IMPACT OF BRAND AMBASSADOR ON BRANDING TOWARDS THE INTEREST OF CUSTOMERS IN INDIAN RETAILS: VALIDATION OF FACTORS

Mr. Subhajit Paul

Phd Research Scholar, Department of Management, Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Agartala, India, Email address: subhajitpaul53@gmail.com

Dr. Anirban Dutta

Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Agartala, India, Email address: anirbandutta.som@gmail.com

Dr. Prosenjit Ghosh

Associate Professor, Department of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, NSHM Knowledge Campus, Durgapur, India, Email address: prosenjit.ghosh@nshm.com

Abstract: The retail industry has changed dramatically and hence the battle to recruit and maintain customers has intensified dramatically. The marketing semiotic elements features were crucial in framing the strategies in this case. The primary goal of this research is to identify and validate the characteristics connected to brand ambassadors as a component of marketing semiotics that is responsible for generating customer attention in Indian retails. The technique used in this study is descriptive in nature, and primary data was acquired from 962 valid respondents via a structured questionnaire. Following the completion of the data analysis (using Amos version 20), six factors were identified using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which are considered to be the factors responsible for generating customer interest in Indian retails and have been validated using convergent and discriminant validity. The conclusions of this study have a strong implication on how an organisation's communication strategy should be developed.

Keywords: marketing semiotics, brand ambassador, CFA, convergent validity, discriminant validity, Indian retail.

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, retail organisations have undergone significant transformations, and they now play a critical role in the economic development of any country. The market demands of numerous Retail businesses are steadily expanding. Status items (branded clothing, dogs, and cellphones) are in high demand (Mazali and Rodrigues-Neto, 2013), and according to the report of overall Indian retail growth (2018) released by IBEF (Indian Brand Equity Foundation), the market prospects for such products are significant in India. As a result, it is critical for retail management to uncover distinct variables that pique customer interest in branding tactics. We are familiar with and observe a variety of companies, including their names, logos and symbols, brand ambassadors, taglines, and other semiotic elements in various aspects. However, we are often unaware of the internal interpretations of these aspects in terms of customer interest.

Marketers are often concerned about their customers' shopping incentive. Westbrook and Black (1985) define motivation as "forces inciting behaviour to satisfy strong need levels." Motivation is an important factor in determining customer behaviour. Business firms are constantly looking for effective ways to communicate with all of their stakeholders, particularly their consumers (Arya, V., Sethi, D., and Verma, H. 2018). Market orientation is defined as reflecting market-driven behaviours from a behavioural perspective by (Singh, V., Vyas, V., and Jadon, S. S., 2017), whereas market orientation is defined as a feature of the organisation's culture reflecting market-driving characteristics from a cultural perspective by (Singh, V., Vyas, V., and Jadon, S. S., 2017). To better understand the feelings of love or interest and the brand-consumer relationship, (Ahuvia, Bagozzi, and Batra, 2007; Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004) expressed their curiosity as well as interest in brand trust, brand loyalty, and brand commitment, all of which are extremely important when it comes to brands or objects.

Semiotics research is concerned with determining what images convey and how they do so. Are there any hidden meanings within these semiotic elements? It is concerned with the many emotions, thoughts, and ideas that they express. Customers respond not only to the signs, symbols, and images themselves, but also to the diverse situations in which they are used. Effective marketing communication can be used to portray diverse items or organisations in a researched approach in order to make an impact. If a symbol or picture has failed to deliver a message for one brand, it does not indicate that the same brand or organisation will not develop a new strategy, which might result in the second endeavour succeeding spectacularly for the organisation. As a result, the organisation is eager to establish a brand through marketing semiotics. We solely looked at brand ambassadors as marketing semiotic elements in this study.

This study, as a result, aids in the recognition / identification and validation of various factors that generate customer interest in Indian retail organisations through the use of brand ambassadors as a marketing semiotic element, which will fundamentally alter the way retail organisations formulate strategy to persuade customers of the superiority of the brand. The result of this study will provide ideas to the organisation's management to assist them build a good communication strategy. This study also shows that customer-organisation bonding does not always require financial aid; rather, marketing semiotic elements play an important role in understanding customer psychology and fostering customers' enthusiasm towards a particular product or brand.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

2.1. Retail Organisations

India's economy is fast expanding. India's GDP growth has a lot of room to grow much more (Prahalad, 2007). The huge expansion in India's GDP, as well as increased income and purchasing power, is driving the consumerism phenomena. According to Halepete and Iyer (2008), the rapid growth of shopping malls, the urbanization of the population, the arrival and introduction of a new generation of brand-conscious consumers, and other western influences are all causing changes in the Indian retail industry. Psychographic changes and favourable demographics linked to the Indian consumer class, brand communication, foreign exposure, wider availability of items, and

availability of excellent retail space are some of the drivers propelling Indian retails (IMAGES, 2009).

Because of its stability and awareness of diverse brands, greater availability of retail space, and international shopping experiences, several international businesses have joined the Indian market with creative methods during the previous three decades. Purchasing power and household income have gradually increased as well. To secure the growth of retail businesses in such circumstances, their supply chains must be proactive and adaptable (Ramesh et al., 2008).

2.2. Brand Love

Shimp and Madden (1988) were the first to bring the sensation of love for marketing, adapting the Interpersonal theory of love to the context of marketing. The Triangular theory of love was introduced by (Sternberg, R.J., 1986), in which three main love aspects, namely passion, closeness, and commitment/decision, were somewhat adjusted in the context of consumption. (Ahuvia 1993) suggested a conditional integration theory to describe how people feel about objects. "Love then can be described as the scenario in which both the desired and actual level of integration are high," (Ahuvia 1993, p. 87) adds. Later on, (Ahuvia 2005b) relates feelings of love for anything to feelings of love for other people.

Researchers who work with the formulation of brand strategies have acknowledged the significance of brand communication in sustaining and building brand equity, the value attached to any brand name or logo that transcends the characteristics of any product and distinguishes the brands in the competitive arena (Sherry 1987, Umiker-Sebeok 1987, Aaker 1991, 1995; Schmidt 1995, Floch 2005, Holt 2004, Mick & Oswald 2007, Ries & Trout 2000).

2.3. Marketing Semiotics

Semiotics as a sign science was initially limited to the study of signs in literature. (Elizabeth A. Oputa, A. Fakhrorazi, Rabiul Islam, 2019) highlighted a number of novel advertising techniques, styles, tactics or strategies that have been established around the world in response to increased competition. Semiotic advertising is one of the most popular kinds or techniques of advertising utilised by organisations and businesses (Cinzia, B, 2011). Advertising's influence on individuals is growing in tandem with its widespread distribution (Jhally, 2014).

2.4. Research gap and objective

While there is literature on both brand love and marketing semiotics, it has been found that there is a gap in the literature about the connection between brand love and marketing semiotics (brand ambassador). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there aren't many studies that focus on how brand ambassadors impact branding in India's retail industry. The retail industry contributes significantly to the expansion of the Indian economy, is one of India's rising sectors, and has a significant impact on the current business environment. Therefore, the core objective of this study aims to uncover various elements and validate them that influence customer's interest towards Indian Retails through brand love and brand ambassadors.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

This study aims to put the above-mentioned theories into practise in order to determine and validate the factors influencing the impact of brand love and brand ambassadors on branding towards the interest of customer in Indian retails. According to the researchers' conceptual model, customers visit a certain brand store because they have emotional attachments to the brand, and marketing semiotics (brand ambassadors) play a critical role in this context. To understand the impact of brand ambassadors on branding, it is vital to determine the variables that contribute to customers' interest in the brand, which leads to a good customer-brand relationship and helps the organisation's management to develop a solid communication plan.

ANNEXURE 1

FIGURE 1:

Conceptual framework:
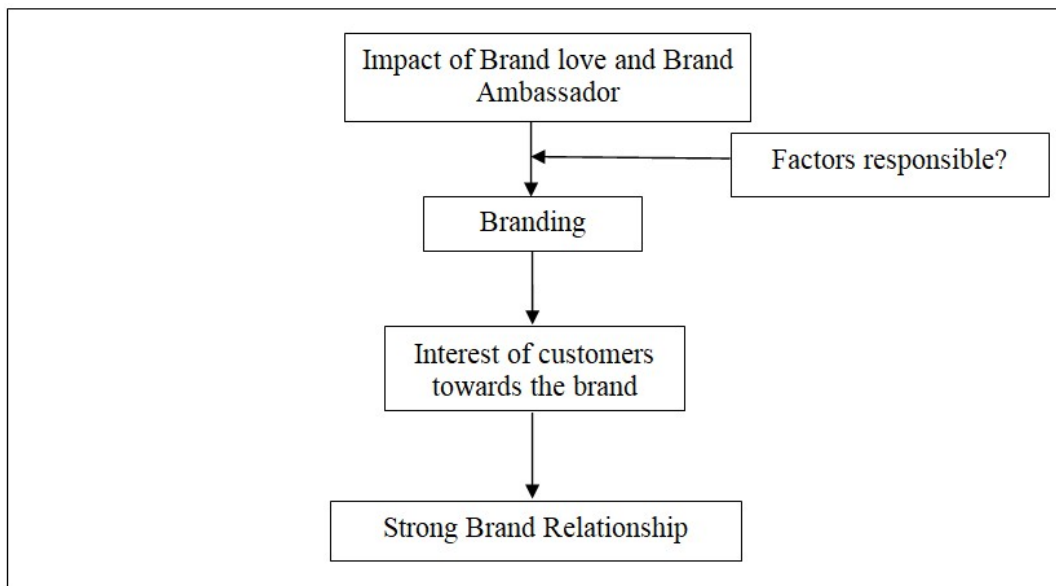
Source: Author's creation

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research paradigm and method

The positivist paradigm is most suited for this study (Saunders et al., 2009; Shankar, A. et al., 2020). According to (Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Shankar, A. et al., 2020), the positivist paradigm method adopts a deductive research approach, which implies that the researchers examine and review existing and previous theories before extracting the hypothesis and research questions. The major goal of this study aims to determine and validate various elements that influence the impact of brand ambassadors on branding and customer interest in Indian retail stores.

3.2. Sample and survey administration

The respondent of this study includes students, employees and self-employed persons. In total, 996 responses has been collected from different parts of India through a structured questionnaire using

convenience sampling and snowball sampling within a time span of three months out of which 962 responses were error-free and fit for this study.

3.3. Measures and Instrument development

This study used both descriptive and quantitative research methods to complete it. The responses were collected from the respondents using a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher using The Triangular Theory Love Scale (Sternberg, 1986), the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield and Sprecher, 1986), The Romantic Love Scale (Rubin, 1970) and (Noel Albert et al., 2009). Jarvis et al. (2003) proposed that in order to ensure that the model's constructs are conceptually different, the researchers eliminate overlapping items and it has also been claimed that making the survey shorter may increase response rates.

There are three sections to the questionnaire: 1) screening questions, 2) study construct items, and 3) demographic profile of respondents. A common and frequently used rating scale that asks respondents to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each objective statement is the Likert scale (Rensis Likert and R. S. Woodworth, 1932). A five-point Likert scale was utilised to conduct this research, and the replies from the respondents were collected into five possible response groups depending on the items in the questionnaire. The values that are assigned for responding are mentioned below: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree / Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

The questionnaire for the survey was accessible in English. The questionnaire used in this survey was pre-tested by forming two focus groups, each with eight active participants visiting retail establishments. Some small changes were made based on comments from the focus groups without jeopardising the significance of the survey questionnaire's components.

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyse the data in this study using Amos (ver.20), a standard statistical software tool for data analysis.

4. Data Analysis

To assess the reliability of the construct, internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha value (Shankar, A. and Datta, B., 2018). The validity of convergent as well as discriminant validity was then examined. Covariance-based structural equation modelling (SEM) with AMOS 20 was employed to check for significant relationships between theoretical constructs and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to look for significant cross-loading on latent components.

4.1. Demographic Analysis

The chosen sample represents the entire population, such that the researcher can extrapolate the results to the entire population (Naderifar, M., Goli, H. and Ghaljaie, F. 2017). Over the course of three months, 996 responses were collected from various parts of India, with 962 of them being error-free and suitable for this study (see Table 1 for more details). Convenience sampling is a sample approach used by academics to acquire data from a pool of respondents who are easily accessible. According to (Dornyei 2007), it is done for the researcher's convenience. Convenience sampling has the following characteristics: rapid data collecting, low cost, easy to conduct

research, and easily available samples. Snowball sampling is a convenience sampling approach used when accessing potential participants with the desired characteristics is challenging. As a result, Snowball sampling and Convenience sampling were utilised to reduce data gathering costs and time.

ANNEXURE 2
TABLE 1:

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Variables	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	588	61.1
Female	374	38.9
Total	962	100.0
Age (in years)		
Below 31	569	59.1
31 - 45	266	27.7
46 - 60	127	13.2
Above 60	0	0
Total	962	100.0
Education Qualification		
Under Graduate	63	6.5
Graduate	721	74.9
Post Graduate	178	18.5
Any other	0	0
Total	962	100.0
Occupation		
Student	275	28.6
Employee	297	30.9
Self Employed	390	40.5
Any other	0	0
Total	962	100.0

Source: Primary data, n = 962

4.2.Reliability and Validity Analysis

Only six variables were discovered using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). As a result, we corroborated the factor analysis using structural equation modelling (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). More information about the measuring model can be found in table 3. All composite dependability (CR) scores are greater than 0.70, indicating that the data is reliable (Nunnally, 1978). The extracted average variance (AVE) values are likewise greater than 0.50, implying convergent validity (Kline, 2010). The discriminant validity was assessed by comparing it to the

squared root AVE and correlation coefficients (given in Table 4). The off-diagonal correlation coefficients are stronger than the diagonal correlation coefficients (square root of AVE) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). These factors, when combined, assure the construct measures' reliability and validity.

4.3. Measurement model

CFA was used in the study to assess the validity of the metrics utilised (Byrne, 2010) and to validate the model for determining the influence of brand ambassadors on branding and customer interest in Indian retail stores. There are six components to the model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in AMOS version 20 to ensure that the measures were genuine. Table 3 shows that the average variance extracted (AVE) values and composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs are greater than 0.5 and 0.7, respectively, indicating that the variables are convergently valid (Hair et al., 2010). The discriminant validity of the measures was determined using the method proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), as shown in table 4, which shows that the values of the square root of AVE for each construct in the upper diagonal are greater than the corresponding off-diagonal correlation coefficients, indicating that the measures are discriminantly valid. The resulting measurement model provided an adequate fit to the data, CMIN/DF = 4.986, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.941, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.903, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.975, NFI = 0.969, TLI = 0.963, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.064, which confirms the unidimensionality of the constructs and provides strong empirical evidence of their validity which made the study suitable.

ANNEXURE 2

TABLE 2:

Table 2: Indicators and their notations

Sl. No.	Indicator Name	Indicators	Notations used in the following tables for these indicators
1	Pleasure	By observing the brand ambassador and purchasing from this store, I take pleasure	Pleasure-Q1
2	Pleasure	Discovering new products based upon the brand ambassador of this store is a pure pleasure	Pleasure-Q2
3	Pleasure	Observing the brand ambassador and by visiting this store I take a real pleasure	Pleasure-Q3
4	Pleasure	I am always pleased to visit/purchase from this store observing it's brand ambassador	Pleasure-Q4

5	Intimacy	I am having a comfortable and an affectionate relationship with the brand ambassador of the store	Intimacy-Q1
6	Intimacy	I feel emotional when I observe the brand ambassador related to this store	Intimacy-Q2
7	Intimacy	I value the brand ambassador of this store significantly in my life	Intimacy-Q3
8	Ideal	There is something 'magical' with the brand ambassador which makes my relationship with this store very strong	Ideal-Q1
9	Ideal	Nothing is important to me than my relationship with the brand ambassador of this store	Ideal-Q2
10	Ideal	I idealise the brand ambassador of this store	Ideal-Q3
11	Duration	I believe that the brand ambassador of this store has accompanied me for several years	Duration-Q1
12	Duration	I have been purchasing/visiting from this store for a long time because I value it's brand ambassador	Duration-Q2
13	Duration	Since I value its brand ambassador I have not switched or changed the store for a long period	Duration-Q3
14	Memories	The brand ambassador of this store reminds me of someone important to me	Memories-Q1
15	Memories	The brand ambassador of this store portraits nostalgia within me through which I can relate memories of my past	Memories-Q2
16	Memories	I associate the brand ambassador of this store with various significant events of my life	Memories-Q3
17	Dream	The brand ambassador of this store corresponds to an ideal for me	Dream-Q1
18	Dream	I dream about the brand ambassador of the store since long	Dream-Q2
19	Dream	The brand ambassador of this store is my childhood dream	Dream-Q3
20	Dream	I always dream to own/possess the brand ambassador of this store	Dream-Q4

Source: Author's creation

TABLE 3:

Table 3: Summary of the measurement model

CONSTRUCTS	ITEM	FL
AVE = 0.934787, CR = 0.982846	Dream-Q1	0.958
	Dream-Q2	0.99
	Dream-Q3	0.928
	Dream-Q4	0.99
AVE = 0.664124, CR = 0.885413	Pleasure-Q1	0.655
	Pleasure-Q2	0.925
	Pleasure-Q3	0.93
	Pleasure-Q4	0.712
AVE = 0.888715, CR = 0.959928	Memories-Q1	0.933
	Memories-Q2	0.956
	Memories-Q3	0.939
AVE = 0.899571, CR = 0.964112	Duration-Q1	0.952
	Duration-Q2	0.928
	Duration-Q3	0.965
AVE = 0.568091, CR = 0.796357	Ideal-Q1	0.844
	Ideal-Q2	0.671
	Ideal-Q3	0.736
AVE = 0.506761, CR = 0.708449	Intimacy-Q1	0.839
	Intimacy-Q2	0.531
	Intimacy-Q3	0.62

Notes: Fit indices CMIN/DF = 4.986 ($p < 0.001$), CFI = 0.975, GFI = 0.941, AGFI = 0.903, NFI = 0.969, TLI = 0.963, RMSEA = 0.064, FL = Factor Loading, α = Cronbach's Alpha, CR=Construct Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, NFI= Normed Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

TABLE 4:

Table 4: Factor correlation output

	Dream	Pleasure	Memories	Duration	Ideal	Intimacy
Dream	0.967[a]					
Pleasure	-0.072*	0.815[a]				
Memories	0.063*	0.071*	0.943[a]			
Duration	0.367**	0.012*	-0.024*	0.948[a]		
Ideal	-0.085*	0.121*	0.088*	-0.447**	0.754[a]	
Intimacy	0.201**	-0.045*	0.108*	0.162**	0.036*	0.712[a]

Notes: **Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$, *Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$.
[a] Diagonal value indicates the square root of AVE of individual latent construct.

TABLE 5:

Table 5: Parameters estimates – regression weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Dream-Q1	<---	Dream	1.000			
Dream-Q2	<---	Dream	1.052	.010	109.610	***
Dream-Q3	<---	Dream	1.007	.013	75.140	***
Dream-Q4	<---	Dream	1.050	.010	107.773	***
Pleasure-Q1	<---	Pleasure	1.000			
Pleasure-Q2	<---	Pleasure	1.359	.058	23.420	***
Pleasure-Q3	<---	Pleasure	1.382	.054	25.668	***
Pleasure-Q4	<---	Pleasure	1.143	.043	26.595	***
Memories-Q1	<---	Memories	1.000			
Memories-Q2	<---	Memories	1.019	.015	68.675	***
Memories-Q3	<---	Memories	1.001	.017	59.611	***
Duration-Q1	<---	Duration	1.000			
Duration-Q2	<---	Duration	1.043	.016	66.200	***
Duration-Q3	<---	Duration	1.064	.014	77.863	***
Ideal-Q1	<---	Ideal	1.000			
Ideal-Q2	<---	Ideal	.831	.039	21.398	***
Ideal-Q3	<---	Ideal	.887	.037	24.262	***
Intimacy-Q1	<---	Intimacy	1.000			
Intimacy-Q2	<---	Intimacy	.660	.055	12.099	***
Intimacy-Q3	<---	Intimacy	.763	.059	12.928	***

Source: Authors' own findings.
Note: ***$p \leq 0.001$

TABLE 6:

Table 6: Standardised Regression Weights

			Estimate
Dream-Q1	<---	Dream	.958
Dream-Q2	<---	Dream	.990
Dream-Q3	<---	Dream	.928
Dream-Q4	<---	Dream	.990
Pleasure-Q1	<---	Pleasure	.655
Pleasure-Q2	<---	Pleasure	.925
Pleasure-Q3	<---	Pleasure	.930
Pleasure-Q4	<---	Pleasure	.712
Memories-Q1	<---	Memories	.933
Memories-Q2	<---	Memories	.956
Memories-Q3	<---	Memories	.939
Duration-Q1	<---	Duration	.952
Duration-Q2	<---	Duration	.928
Duration-Q3	<---	Duration	.965
Ideal-Q1	<---	Ideal	.844
Ideal-Q2	<---	Ideal	.671
Ideal-Q3	<---	Ideal	.736
Intimacy-Q1	<---	Intimacy	.839
Intimacy-Q2	<---	Intimacy	.531
Intimacy-Q3	<---	Intimacy	.620

Source: Authors' own findings.

TABLE 7:

Table 7: Parameter estimates - covariance

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Dream	<-->	Pleasure	-.057	.027	-2.148	.032**
Dream	<-->	Memories	.080	.042	1.903	.057[ns]
Dream	<-->	Duration	.429	.041	10.403	***
Dream	<-->	Ideal	-.090	.038	-2.394	.017**
Dream	<-->	Intimacy	.219	.040	5.491	***
Pleasure	<-->	Memories	.061	.029	2.090	.037**
Pleasure	<-->	Duration	.010	.027	.368	.713[ns]

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Pleasure	<-->	Ideal	.086	.026	3.285	***
Pleasure	<-->	Intimacy	-.033	.027	-1.217	$.224^{ns}$
Memories	<-->	Duration	-.030	.042	-.716	$.474^{ns}$
Memories	<-->	Ideal	.100	.041	2.448	.014**
Memories	<-->	Intimacy	.127	.044	2.885	.004**
Duration	<-->	Ideal	-.469	.042	-11.285	***
Duration	<-->	Intimacy	.175	.040	4.398	***
Ideal	<-->	Intimacy	.036	.040	.895	$.371^{ns}$

Source: Authors' own findings.

Note: ***$p \leq 0.001$; **$p \leq 0.05$; ns = not significant.

5. Discussion

According to Yong and Pearce (2013), there is no guideline for naming any factors, hence the naming of any factor is arbitrary. As a result, the researcher must use his or her best judgement when naming any factor. Any factor's name should be written in such a way that the variables within the factors can be represented. This research focuses on six distinct factors: Dream, Pleasure, Memories, Duration, Ideal, and Intimacy.

The criteria were identified by the researchers based on the indications that were requested from the respondents in the form of a questionnaire. The first factor is called "Dream" since the indicators 17, 18, 19, and 20 are all linked to the organisation's dreaming (e.g. - I dream about the brand ambassador of the store since long). The second factor is called "Pleasure" since the indicators 1, 2, 3, and 4 are all related to the organisation's satisfaction (e.g. - By observing the brand ambassador and hence purchasing from this store, I take pleasure). The third element is called "Memories" since the signs 14, 15, and 16 are all related to the respondents' ability to remember or recall information about the organisation (e.g. - The brand ambassador of this store portraits nostalgia within me through which I can relate memories of my past). The fourth component is called "Duration" since the indications 11, 12, and 13 are related to the length of time that respondents have been associated with that organisation (e.g. - I believe that the brand ambassador of this store has accompanied me for several years). The fifth element is names as "Ideal" since indicators 8, 9, and 10 deal with the respondents' admiration and respect for the organisation (e.g. - I idealise the brand ambassador of this store). Finally, the sixth component is called "Intimacy" since the signs 5, 6, and 7 all relate to the respondents' intimacy and attachments to the organisation (e.g. - I have an affectionate and comfortable relationship with the brand ambassador of the store).

6. Conclusion and managerial implication

According to the findings of this study, six aspects, namely dream, pleasure, memories, duration, ideal, and intimacy, play a critical part in the impact of brand love and marketing semiotics (brand

ambassadors) on branding towards customer interest in Indian retails. The "Dream" component was the most significant.

This research suggests that the authorities of retail organisations will face significant managerial consequences as a result of this research. The component "Dream" indicates that while choosing a brand ambassador, the authorities should focus on the brand ambassador's personality, which will have a favourable impact on the client. The factor "pleasure" denotes that when picking a brand ambassador, the ambience and other internal surroundings should be taken into account and kept identical so that there is a connection between the brand ambassador and the atmosphere. The element "Memories" denotes how long the brand ambassador has been in commemoration with regard to time, resulting in nostalgia. The component "Duration" denotes how long the brand ambassador is associated with the company and has a positive impact on society. The term "ideal" refers to the image of the brand ambassador in the minds of the public. The factor "Intimacy" denotes the brand ambassador's connecting and comfortable interaction with customers in their minds. As a result of this research, the management of an organisation will be able to quickly design a powerful communication plan while selecting brand ambassadors based on the criteria that are most important to them. Finally, the study reveals that customer-organisation bonding does not always progress and requires financial assistance; rather, the love for a brand and semiotic element (brand ambassador) plays a critical role in fostering customers' interest in Indian retailers, resulting in strong relationships towards a brand in the long run.

7. Limitations and scope for future research

This research work, like all research work, has certain limitations, though every attempt was made to minimise any major issues and conduct the research in a sound manner. Because studies on the impact of marketing semiotics on branding in the direction of customer interest are few, it was challenging to develop a conceptual framework. The responses were collected from all throughout India, however due to a lack of time and the current state of affairs, they were collected online.

This study's conclusions have significant ramifications for Indian retailers. Advertisements should be developed in such a way that they provide more value and have a better influence on customers. The major goal of this research is to verify and investigate the aspects that contribute to the impact of brand ambassadors on branding and customer interest in Indian retail stores. In this study, it was discovered that the semiotic element of brand ambassador plays a critical part in branding customers' attention in Indian retails.

The six parameters discovered by the analysis add new aspects to future research. This research could be applied to other industries and with additional marketing semiotic aspects. Apart from that, this research might be carried out in other locations of India (individually) to achieve a far better result.

References

Aaker, David (1991) Managing Brand Equity, New York: Free Press. (1995) Building Strong Brands, New York: Free Press.

Ahuvia, A.C. (1993). I love it! Toward a unifying theory of love across diverse love objects. doctoral dissertation, field of marketing, Northwestern University.

Ahuvia, A.C. (2005b). The love prototype revisited: A qualitative exploration of contemporary folk psychology. Working paper. University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Ahuvia, Aaron C., Bagozzi Richard P. and Batra Rajeev (2007), "Brand love": the "what" and "so what", Marketing Science Institute Conference, Mineapolis.

Anderson, J.C., Gerbing, D.W., 1988. Structural equation modeling in practice: a review and recommended two-step approach. Psychol. Bull. 103 (3), 411.

Arya, V., Sethi, D., & Verma, H. (2018). Areemojis fascinating brand value more than   textual language? Mediating role of brand communication to SNS and brand attachment. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 23(4), 648-670. doi:10.1108/ccij-03-2018-0036.

Bryman, A., 2012. Social Research Methods, fourth ed. Oxford University Press, New York.

Byrne, B.M. (2010), Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, NY.

Caroll, Barbara. A. and Ahuvia Aaron C. (2006), "Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love," Marketing Letters, 17 (2), 79-89.

Cinzia, B. (2011) 'Semiotic approaches to advertising texts and strategies: narrative, passion, marketing', Semiotica, Vol. 183 (1/4), pp.243–271.

Dornyei, Z. (2007). Research methods in applied linguistics. New York: Oxford University Press.

Elizabeth A. Oputa, A. Fakhrorazi, Rabiul Islam. (2019). "The influence of semiotic advertising efficacy on gen-y purchase intent: a study of reputable major brands of smart phone", Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, eISSN: 2395-6518, Vol 7, No 1, 2019, pp 249-255.

Floch, Jean-Marie (2005) Semiotics, Marketing and Communication: Beneath the Signs, the Strategies, translated by Robin Orr Bodkin, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error", Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-50.

Fornell, C., Larcker, D.F., 1981. Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: algebra and statistics. J. Mark. Res. 18 (3), 382–388.

Hair, J.F. and Anderson, R.E. (2010), Multivariate Data Analysis, 7th ed., Prentice Hall Higher Education, NJ.

Halepete, J. and Iyer, K.V.S. (2008), "Multidimensional investigation of apparel retailing in India", International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, Vol. 36 No. 9, pp. 676-88.

Hatfield, E. and Sprecher, S. (1986) 'Measuring passionate love in intimate relationships', Journal of Adolescence, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp.383–410.

Holt, Douglas (2004), How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

IBEF, 2018. Indian retail growth report. Available at: https://www.ibef.org/industry/retail-india.aspx.

IMAGES (2009), India Retail Report 2009, Chapter 3, p. 82.

Jarvis, B. C., Mackenzie, B.S., Podsakoff, M.P., 2003. A critical review of construct indicators and measurement model misspecification in marketing and consumer research. J. Consum. Res. 30, 199-218.

Jhally, S. (2014). The codes of advertising: Fetishism and the political economy of meaning in the consumer society. Routledge, 2014.

Kline, R.B. (2010). Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Mahin Naderifar, Hamideh Goli, and Fereshteh Ghaljaie, (2017). Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research, Strides Dev Med Educ. 2017 September; 14(3):e67670.

Mazali, R., Rodrigues-Neto, J., 2013. Dress to impress: brands as status symbol. Game. Econ. Behav. 82, 103-131.

Mick, David Glen and Laura Oswald (2007), "The Semiotic Paradigm on Meaning in the Marketplace," in Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing, Russell W. Belk, editor, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Noel Albert, Dwight Merunka, and Pierre Valette-Florence (2009) ,"The Feeling of Love Toward a Brand: Concept and Measurement", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 36, eds. Ann L. McGill and Sharon Shavitt, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 300-307.

Nunnally, J. (1978). Psychometric theory. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Prahalad, C.K. (2007), "Has capacity of 13% growth", Vijay Times, January, p. 14

Ramesh, A., Banwet, D.K. and Shankar, R. (2008), "Modeling the enablers of supply chain collaboration", International Journal of Logistics Systems and Management, Vol. 4 No. 6, pp. 617-33.

Rensis Likert and R. S. Woodworth, (1932). Archives of Psychology, New York, Vol 22, pp 5 – 55.

Ries, Al and Jack Trout (2000) Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Robson, C., 2011. Real World Research, third ed. Wiley, UK.

Rubin, Zick (1970), "Measurement of romantic love," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16, 2, 265-273.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., 2009. Research Methods for Business Students. Pearson education, Essex.

Schmidt, Bernd (1995), "Issues of Corporate Identity in East Asia," Columbia Journal of World Business, Winter

Shankar, A. and Datta, B., (2018), "Factors Affecting Mobile Payment Adoption Intention: An Indian Perspective" Global Business Review 19(3S) 72S–89S © 2018 IMI SAGE Publications. DOI: 10.1177/0972150918757870.

Shankar, A., Jebarajakirthy, C., and Ashaduzzaman, Md., (2020), "How do electronic word of mouth practices contribute to mobile banking adoption?" Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 52, (2020), 101920.

Sherry, John, with Eduardo Camargo (1987), "May Your Life Be Marvelous: English Language Labeling and the Semiotics of Japanese Labeling," Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, No.2.

Shimp, Terence A. and Thomas J. Madden (1988), "Consumer object relations: A conceptual framework based analogously on Sternberg's triangular theory of love," Advances in Consumer Research, 15, 163-168.

Singh, V., Vyas, V., and Jadon, S. S., (2017), Role of technology in brand management of Indian SMEs: an exploratory study: World Review of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development (WRSTSD), Vol. 13, No. 2, 2017

Sternberg, Robert J. (1986), "A triangular theory of love," Psychological Review, 93 (2), 119-135.

Umiker-Sebeok, Jean (1987), Marketing and semiotics: Selected papers from the Copenhagen symposium (Studies from the Marketing Institute), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Westbrook, R.A. and Black, W.C. (1985), "A motivation-based shopper typology", Journal of Retailing, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 78-103.

Whang, Yn-Oh, Allen, J., Sahoury, N., & Zhang, H. (2004). Falling in love with a product: the structure of a romantic consumer-product relationship. In: Kahn, B.E. and Luce, M.F. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, vol. 31 pp. 320–327.

Yong, A. G., Pearce, S. (2013). A Beginner's Guide to Factor Analysis: Focusing on Exploratory Factor Analysis. Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology, Vol. 9(2), p. 79-94.