



Role Of Emotions in Generating Brand attachment Among Indian Automobile Customers- A Conceptual Review

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Abstract: Marketing has become a key component of economic development for businesses and all recognizable products in the society. When we refer to marketing, we encompass all types of interactions between business organizations and individuals, extending beyond the simple transactions of purchasing and selling of goods and services. Establishing solid connections between consumers and brands is an objective for every business organizations, as it results in beneficial effects on sales and income. The modern marketing environment highlighted the importance of building strong relationships with consumers to achieve a competitive edge. Social media platforms offer an excellent opportunity for brands to interact with their stakeholders due to the media's engaging nature. A consumer's emotional experiences with a brand extend beyond immediate purchases; they influence the future relationship between the brand and the consumer. The emotional bond that develops between a brand and its customers is referred to as brand attachment. Brand attachment has been shown to mediate the connection between social self-expression and intentions to repurchase. The Indian automotive market features a variety of well-known automobile brands, each possessing distinct advantages and attractions. This paper is a significant step forward to understand the role of emotions in generating brand attachment among automobile customers. This study expands the line of research by focusing on emotions in generating brand attachment among Indian automobile customers.

Key Words: Attachment, Emotions, Customer, Automobile.

1. INTRODUCTION

A person's first decision after moving up to the income ladder these days is to purchase a vehicle. Having a car had now seen as an indispensable thing rather than a luxury. Currently, the Indian automobile sector is highly competitive due to the presence of both domestic and international brands, along with growing expectations from customers regarding pre- and post-sales service. The competition in the automobile industry had given rise to promote and maintain each single consumer. Creating and maintaining brand attachment may well be a part of the solution for customer flopping. In the current competitive landscape, businesses and industries have emphasized the significance of understanding how to improve their relationship with customers. In order to foster this emotional and cognitive connection between customers and brands, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the elements of brand attachment. Loureiro et al., (2012) Brand attachment had mostly linked to feelings customers build towards a brand over time. Brand attachment foreshadow the frankness of the relationship between customers and brands. Consumer often feel free to express their brand attachment by words or through social media platforms. Grubor et al., (2017) Consumers indicate the brands they love and strongly advocate the ideas that were embedded in their philosophy and image. In the automotive industry, there are users who are totally brand loyal to a single company. If a new brand offers a more competitive product or if a trusted individual suggests it to them, they will investigate it. Due to the fierce competition in the Indian auto industry, which is fueled by safety and technological advancements, automakers are being forced to hold onto every single customer. Noreina et al., (2019) Experiences with consumable brands or services may differ from those with automobile brands. In the sense that brand experience in automobile usually involves issues of belief, likeness, attitude, and involvement, which is differ from each individual customer. Customers in the automobile industry are becoming more



conscious of their status and how society views it symbolically, which is a trending phenomenon. Ajoy et al., (2011). The purchasing habits of passenger car buyers are significantly impacted by a distinct combination of cultural, social, economic, and psychological factors. Now consumers prioritize social needs and perceive cars as better fulfilling than their other requirements. Customers choose to purchase vehicles related to their line of work or activity. Rosidah et al., (2016) Consumers are now proud to associate with brands they are intimate with and loyal to, which are perhaps in line with their personality. The accessibility of auto financing seems to play a crucial role in shaping the purchasing decisions of passenger car buyers in the Indian market. Banks play a dominant role in providing new car loans with lower lending rates. Alpana et al., (2021) Due to the easy accessibility of automobile loans, increased salaries, greater disposable income, and rapid access to information, buying an automobile has become a more efficient and convenient process. Today, consumers invest considerable time and research online when looking to purchase vehicles from various platforms. They compare prices, resale value, ratings, comfort level, designs and consider brand name. Indian automobile consumers are brand fanatics and assess features of the vehicle that bring maximum satisfaction. Even though many research works manifest the topic brand attachment, there may be only a few studies that give importance to the role of emotions in generating brand attachment among automobile customers. This study focuses mainly on Indian automobile car customers.

2. Objectives

- a). To study brand attachment in general.
- b). To study whether brand attachment can generate targeted emotions among automobile customers.

3. Methodology

This study is based on the analysis of the secondary data published in the magazines and websites.

4. Literature review

Banerjee et al., (2010). Suggested that household income is the main influence that determines the number of cars and size of cars a household purchases. Additionally, family size has been shown to be an insignificant factor, as larger families were found to favor smaller vehicles. Sheik & Ali, (2013) Analyzed consumer preferences towards passenger cars. It was found that buyers took certain factors like price, technology and comfort into account before selecting a brand of car. Sangeeta Gupta. (2013). Reference groups have a crucial influence on the purchasing decisions of passenger vehicles. Insights from friends, family, and relatives serve as significant sources of information and persuasion when it comes to buying passenger cars. Furthermore, promotional discounts and fuel efficiency are identified as the primary factors that customers prioritize in their preferences. Anandh & Sundar (2014). The factors influencing consumers' preferences for small cars include worth, comfort, capability, readiness, ambition, and necessity. Arnold Japutra et al., (2014). Inferred a comprehensive insight into the factors that influence brand attachment, enhancing the connection between brand and self as well as the prominence of the brand. A strong alignment with one's ideal self is linked to increased brand attachment. Greater alignment with the ideal self results in a more profound brand attachment, subsequently leading to increased brand loyalty. Gautam Raj Kumar. (2014). A majority of customers have purchased cars to gain social status due to family and peer influences, while others are acquiring vehicles out of necessity. Nearly all customers choose to visit the company showroom for assessing the products. Factors such as pre-sales and after-sales services, eco-friendliness, guarantee and warranty programs, and the brand's reputation in the market are deemed crucial for brand evaluation. Menaka & Ashath (2014). The latest generation of consumers cannot be easily categorized using traditional demographic criteria, and without a comprehensive understanding of their mindset and purchasing habits, choices regarding product design, variations, branding, and distribution methods may be misguided. Vikram Shende (2014). Consumer behavior encompasses all the human actions involved in making decisions before and after purchases. There are several key categories of determinants and expectations that influence consumer behavior, including socioeconomic, psychological, political, geographical, demographic factors, as well as product & technology. When it comes to purchasing mini segment cars, customers tend to be very price-sensitive; however, this segment is also evolving its needs, and an increase in disposable income has led to migration within this segment. Afif et al., (2015). Brand loyalty serves as a key indicator of effective marketing performance. The development of a brand establishes mental frameworks that assist consumers in organizing their understanding of products and services, thereby clarifying their decision-making processes and, in turn, providing value to the company. Anderson et al., (2015). Customer preferences for automobile brands are frequently attributed to the lasting effects of market conditions and policies. There is a notable connection between the automobile brand selected by parents and the choices of their adult children. Batra (2015). The characteristics of vehicles, the marketing tactics employed by companies, regulations influencing buying choices, the



technical functioning of cars, and the reputation of brands are the elements that impact consumers' brand preferences for compact cars. Dennis et al., (2016). The significance of a brand is the primary factor that influences the strength of brand attachment, impacting satisfaction, trust, commitment, and brand equity. Moreover, brand identity has a positive effect on satisfaction, with a more substantial impact on consumers. Ebrahim et al. (2016) Acquiring consumer preferences necessitates providing a suitable equilibrium of brand messages. Brand preference is influenced directly by factors such as brand personality, characteristics, visual appeal, self-congruence, and pricing. Manzoor & Shaikh (2016). Brand equity refers to the additional value a product gains from its brand name, which plays a significant role in the long-term financial success of the company. The perceived quality of a product positively influences consumers' intention to make a purchase. Additionally, the Indian automobile sector is among the rapidly expanding manufacturing industries. Loureiro et al., (2017). Customers appreciate engaging with one another, discussing the brand, its products, or services, and sharing knowledge with fellow customers regarding aspects they may not yet know. Additionally, customers are willing to offer constructive feedback to customer service or share their real-life experiences with the products or services. When thinking about brand loyalty, aspects of brand reputation become important. Choudhury et al. (2018). Messages from the company to consumers across different regions, urban areas, genders, and age demographics generate a favorable perception of their product and its advantages. Dhanabalan et al., (2018). Customer perceived value refers to the potential customer base that a company possesses, resulting from the relationship between what customers pay and the value they receive in exchange. In the case of purchasing a car, factors such as brand, price, quality, design, utility, and technical aspects have a positive impact on the perceived value. Sengar, S. (2019). Elements such as the accessibility of spare parts, carrying capacity, initial payment, brand reputation, vehicle mileage, and after-sales service significantly affect buyers when they consider purchasing a vehicle. Likewise, recommendations from others and advertising through banners and flex materials are key components that significantly influence the decision to buy a vehicle. Alpna Vaidya et al., (2021). The purchasing decisions regarding cars are affected by various factors such as availability of parking, family requirements, preferred brands, advertising, attractive deals, and comfort. Bhuyan & Sultana (2021). The brand significantly affects the decision-making process of consumers. There is a notable relationship between brand loyalty and brand preference. Brand preference appears to have greatly influence purchasing decisions. The brand's perception influences consumer preferences and raises customer satisfaction.

Youn & Dodoo(2021) indicate that a brand possessing nostalgia equity will foster perceptions of brand, personality traits, along with improved consumer-brand relationship results. In particular, it should be advised that brand personality traits like sincerity, excitement, and competence should be preserved or even highlighted by the business firms. Baishya & Choudhury (2022). Emotions associated with consumption play a crucial role in the evaluation process that follows a purchase. Feelings such as enthusiasm and tranquility are primarily influential in the satisfaction that consumers derive from their automotive vehicles. It is important for car marketers to concentrate on facilitating the emotions that customers commonly feel after acquiring and using their cars. Dasgupta et al., (2022). Elements that have surfaced as crucial for reviving car purchases include facelifts, spot testing, voice bots, discounts, advertising, and improved financing choices. The feelings tied to these characteristics, as identified, will assist marketers in creating their market strategies more efficiently. Bhalla & Pathak (2023). Inferred that consumer' attitudes toward a brand act as a mediator in the connection between brand anthropomorphism and the intention to purchase. The study also makes it clear that the connection between brand anthropomorphism and brand love is influenced by emotional stability. Rodrigues et al., (2023).

Brand love is positively impacted by the elements that lead to brand connection and brand satisfaction. Subsequently, brand love has a beneficial impact on brand loyalty and favorable word of mouth for the brand. Shams et al., (2023). Brand personality plays a crucial role in influencing consumer buying behavior. A positive brand personality can significantly affect consumer choices and their loyalty to the brand. Furthermore, the research highlighted that consumer demographics have an impact on brand personality. The study revealed a strong connection between how consumers perceive brand personality and the overall brand image. Bhuyan & Sultana (2024). Customer decisions in choosing a particular car brand are shaped by a multitude of factors tailored to their individual requirements and tastes. Elements such as color, brand reputation, comfort, and model variety significantly influence their purchasing choices. Hashem et al., (2024). Brand affection and customer satisfaction rely on three distinct factors: communication, social influence, and the individual traits of the customer. A strong emotional attachment to a brand increases consumers' likelihood of displaying positive behaviors towards it. When consumers have a strong fondness for a car brand, they are more likely to ignore unfavorable information. Brand affection acts as a mediator between brand trust and the tendency to overlook negative information. Milheiro et al., (2024). One of the most effective methods for creating a connection between consumers and a luxury car brand is to move beyond just the basic aspects of comfort, convenience, entertainment, and safety. Brand Attachment contributes to customer satisfaction, commitment, trust, and even loyalty, which are key elements that marketing aims to highlight and ensure.



5. Indian passenger cars industry

The expansion of the Indian automobile industry serves as a strong reflection of the overall health of the economy, given the sector's significant contribution to both macroeconomic growth and innovation. Vijayaragavan (2021). The automobile industry provides great opportunities for investment and direct and indirect employment to skilled and unskilled labor. The two-wheeler segment was the primary supporter to the Indian automobile industry. An expanding middle class and a large proportion of India's population being young drive the major reason. The growth in population, a boost in disposable income, and the accessibility of credit and financing drive the automotive industry in the country. In addition to the increasing demand for two-wheelers, cars and light commercial vehicles are expected to have significant growth in the upcoming years. Mukherjee and Chattopadhyay (2019). Indian car buyers today have a wide range of options in terms of type, capacity, brands, models, etc. The Indian automobile sector is currently experiencing significant success, and the bright picture does tend to continue in the coming future that leads to the boost of entire Indian economy. The Indian passenger car sector is reasonably concentrated, with the top six players having most of the market share in all the segments. Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Tata Motors Limited, Hyundai Motor Company, Honda Motor Company, Toyota, and Mahindra & Mahindra Limited are the leading companies in the passenger car market. India's scrappage policy calls for the removal of outdated and unfit automobiles that pollute the environment. However, vintage motorcycles and cars are typically older than the typical car on the road. However, the Vintage cars and bikes are generally older than the average vehicle on the road. Many customers are keeping and well maintaining their automotive brands due to their brand and vehicle attachment. However, the vintage vehicles very well maintained and used less kilometers. Thus, this is a separate category and the nature of such vehicles be taken into consideration. However, the preference for new cars is becoming more widespread for a number of pragmatic reasons, such as availability of models that are more expensive, contemporary amenities, and dependability.

6. Emotions behind automotive brand

An automotive represents more than a mere vehicle to travel. It serves as a reliable partner that has significantly affected many situations of life. The motorist have depended on it to go for the job, travel with family on vacations, and embody their autonomy and freedom. It is not surprising that numerous individuals develop strong emotional connections with their cars and experience sorrow when parting with them. Rai & Bhattarai (2024). Consumers tend to be more influenced by emotions than logic when purchasing a passenger car, as practical elements like features, cost, and aesthetics do not significantly affect brand preference. In contrast, emotional aspects such as the brand's identity and self-congruity play a considerable and favorable role in shaping brand preference during the choice of a passenger vehicle. Modern automotive business organizations built relationships with consumer by attractively engaging them with personal communication that responds to their needs. Businesses will attempt to communicate personally with customers in order to learn how they perceive them. One of the main factors that propels a successful carmaker is cultivating a strong emotional connection between consumers and their cars. Various automotive customers may experience different feelings and encounters. Emotional experiences related to cars are relevant for everyone, whether they drive a compact model or a luxury vehicle. Emotions tied to a vehicle are also pertinent for paid drivers who earn a salary, as they too experience an emotional reaction, typically reflecting the comfort and reliability provided by the vehicle. The emotions experienced can vary significantly among different customer types, target demographics, and of course, brands. One consistent element is that individuals develop an emotional relationship with cars and this attachment plays a significant role in their purchasing choices. Main reasons behind the emotional attachments for an automotive brand purchase can be the following.

6.1. Cultural Conditioning- The culture we come from significantly influences our likes and viewpoints regarding automobile brands. Varied cultures frequently have unique connections with particular manufacturers. High-end brands such as Mercedes where commonly linked to prestige and achievement, whereas certain off-road brands may stir sentiments of exploration and liberty. These connections are ingrained in our minds through societal factors and representations in the media.

6.2. Self-Identity- Vehicles can represent our personality and beliefs. The type of vehicle we choose often conveys information about our identity and the impression we wish to create in the minds of others. This need for self-representation can foster emotional connections with car manufacturers that correspond to our self-image.

6.3. Nostalgia- Vehicles have a special way of evoking feelings of nostalgia. Numerous individuals cherish memories tied to specific automotive experiences from their earlier days, like family road trips or significant moments. Such positive connections can forge a lasting emotional attachment that persists into adulthood reminders about a brand of automotive.



6.4. Reliability- The way each consumer view the quality and dependability of a car brand can significantly impact the emotional bond with it. Brands known for their longevity and minimal upkeep tend to draw in devoted customers who experience a feeling of assurance in their decision. Positive experiences with an automobile brand can lead to a deep sense of trust and attachment, making customers more likely to stick with the brand for future purchases.

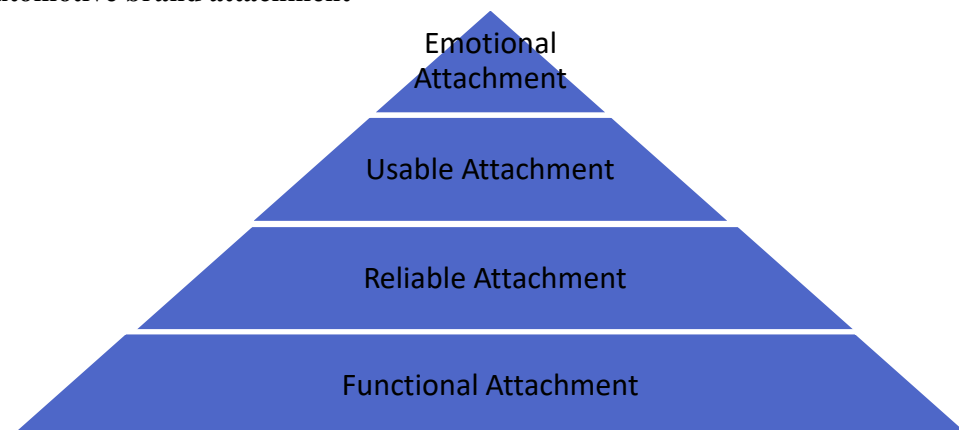
6.5. Social Influence- People are inherently social beings and the decisions to purchase goods and services where frequently shaped by the values of peers and communities. Being part of a particular automotive brand's community can create a feeling of connection and friendship among enthusiasts. This common interest can strengthen emotional ties, as individuals bond over their shared admiration for a specific manufacturer. Car gatherings, online discussion platforms, and social media communities offer avenues to unite and strengthen these emotional connections.

6.6. Integrity- Integrity of automotive manufacturer is great importance in the modern automotive market. Being courteous to clients and acting morally are crucial in the automotive sector. A customer's integrity to the specific brands primary vehicle will expand to the entire scope of the manufacturer's family brands.

6.7. Value- monetary value of a used car that is sold in the open market is very relevant. Several factors determine the value of used car like its brand, model, service history and mileage.

6.8. Familiarity to the brand- The brand of vehicle is more than just a means of getting around; it represents the personal environment that displays the automotive user character and tastes. From the soothing aroma inside to the user-friendly design of the controls, each aspect becomes a part of the user's everyday life. Parting with our automotive entails giving up this sense of comfort and familiarity.

7. Types of automotive brand attachment



7.1. Functional brand attachment- The automobile brand is useful to customer and helps the customer to finish the intended task.

7.2. Reliable brand attachment- Consumers believe that the brand is capable of fulfilling its value promise. The brand is anticipated to consistently satisfy the expectations of its customers.

7.3. Usable brand attachment- The brand is easy to understand, its features are simple to use, making it accessible even for beginners to understand and utilize.

7.4. Emotional brand attachment- The automobile brand will win the heart of the vehicle user. This type of attachment will help the business to contribute to the success of competition.

8. CONCLUSION

Brand attachment has been a fundamental concept in the literature on consumer-brand relationships for the past several decades (Shimul 2022). Brand attachment describes the deep emotional bond that consumers develop with a brand, leading them to view that brand as integral to their identity. In modern competitive environment, business should use intelligent interaction with consumers to evoke emotional attachment to a focused brand (Khan et al., 2023). Customers engage with one another, discussing the products, brand, or services, and sharing knowledge about what they might not know regarding those products or services. Additionally, customers are willing to offer constructive feedback to customer service or share their live experiences with the products or services. Consequently, beyond just the reliability of a car or its perceived quality, customers desire to connect with the characteristics of the car and communicate this with others to feel a bond with a specific car brand. Since it shows how strongly customers feel a connection to a brand, emotional brand attachment is a crucial term in marketing research. This connection influences their actions and, in turn, enhances the profitability of the business and the value of the customer over their lifetime. (Theng So et al., 2013). The



aim of the current study is to analyze the role of emotions in generating brand attachment among automobile customers specifically to Indian market. Our observations have confirmed that emotions related to an automobile brand of car can generate brand attachment and in turn leads to future buying. Furthermore, as the study being conducted for a short period, it could be possible that we fail to take in some previous findings regarding this topic as well.

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