

Brand Anthropomorphism: A trigger to achieve Brand Fidelity

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Abstract

There has recently been a surge of research on novel evolving antecedents and outcomes in the consumer brand relationship literature. The purpose of this research is to combine the growing concepts of brand anthropomorphism and brand fidelity with the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in order to gain a better understanding of brand anthropomorphism and brand fidelity. The information was gathered from a survey of university students in the National Capital Region of Delhi, India. PLS SEM is used to empirically test the research model. Findings of the study shows, that the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumer brand relationships are based on emotional factors (brand love) rather than behavioral factors (brand loyalty) which are further discovered to have a major influence on brand fidelity. The study adds to the body of knowledge on consumer brand relationships by advocating for the role of brand anthropomorphism in creating brand fidelity.

Keywords - Brand Anthropomorphism, Brand love, Brand fidelity, Consumer Brand Relation

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I. Introduction

Anthropomorphism is the tendency of the individual to perceive non-human objects as human entities (Guthrie, 1993). According to various studies, people anthropomorphize not only objects and pets (Chartrand, Fitzsimons, and Fitzsimons, 2008), but also nonhuman supernatural entities (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007).

The propensity of anthropomorphism with respect to branded products was researched by Kim & McGill (2011) and Aggarwal & McGill (2012), which piques interest in the concept of brand anthropomorphism. The concept of brand anthropomorphism is an emotional concept, and researchers like Delbaere et al. (2011) found that when products are presented in an anthropomorphic fashion, branded products generate more intense mark personality traits in the minds of consumers. Landwehr et al. (2011) have shown that consumers tend to use anthropomorphic properties, like elements of human design, to assign qualities such as friendliness and aggressiveness to branded products. Aggarwal & McGill (2012) found that anthropomorphized brands triggered people's goals for successful social interaction, which led to behaviour that was assimilative or contradictory to the brand's image. Tukej & Podnar (2018) recognised brand anthropomorphism as a cognitive process and found it can influence consumer-brand identification positively. Existing research shows the positive effects of anthropomorphism on consumer perception and judgement (Kim & McGill, 2011; Landwehr et al., 2011; Aggarwal & McGill, 2012; Gelbrich et al., 2012; Hart et al., 2013). According to recent research, brand anthropomorphism leads to higher brand attachment (Jianfeng Ma et al. 2021) and increases marketers' attention. All this research indicates that brand anthropomorphism impacted the relationship in a way that both the partners benefited. Consumers develop a relationship with the brand when they think of them as partners emotionally and act in a positive way behaviorally.

For businesses, consumer behaviour has proven extremely important. Businesses focus on satisfying client needs by offering products and services, but they also closely monitor how customers behave when it comes to their own and rival brands of goods. The components of consumer behaviour are substantial, but firms must focus on their focus on the loyalty of their customers (Fournier & Yao, 1997). Businesses strive to develop enduring consumer loyalty. They constantly strive for devoted customers. This is why marketers have focused on building brand equity since the beginning of marketing activity. As a result, the main constructions in brand management were brand commitment, brand loyalty, brand personality, etc. With the development of brand research, brands are now assessed from an emotional and psychological standpoint. The "connection element" further illustrates the brand's identity as one who exudes feelings, emotion, and a sense of belonging. Therefore, it has become crucial for businesses to manage customer brand loyalty. Brand faithfulness arises as a result of customer loyalty (Faridi & Naushad, 2021). Also, brand fidelity is a type of consumer behaviour that develops over time as a result of a consumer's persistent use of a certain brand, product, or service (Grace et al, 2018). Companies benefit from this positive attitude toward a product or service because they become positive brand

champions and help generate positive word of mouth about the company. Consumers who acquire brand fidelity are more likely to forgive variations in price or performance. Companies must have brand fidelity management in place to ensure that consumers remain loyal to the company. Brand fidelity, a factor recently evolved and validated in research work by Grace (2018), is the outcome of positive relationships. Brand fidelity is regarded as the pinnacle of consumer loyalty. This variable has not been examined in relation to brand anthropomorphism. Therefore, in the present research, we expect the dimension of brand anthropomorphism to have a positive emotional and behavioural relationship between the consumer and the brand and can act as a trigger to achieve brand fidelity.

To analyse the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumer brand relationships and brand fidelity, smart phones were chosen by the researchers, as today, mobile phones have become an integral part of our lives. The report 2021 by Mordor intelligence consultancy, projects that the global smartphone market will expand by 4% over the course of the projection period (2022-2027). The smartphone market is expanding in Asian nations due to elements like rising disposable income, expanding telecom infrastructure, the advent of smartphones focused on affordability, and an increase in product launches. The smartphone market has been continuously expanding in terms of both models and market size. Globally, it is anticipated that 40% of people would own a smartphone by 2021. The number of smartphone subscriptions worldwide now exceeds six billion, and Ericsson predicts that over the next several years, that figure will increase by several hundred million more. The nations like China, India, and the United States are among the largest user of smart phones. Further, according to a report published by Shangliao Sun (2021), smartphone users in India were estimated to reach over 748 million in 2020, and it is forecasted that worldwide smartphone users will increase by 1.5 billion by 2040.

Smartphones are powerful, internet-enabled devices with user-friendly interfaces and advanced operating systems, which give users several features, such as downloadable applications, event calendars, digital cameras, GPS navigation, and media players (Wang et al., 2014). These uses and features must be considered when examining how smartphones impact user psychology and behavior. Smartphones today act as tools for communication, devices for entertainment, sources of information, and even personal assistants. This evolution in the nature of communication devices has also impacted the nature of users' relationships with their phones. Those users feel attached to smartphones due to the several uses they offer, which is a probability that may be strongly considered.

Research suggests that two components characterise the phone-user relationship – the ability to personalise the phone and the capability of the phone to act as a tool to store personal memories and reflect "the self" aspect (Meschtscherjakov, 2009; Tian et al., 2009; Venta et al., 2008).

We chose smartphones because these devices are highly conspicuous and used across situations and consumer segments. Further, given the nature of the product, it is logical to assume that most consumers evaluate different brands of smartphones before making a purchase decision. Thus, the study seeks to determine the significance of brand anthropomorphism in building consumer-brand relationships to achieve brand fidelity.

Considering the research gap, literature review was done for the concept of brand anthropomorphism and consumer brand relationship. The different elements of this relationship were studied to develop the conceptual framework which can bridge the above said gap.

II. Theoretical framework and conceptual development

2.1 Anthropomorphism and Brand Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism is the phenomenon of perceiving non-human objects as human entities by the individual (Guthrie, 1993). Previous research has shown that people anthropomorphized non-human supernatural entities as well as objects and pets (Chartrand, Fitzsimons, & Fitzsimons, 2008; Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). Therefore, anthropomorphism is a comparatively invariant and automatic psychological process that enables the perception of nonhuman forms as human by ascribing humanlike features, intentions, and behaviour (Guthrie, 1993; Epley et al., 2007; Waytz et al., 2010).

An object is more likely to be anthropomorphised if it has traits similar to humans. The tendency to anthropomorphize varies with the individual and broadly depends upon the individual's knowledge, the situation in which they are in, and their own motivation while doing evaluation (Epley et al., 2007). Waytz, Cacioppo & Epley (2010) extended the tendency of anthropomorphism to include not just behaviour characteristics of non-human objects but also the human brain, which can convince and influence people to a larger extent. Labroo, Dhar & Schwarz (2008) proposed that merchandising with an anthropomorphic appearance increases the attraction of the potential consumer towards the product.

Brand anthropomorphism refers to the perception of a brand as a person (Aaker, 1997). It is defined as "brands viewed by consumers as actual human beings with a range of emotional states, minds, souls, and conscious activities that can function as significant members of social ties" (Puzakova et al., 2009, p. 413). Researchers like Aggarwal & McGill (2012), Puzakova & Aggarwal (2018) and Tukej & Podnar (2018) suggest that brand anthropomorphism influences the consumer positively towards the brand. We can ask questions like,

is this brand anthropomorphism acting as a trigger to build long-term consumer brand relationships and achieve brand fidelity?

2.2 Consumer Brand Relationship

The consumer-brand relationship refers to the interaction between consumers' attitudes toward brands and brands' attitudes toward customers (Coelho et al., 2018). Prior studies on consumer brand relationships divide this relationship into two categories: one is emotional and the other is behavioural (Clark and Mills, 2011). Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014 concluded that anthropomorphism enhances love and Aggarwal (2004) also points out that the interaction between customers and brands can be explored only by personifying the brand relationship, so we can expect that brand anthropomorphism may trigger both emotional relationship and behavioural relationship in terms of brand love and brand loyalty, respectively.

2.3 Brand love and Brand Loyalty

Indeed, brand love indicates the emotional connection of customers to a particular brand. Talk of emotional links and connection sounds more normal than love for a company. While brand love is widely accepted as an attachment dimension, it was once considered a distinct term (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Brand love is a fairly new term in academic discussions that demonstrates the growing relationships between consumers and brands. Brand love and brand hate (e.g., Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016) are fairly modern concepts and represent the growing connections between customers and brands. Research shows that loyalty predicts brand love better than traditional models correlated with perceived brand quality (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014).

It has been established that emotional bonds between consumers and brands improve customer relationships in the long term (as discussed by Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Marking also has a significant effect on customer loyalty (Kaufmann et al., 2016), and customers who like marking are more dedicated to repurchasing the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Ahuvia et al. (2022), consumers love brands that are important to them and feel a sense of accountability for the brand's success. Also, as an outcome of brand love (Hegner et al., 2017), forgiveness in essence reinforces positive consumer/brand maintenance behaviours (i.e. accommodation and willingness to sacrifice). Brand love, according to Raham et al. (2021), can lead to the essential outcome of willingness to forgive faults.

On the other hand, satisfied consumers who love a certain brand exhibit a greater willingness to disseminate positively (e.g., Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Wallace et al., 2014). If consumer brand experiences continually remain positive, then consumers' emotional association with the brand (brand commitment, passionate brand love) drives their desire to forge and reinforce a long-term association with the brand. Brand loyalty initiates the procedures through recurring consumer experiences with brand touch points as an outcome of continuing buying and patronage. This may beget willingness to forgive (Bauer et al., 2009), enhance willingness to pay premium prices (Albert & Merunka, 2013), produce brand loyalty and encourage revisits. Therefore, the argument can be put as,

H1: Brand Anthropomorphism positively influences Brand Love

H2: Brand anthropomorphism positively influences Brand Loyalty

H3: Brand love positively influences Brand Loyalty

2.4 Brand Fidelity

According to Grace et al. (2018), brand fidelity refers to a consumer's commitment to a brand partner as evidenced by a collection of behaviours (i.e. accommodation and forgiveness – performance and price) and cognitions (i.e. denial of alternatives and cognitive interdependence) that help to keep the relationship stable and long-lasting. The present study considers performance forgiveness and price forgiveness as brand fidelity constructs.

Brand fidelity is a social process for society, hence the idea that it operates independently is refuted (Faridi & Naushad, 2021). With respect to brand fidelity behaviours, Grace et al. (2018) define the following two dimensions: 1) accommodation/forgiveness – indicates how much one is willing to forgive and support a brand partner when there are price/performance differences;

2) Willingness to sacrifice – means the extent to which one is ready to continue one's association with the brand partner.

Willingness to sacrifice appears to share an association with accommodation and forgiveness. However, willingness to sacrifice items does not form a separate dimension, but rather displays cross-loading or high correlation with accommodation and forgiveness dimensions. Grace et al. (2018) asserted that if consumers displayed the willingness to accommodate or forgive the brand in the presence of variation in price or performance, then, by so doing, they were more likely to make a kind of sacrifice (e.g., financial, convenience, social, or other). Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes the argument as

H4: Brand Love positively influences Brand Fidelity

H 5: Brand Loyalty positively influences Brand Fidelity

2.5 Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Fidelity

Anthropomorphism is important in generating positive attitudes and behaviour in consumers and can thus serve as a catalyst for developing strong consumer brand relationships (Gupta & Jain, 2019). Strong relationships are always willing to sacrifice, and Grace et al (2018) propounded that if consumers exhibit the willingness to sacrifice, then they accommodate variations which are either in performance or in price.

In the framework of experiential consumerism, brand love is a principle that emerges. Literature makes it easier to choose brand love as a mediator between brand anthropomorphism and brand loyalty as well as brand fidelity. Huang (2017), who investigated the brand love of mobile phone customers in Taiwan, found that brand love is a powerful mediator between emotion and loyalty. Brand love is an appropriate mediator in this study because of the high-order structure that includes emotions (Wijikoon & Fernando, 2020).

The argument can be put forth while keeping both emotional and behavioural relationships in mind and it is hypothesized as

H 6: Brand Love mediates the relationship between Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Fidelity

H 7: Brand Loyalty mediates the relationship between Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Fidelity

H 8: Brand Love and Brand Loyalty mediates the relationship between Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Fidelity

The proposed conceptual model for this study is as follows...

Figure I: model of study

III. Method

3.1 Data collection

The data for the proposed variables were collected through virtual survey among the university students between the age of 18 & 23 years and mandatorily the owner of smart phones, based at Delhi NCR. The student sample is more homogeneous, having similar demographic and psychographic characteristics (Sharma et al, 2021). Furthermore, Eastman and Liu (2012) found that university students are encouraged to use brands to increase their social standing and demonstrate high-status consumption. This explains why they have a higher level of brand engagement and brand love. This characteristic also makes these youthful customers a high-potential target demographic for marketers and brand managers (Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001). Finally, students engage in more smart phones than other generational cohorts (Vorderer et al., 2016), making them a good fit for this research.

The online mode of data collection was chosen because online data collection has several advantages, as this mode promotes honest responses from respondents and considerably reduces the biasness of social desirability (Hung & Law, 2011).

Data was collected between March, 2021 to May, 2021. After removing the incomplete responses, n=298 responses were found to be fit for further analysis. Study was dominated by graduate respondents which were 72.77 percent while postgraduate were 23.33 percent. Out of total respondents 52% are males and 48% are females.

3.2 Procedure

In the present study, to ensure equal representation of all regions of Delhi NCR, stratified sampling has been used by dividing the region into eight strata. Purposive sampling was done within the strata as permission is required from the head of the institution to use their virtual platform.

The questionnaire, which was administered via google forms, consisted of 12 questions, out of which the first two questions are informational questions that confirm the eligibility of the respondents. The next six questions were designed to gather information for the present study. Last but not least, four questions were asked related to demographic interests.

Analysis was done using PLS SEM as the questionnaire consists of reflective as well as formative scales. When formatively specified constructs are incorporated into the PLS path model, PLS-SEM is the preferable method (Hair et al. 2019).

3.3 Measures

All the items were validated in prior studies to measure the proposed variables in present study. Brand Anthropomorphism ($\alpha = 0.791$) was measured using 4 item scale adapted from Guido and Peluso (2015) and recently used by Ali et. al (2020). Brand love ($\alpha = 0.899$) was measured using 7 item scale adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and lately used by Zhang et. al (2020). Brand loyalty ($\alpha = 0.712$) was measured using 3 item

scale adapted from Yoo and Donthu (2001). Brand fidelity ($\alpha = 0.821$) was measured using 14 item scale adapted from Grace et al. (2018).

IV. Results

4.1 Common method biasness

To test CMB, Harman's single-factor method (Gunkel et al., 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2003) was used and the score of total variance explained is 32.219 which suggest that biasness will not affect the data.

4.2 Sample adequacy

To test sampling adequacy, the KMO value is found to be .913 which is more than 0.60, the recommended value (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Barlett's test of sphericity is also significant at $p < 0.05$ which indicates the data is suitable for further analysis.

4.3 Analysis of formative measurement model

Hair et al., 2019 advocates' PLS-SEM approach as a preferred approach when the structural model is consist of formative construct.

4.3.1 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is being tested using the values of variance inflation factor (VIF) in PLS-SEM. Hair et. al. (2011) and Hair et. al.(2017) in their studies prefer the VIF value to be less than 5 to be indicated towards non-collinearity and the VIF values for all the indicators in the present study lies between 1.401 and 4.617 suggesting that multicollinearity is not evident.

4.3.2 Convergent validity

To establish internal consistency, measures of convergent validity that is, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) are being analyzed.

Table I: convergent validity

The measure of internal consistency cronbach's alpha for all the constructs of the study are above 0.70 and lies between 0.801 and 0.963 which suggests the measure is acceptable. The score of composite reliability are between 0.805 to 0.962 which too are acceptable and finally as per scores of AVE all constructs have the value above the desired one that is 0.50 and lies between 0.581 (brand loyalty) and 0.785 (brand love) indicating the required accountability of variance of the indicators. This strongly ensures the internal consistency of all the constructs.

4.3.3 Discriminant Validity

Fornell – Larcker criterion was used to asses' discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE for each factor should be higher than the squared correlations between all other factors (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table II: Discriminant Validity

Measures in the table II confirm the discriminant validity of the variables used in the study.

4.3.4 Statistical Significance and relevance

As PLS-SEM is a non parametric method, 2000 bootstrap re-sampling is done to determine the statistical significance and relevance of the indicator loadings and outer weights for respective reflective and formative scales.

Table III: Outer weights and loadings for formative scale

Table III shows the results of formatively measured construct Brand fidelity by showing the outer weights of its indicators, their t values and p values which exhibit the significance. The p value of one indicator forgiveness for price is not significant even then the indicator was not dropped as it is recommended by hair et al (2017), to keep the indicator in the study, if loading of the indicator is more than 7 but p is not significant.

Table IV: outer loadings for reflective scales

Table IV shows the significant outer loadings of all the variables on the desired construct and therefore researcher conclude the measurement model to be significant and relevant. Overall, the assessment of measurement model is satisfactory.

4.4 Analysis of structural model

Structure model analysis provides evidences to the researcher to support the conceptual model of the study. For assessing the structural model, the measures of inner VIF and path coefficients' significance has to be evaluated.

4.4.1 Inner VIF

To check the collinearity among the group of variables in the study, inner VIF values were assessed. Hair et. al. (2011) and Hair et. al.(2017) in their studies recommended the VIF value to be less than 5 to infer non-collinearity among the variables.

Table V: inner VIF

Table V shows that all the values are under recommended limits and there is no issue of collinearity

4.4.2 Path Coefficient

Path coefficient represents the hypothesized relationships between the variables, and the estimates obtained (β) represents the strength of relationship

Table VI: Results of hypothesis paths

With 2000 bootstraps, a procedure was carried out and the measures of t stats, path coefficients, and p values were analysed to test the significance of direct and indirect relationships, which are hypothesised in the conceptual model. Brand Anthropomorphism has an effect on brand love, as predicted in H1, and the relationship is significant ($\beta = 0.342$ and $p = 0.0$), whereas the relationship between Brand Anthropomorphism and Brand Loyalty is not significant ($\beta = 0.081$ and $p=0.093$). As predicted in H3 ($\beta = 0.656$ and $p = 0.0$), H4 ($\beta = 0.465$ and $p = 0.0$), and H5 ($\beta = 0.412$ and $p = 0.0$), all other direct relationships are significant. The H7 relationship is not significant when analysing indirect relationships ($\beta = 0.033$ and $p = 0.116$), where we predicted that brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand anthropomorphism and brand fidelity. All other indirect relationships as predicted in H6 ($\beta = 0.158$ and $p = 0.0$) and H8 ($\beta = 0.093$ and $p = 0.0$) are statistically significant.

Figure II: Result depicted in model (indirect relationships shown in dotted lines)

V. Discussions

The findings of the study substantiate brand anthropomorphism as a trigger to build robust relationships emotionally rather than behaviorally. The empirical results of the study supported H1 hypotheses which proposed that brand anthropomorphism positively influences brand love and the study extended the research of Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014 and Batra et al., 2012 where it had been concluded that anthropomorphism enhances love, but did not support the H2 hypothesis, which proposed that brand anthropomorphism positively influences brand loyalty. This study empirically supported the H3, H4 and H5 hypotheses, which proposed brand anthropomorphism as a trigger for long-term relationships and further endorses that brand love may be seen as deep emotional brand associations (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012) and predicts brand loyalty better than conventional models linked to perceived brand quality (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014).

Hypothesis H6 and H8 proposed brand love as a mediator between brand anthropomorphism and brand fidelity, and these hypotheses are supported by the study. Brand love is an acceptable mediator in this study, which incorporates emotions, and this validated Wijikoon & Fernando's proven impact (2020). Hence researcher can conclude that being Brand anthropomorphism is an emotional concept, it has a significant emotional role in building consumer brand relationship and achieving brand fidelity but in absence of brand love as the mediator, the relationship between brand anthropomorphism and brand fidelity is not significant as H7 hypothesis is not supported in the study. So there is no doubt that Anthropomorphism plays a crucial role in generating positive attitude and positive behavior from consumers and therefore can be an initiator to build robust Consumer brand relationship (Gupta & Jain, 2019) but only when emotions are involved. The dimension of brand anthropomorphism is established in this study to have positive emotional and behavioural relationships between the consumer and the brand and can operate as a trigger to attain brand fidelity, as expected. This will increase the horizon of knowledge related to brand anthropomorphism, Consumer brand relationship and brand fidelity.

VI. Implications

The present study enlightens about the role that brand anthropomorphism plays in establishing both emotional and behavioral relationship. This study widens the mode to strengthen the consumer-brand relationship which results in brand fidelity. Results of the study provide a deeper understanding of consumer-brand relationship and examine key dimensions of consumer-brand associations. The present study provides the understanding of attitudinal behavior as an outcome of consumer-brand relationship in terms of brand fidelity which is a relatively new concept and can be applied to both products and services. Theoretically, brand fidelity is a new concept and this study will enhance the present body of knowledge.

Marketers can adopt numerous stimuli in their branding to imitate human characteristics and can try to achieve brand fidelity. A human prefix and a mascot of a person as a friend could be used as a technique. Another way to embed brand anthropomorphism in smartphones is to use testimonials or famous ambassadors, whose personalities may rub off on the brand (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Brand fidelity as an outcome of a relationship can increase business worth (both financial and behavioral).

VII. Limitations

The study was limited only to one product (smartphones). The concept of brand anthropomorphism is product-specific, and therefore, the study's findings cannot be applied to all product classes. The Delhi-NCR region is the only region covered in the study, and conclusions were generalised based on the findings of the audience residing in the stated region only. The study is confined to owners of smartphones in a specific age group (18–23). The ownership of smartphones is beyond the age group, and therefore the results cannot be generalised across all smartphone owners in the region.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire

1. Do you have smart phone?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, then continue otherwise discard here.

2. Which brand of smart phone do you have _____

3. This brand of smart phone which you own, seems to...(Rate the statement from not at all 1 to very much 5).

- a. looks like a person 1 2 3 4 5
- b. have eyes and can catch my pics. 1 2 3 4 5
- c. have a mouth to speak 1 2 3 4 5
- d. have ears to listen me 1 2 3 4 5

4. My intentions with this brand of smartphone in future are (Rate the statement from not at all 1 to very much 5).

- a. This is a wonderful brand 1 2 3 4 5
- b. This brand makes me feel good 1 2 3 4 5
- c. This brand is totally awesome 1 2 3 4 5
- d. This brand makes me very happy 1 2 3 4 5
- e. I love this brand 1 2 3 4 5
- f. This brand is a pure delight 1 2 3 4 5
- g. I'm very attached to this brand 1 2 3 4 5

5. Rate the statement from no, its not 1 to yes, it is 5, considering this brand of smart phone would be

- a. My first choice 1 2 3 4 5
- b. I consider myself to be loyal 1 2 3 4 5
- c. I will not buy any other brand if this is available 1 2 3 4 5

6. Considering your experience with the brand, rate the statement from not at all 1 to very much 5

a. If your brand of Smartphone experienced some problems and the brand was temporarily not up to scratch, how likely is it that you would continue to use this brand?

1 2 3 4 5

b. If your brand of Smartphone experienced some problems and the brand was temporarily not up to scratch, how likely is it that you would recommend this brand to others?

1 2 3 4 5

c. If your brand of Smartphone experienced some problems and the brand was temporarily not up to scratch, how likely is it that you would support the brand when others were complaining about it?

1 2 3 4 5

d. If your brand of Smartphone experienced some problems and the brand was temporarily not up to scratch, how likely is it that you would make excuses for the brand?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Considering your experience with the brand, rate the statement from not at all 1 to very much 5

a. It doesn't bother you when your Smartphone Brand increases its prices, as I will always use this brand anyway.

1 2 3 4 5

b. Regardless of what price your Smartphone Brand is, you will always strongly recommend this brand to others.

1 2 3 4 5

c. When your Smartphone Brand has had a price increase, it has been well justified.

1 2 3 4 5

- d. Your Smartphone Brand is still well worth the money even when its prices goes up. 1 2 3 4 5

- 8. After using the brand how would you like to rate the statement. (strongly disagree 1 to strongly agree 5)
- a. There is really no other brand like your Smartphone Brand 1 2 3 4 5
- b. If asked, you would be quick to point out how superior your Smartphone Brand is to its competitors 1 2 3 4 5
- c. Your Smartphone Brand is one of a kind and, in your opinion, there is no competition 1 2 3 4 5
- d. It is impossible for another other brand to compete with your Smartphone Brand 1 2 3 4 5
- e. Your Smartphone Brand is flawless. 1 2 3 4 5
- f. You would be devastated if you could not buy your Smartphone Brand anymore as nothing else will ever come near it. 1 2 3 4 5

- 9. Name:
- 10. Age:
- 11. Gender:
- 12. Occupation:

Figures:

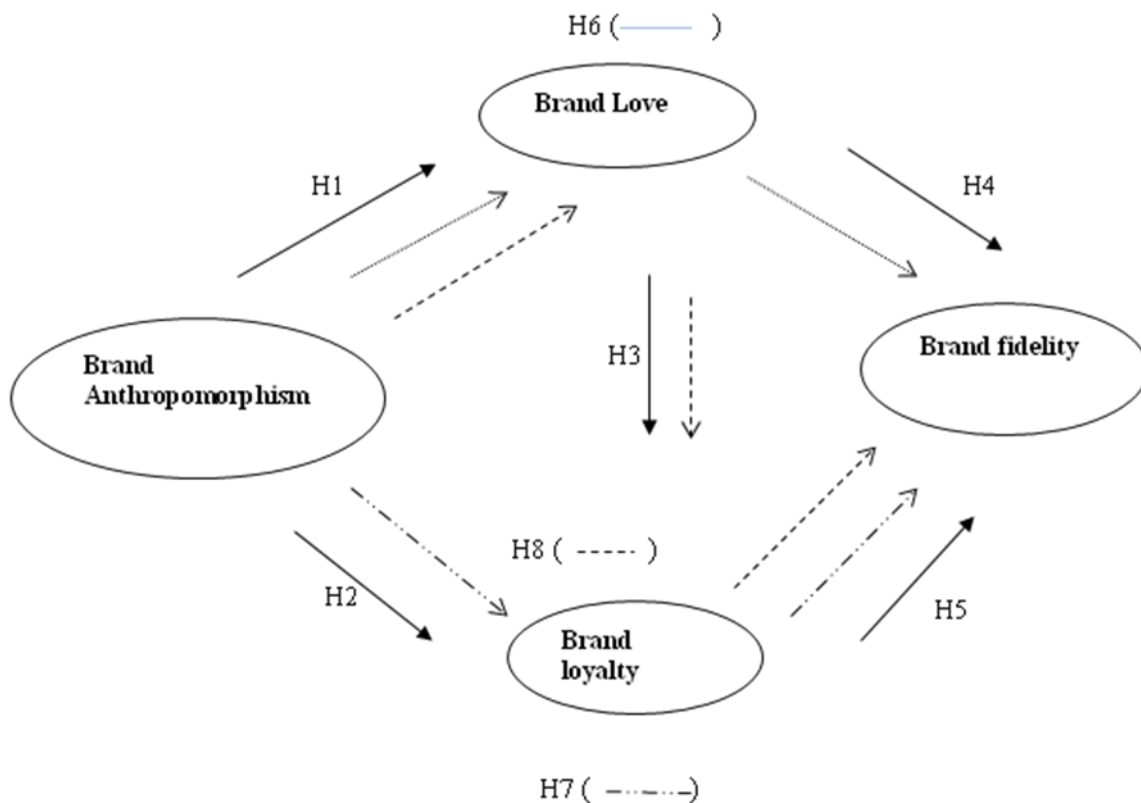


Figure I: Model of Study (indirect relationships in dotted lines)

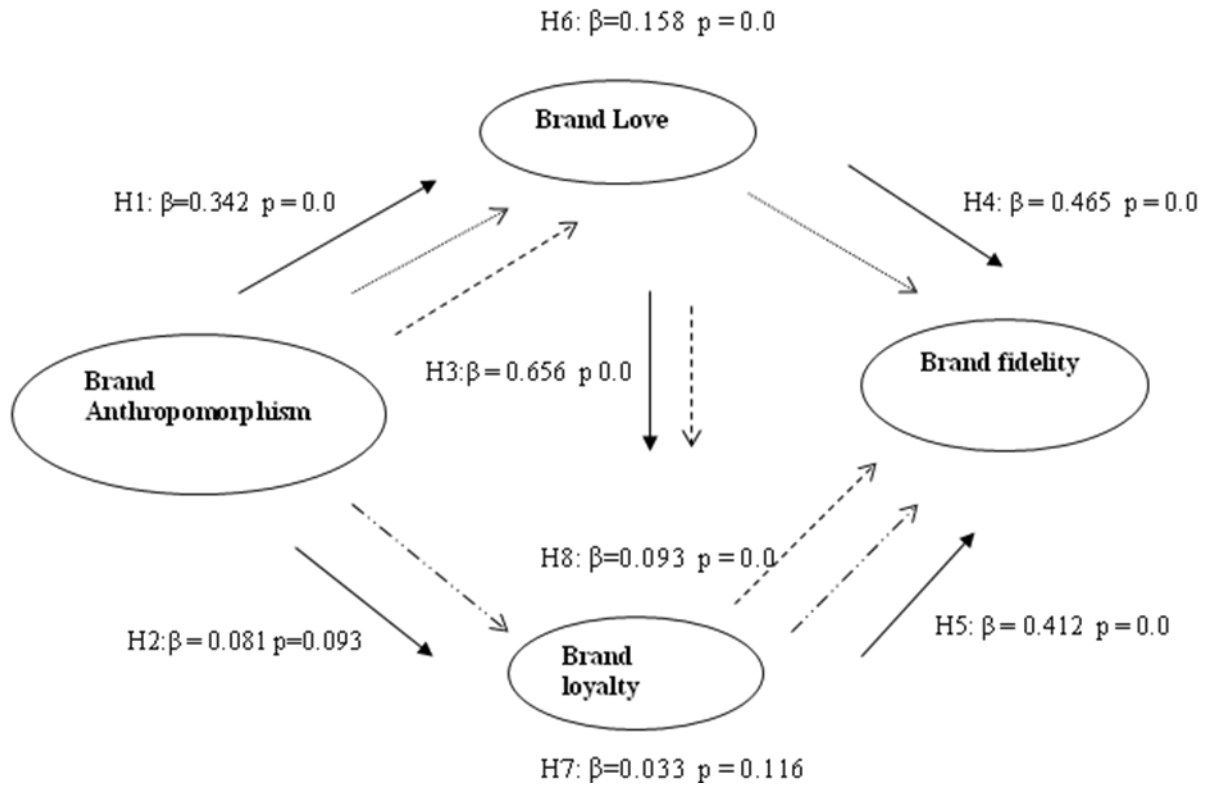


Figure II : Result of the study (indirect relationships in dotted line)

TABLES:

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BA	0.918	0.933	0.912	0.727
BF		1.000		
BL	0.963	0.964	0.962	0.785
BLY	0.801	0.813	0.805	0.581

BA Brand Anthropomorphism; BF Brand fidelity; BL Brand Love; BLY Brand Loyalty

Table I: convergent validity

	BA	BF	BL	BLY
BA	0.852			
BF	0.354	0.928		
BL	0.355	0.758	0.886	
BLY	0.348	0.762	0.769	0.804

BA Brand Anthropomorphism; BF Brand fidelity; BL Brand Love; BLY Brand Loyalty

Table II: Discriminant Validity

Formative constructs	Formative Indicators	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Loadings	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Brand fidelity	Durability and stability	0.569	0.563	0.943	0.068	8.343	0.000
	Forgiveness of performance	0.367	0.373	0.900	0.076	4.859	0.000

Forgiveness of price	0.159	0.157	0.827	0.069	2.288	0.023
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Table III: Outer weights and loadings for formative scale

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
BA1 <- BA	0.862	0.863	0.018	46.977	0.000
BA2 <- BA	0.907	0.907	0.011	82.505	0.000
BA3 <- BA	0.900	0.898	0.018	49.425	0.000
BA4 <- BA	0.913	0.913	0.013	70.143	0.000
BL1 <- BL	0.899	0.898	0.014	66.328	0.000
BL2 <- BL	0.907	0.906	0.013	67.993	0.000
BL3 <- BL	0.924	0.923	0.009	99.028	0.000
BL4 <- BL	0.887	0.887	0.016	56.737	0.000
BL5 <- BL	0.930	0.930	0.009	105.003	0.000
BL6 <- BL	0.920	0.921	0.010	88.079	0.000
BL7 <- BL	0.862	0.864	0.014	60.811	0.000
BLY1 <- BLY	0.896	0.897	0.014	66.178	0.000
BLY2 <- BLY	0.780	0.780	0.035	22.019	0.000
BLY3 <- BLY	0.858	0.860	0.016	53.069	0.000

BA Brand Anthropomorphism; BF Brand fidelity; BL Brand Love; BLY Brand Loyalty

Table IV: outer loadings for reflective scales

	BA	BF	BL	BLY
BA			1.000	1.000
BF				
BL		1.000		1.000
BLY		1.000		

BA Brand Anthropomorphism; BF Brand fidelity; BL Brand Love; BLY Brand Loyalty

Table V: inner VIF

(DIRECT)					
		Beta	t-statistic	P value	Hypothesis supported
H1	BA -> BL	0.342	5.749	0.000	YES
H2	BA -> BLY	0.081	1.681	0.093	NO
H3	BL -> BLY	0.656	14.890	0.000	YES
H4	BL -> BF	0.465	8.577	0.000	YES
H5	BLY -> BF	0.412	7.980	0.000	YES
(INDIRECT)					
H 6	BA -> BL -> BF	0.158	5.434	0.000	YES
H 7	BA -> BLY -> BF	0.033	1.573	0.116	NO
H 8	BA -> BL -> BLY -> BF	0.093	4.274	0.000	YES

BA Brand Anthropomorphism; BF Brand fidelity; BL Brand Love; BLY Brand Loyalty

Table VI: Results of hypothesis paths