth play a big role in how people act. But it's still not clear how much these social factors affect the link between loving a brand and being loyal to it. Literature on the subject often sees social influence as a direct cause of brand loyalty or doesn't even consider its ability to moderate it (Wang et al., 2018).

There is also a big gap in how well we understand these processes in different cultural settings. There aren't many cross-cultural studies, even though cultural differences can have a big effect on how self-esteem and social factors affect consumer behavior. Getting these gaps filled could help us get a better picture of how brand love turns into brand loyalty, taking into account how complexly personal self-esteem and social factors interact.

Research Methods

The descriptive and causal comparative research design has been utilized for this research paper. In a similar vein, an analytical research design is utilized to investigate the connection between the variables that are being investigated. The study population includes all residents of Bharatpur Metropolitan City in Chitwan, Nepal. To achieve study objectives, a questionnaire survey has been used, 218 respondents were taken as a sample by using convenience sampling method. This research has been based on the primary source of data. To support research goals, respondents' agreeableness was measured using the Likert Scale Method. Using a five-point Likert scale, respondents answered banking service questions from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The study variable that was carried out for the purpose of this research project is incorporated into the conceptual framework.

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

Moderating Variables
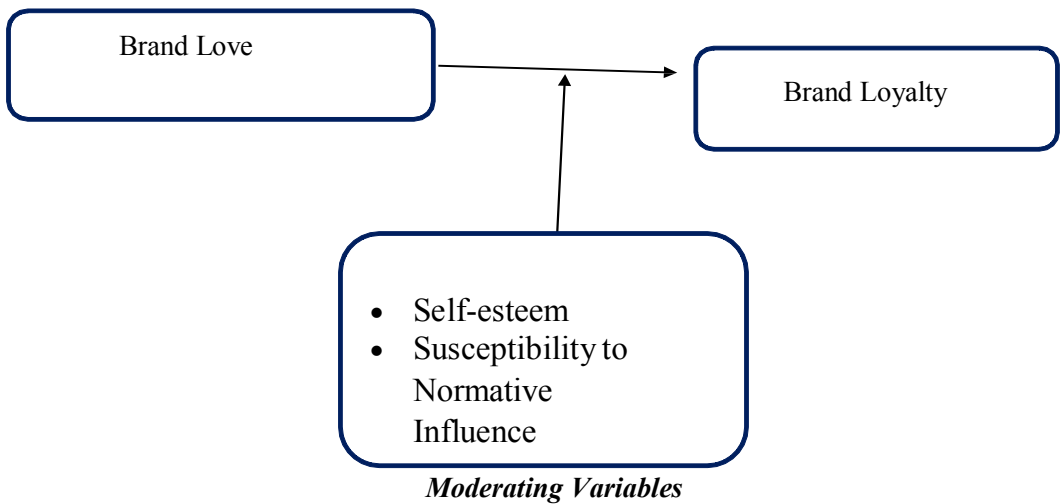
(Source: Le,M.T. 2021)

Results and Discussions

Table 1 Correlation Analysis

Particulars		Brand Loyalty	Brand love	Self-esteem	SI
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.146[*]	-0.058	0.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.031	0.394	0.056
Brand love	Pearson Correlation	.146[*]	1	.550[**]	.313[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.031		0.000	0.000
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	-0.058	.550[**]	1	.190[**]

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.394	0.000		0.005
SI	Pearson Correlation	0.130	.313**	.190**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.056	0.000	0.005	
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Table 1 presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the relationships between Brand Loyalty (the dependent variable) and three independent and moderating variables: Brand Love, Self-Esteem, and Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI).

Brand Loyalty and Brand Love: The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Loyalty and Brand Love is 0.146 with a significance level of 0.031. This indicates a positive but weak relationship between the two variables, meaning that as Brand Love increases, Brand Loyalty tends to increase slightly. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that Brand Love has a modest yet significant influence on Brand Loyalty.

Brand Loyalty and Self-Esteem: The correlation between Brand Loyalty and Self- Esteem is -0.058 with a p-value of 0.394. This negative correlation is weak and not statistically significant, indicating that there is no meaningful relationship between Self-Esteem and Brand Loyalty in this sample. Changes in Self-Esteem do not appear to influence Brand Loyalty significantly.

Brand Loyalty and Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI): The correlation between Brand Loyalty and SI is 0.130 with a p-value of 0.056. This positive correlation is also weak and is just above the threshold of statistical significance ($p = 0.05$). Although the relationship is not statistically significant at the conventional level, it suggests that individuals who are more susceptible to normative influence may exhibit slightly higher brand loyalty.

Regression Analysis

A statistical method for determining the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables is regression analysis. It aids in the prediction or explanation of variations by estimating the impact of changes in independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings include measures such as R-square to evaluate the model's explanatory power and coefficients that show the direction and strength of relationships. Regression is a popular tool for trend analysis and decision-making in disciplines like economics, finance, and social sciences.

$Y = a + â1X1 + â2X2 + â3X3 + €$

$BLY = a + â1*BLV + â2*SE + â3*SI + €$ Where,

BLY = Brand Loyalty

BLV = Brand Love

SE = Self-esteem

SI = Susceptibility to Normative Influence

a = Constant

€ = Error

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.239[a]	0.057	0.044	0.9139
a. Predictors: (Constant), SI, Self-esteem, Brand love				

Table 2 provides the model summary for a regression analysis predicting Brand Loyalty (BL) using Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI), Self-Esteem, and Brand Love as predictors. The R value of 0.239 indicates a weak to moderate positive correlation between the predictors and Brand Loyalty. The R Square value of 0.057 shows that only 5.7% of the variance in Brand Loyalty is explained by these predictors combined.

Table 3 ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.815	3	3.605	4.317	.006^b
	Residual	178.726	214	0.835		
	Total	189.541	217			
a. Dependent Variable: BL					
b. Predictors: (Constant), SI, Self-esteem, Brand love					

Table 3 displays the ANOVA results for the regression model predicting Brand Loyalty (BL) using Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI), Self-Esteem, and Brand Love as predictors. The Regression Sum of Squares is 10.815, reflecting the variation in Brand Loyalty explained by the three predictors. The Residual Sum of Squares is 178.726, indicating the variation not explained by the model. The Mean Square for the regression is 3.605, and for the residual, it is 0.835. The F-value is 4.317 with a significance level of 0.006, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant.

Table 4 Coefficients for the Regression Model

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.145	0.386		8.154	0.000
	Brand love	0.260	0.095	0.226	2.745	0.007
	Self-esteem	-0.179	0.071	-0.200	-2.522	0.012
	SI	0.093	0.067	0.097	1.388	0.167
a. Dependent Variable: BL						

Table 4 presents the coefficients for the regression model where Brand Loyalty (BL) is predicted by Brand Love, Self-Esteem, and Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI).

Brand Love: The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.226. The t-value is 2.745 with a significance level of 0.007, indicating that Brand Love has a statistically significant positive impact on Brand Loyalty.

Self-Esteem: The standardized coefficient (Beta) is -0.200. The t-value is -2.522 with a significance level of 0.012, showing that Self-Esteem has a significant negative effect on Brand Loyalty.

SI: The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.097. The t-value is 1.388 with a significance level of 0.167, indicating that SI does not have a statistically significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

Findings and Conclusion

The correlation analysis shows Brand Love has a significant positive relationship with Brand Loyalty, suggesting that emotional attachment to a brand can enhance loyalty. However, the relationship is weak, implying that other factors may also play a role in determining brand loyalty. Susceptibility to Normative Influence (SI) shows a weak, positive correlation with Brand Loyalty, hinting at a potential influence, though the relationship is not statistically significant. Self-Esteem does not appear to have a significant impact on Brand Loyalty.

The regression results reveal that Brand Love significantly positively influences Brand Loyalty, while Self-Esteem significantly negatively impacts it. SI, however, does not have a significant effect on Brand Loyalty. This indicates that among the predictors, Brand Love and Self-Esteem are important factors influencing Brand Loyalty, whereas SI does not contribute significantly to the model.

Bandyopadhyay's (2016) study delves into the interplay between self-esteem, negative affect, normative influence, and impulsive buying, emphasizing the psychological and social factors driving consumer behavior. The findings reveal that lower self-esteem and negative emotions strongly correlate with increased impulsive buying. This is consistent with the current study's observation

that self-esteem negatively impacts brand loyalty, suggesting that individuals with lower self-esteem might engage more deeply in impulsive behaviors, including brand-related impulsive purchases. The current study's finding that normative influence does not significantly affect brand loyalty contrasts with Bandyopadhyay's results, where normative influence moderates the relationship between negative affect and impulsive buying. This discrepancy might arise due to differences in how normative influence is operationalized or varying levels of social pressure in the contexts studied. Bandyopadhyay's emphasis on negative emotions triggering impulsive buying aligns with the current study's recognition of emotional factors in consumer behavior, suggesting a broader trend of emotional states influencing various consumer behaviors, including brand loyalty. Overall, both studies highlight the critical role of psychological factors in shaping consumer actions, although specific mechanisms and impacts may differ based on context and operational definitions.

Le's (2021) study explored the impact of social characteristics and self-esteem on the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. The findings suggest that brand love has a direct positive effect on brand loyalty, with self-esteem moderating this relationship. This aligns with the current study's findings that brand love positively influences brand loyalty and that self-esteem negatively affects it. However, the current study finds a weak correlation between self-esteem and brand loyalty, suggesting that self-esteem's moderating role might be less pronounced than indicated by Le's research. This inconsistency could stem from differing sample demographics or cultural contexts affecting self-esteem's role in brand loyalty.

Astuti (2023) research highlights the positive impact of brand love, brand trust, and brand image on brand loyalty, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results are consistent with the current study, which also finds that brand love significantly influences brand loyalty. However, the current study did not find brand trust to be a significant mediator, contrasting with Astuti's findings. This discrepancy may arise from differences in the operationalization of brand trust or variations in the industry and consumer base studied.

Asiyah & Irfayanti (2023) study found that brand love directly impacts brand loyalty but

not through brand trust. This is consistent with the current study's finding that brand love significantly influences brand loyalty. However, the current study indicates that self-esteem negatively impacts brand loyalty, while Asiyah & Irfayanti did not find this relationship. This inconsistency might result from differences in sampling or the type of products studied, as brand trust's role could vary by industry.

Widiyantoro & Kuswati (2024) research suggests that brand love mediates the relationship between brand experience, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. This is consistent with the current study's finding that brand love positively influences brand loyalty. The current study's focus on brand love as a key predictor aligns with these results, though it found that self-esteem negatively affects brand loyalty, contrary to the findings of the other studies. This inconsistency might reflect different conceptualizations of brand satisfaction and experience across studies.

The study on "The Impact of Brand Love on Brand Loyalty: The Moderating Role of Self-Esteem and Social Influences" offers valuable insights into how brand love, self-esteem, and susceptibility to normative influence (SI) interact to affect brand loyalty. The findings highlight the complex interplay between these variables and provide a nuanced understanding of consumer-brand relationships.

The study aimed to explore how self-esteem and susceptibility to normative influence moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. The findings reveal that brand love has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, indicating that a strong emotional connection with a brand enhances consumer loyalty. However, self-esteem was found to negatively impact this relationship, suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem may exhibit weaker loyalty even if they love the brand. Susceptibility to normative influence, on the other hand, did not show a significant effect on brand loyalty. This suggests that while social factors might play a role in brand choices, they do not significantly moderate the relationship between brand love and loyalty in the context of this study.

The study sought to model the mediation role of brand love and assess how self-esteem

and susceptibility to normative influence impact the consumer-brand relationship. The results indicate that brand love mediates the relationship between emotional attachment and brand loyalty effectively. Although self-esteem and susceptibility to normative influence were considered as influencing factors, only self-esteem showed a significant moderating effect. Higher self-esteem weakened the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, suggesting that the emotional attachment to a brand is less likely to translate into loyalty among individuals with higher self-esteem. Susceptibility to normative influence did not mediate this relationship, implying that social pressures may have less impact on how brand love translates into loyalty.

The third objective focused on understanding the impact of brand love on brand loyalty while examining the moderating effects of self-esteem and social influences. The study concludes that brand love significantly drives brand loyalty, reinforcing the idea that emotional attachment is crucial for fostering consumer loyalty. However, the impact of self-esteem on this relationship is complex; higher self-esteem appears to diminish the effectiveness of brand love in enhancing loyalty. In contrast, social influences, as measured by susceptibility to normative pressure, do not significantly affect brand loyalty in this study. This highlights that while brand love is a critical factor for loyalty, individual psychological traits like self-esteem play a more substantial role than social pressures.

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Authors' Contribution

1st Author Contribution: The first author was primarily responsible for the conceptualization and overall framework of the study. This involved identifying the research problem, establishing the theoretical foundation, and defining the objectives and scope of the research.

2nd Author Contribution: The second author's role was essential in critically reviewing

and analyzing the final manuscript. The author's feedback and recommendations were invaluable in refining the final draft and ensuring that the manuscript was of the highest quality before submission for publication.

Compliance with ethical standards

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