THE BRAND EMOTION MODEL: ITS MEASUREMENT AND IMPACT ON PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

This study compares the impact of brand emotion and brand trust on consumers' purchase intention. A structural equation model is used to investigate which of the seven core components of brand emotion: self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence, and anticipated separation distress, has a more significant influence on consumers' brand emotion. Furthermore, this study examines the differential impact of brand emotion and high quality on loyalty across various products and brands. The findings indicate that consumers attach greater importance to brand emotion irrespective of the product or brand, and positive emotional connection is the most crucial component of brand emotion. Regardless of the product category, the stronger the emotional connection with a brand, the more likely consumers will purchase it.

Keywords

Brand Emotion, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, Positive Emotional Connection

1. Introduction

Consumers' brand attitudes are derived from their likes or dislikes of brands' critical attributes and benefits (Keller & Swaminathan, 2019). When making purchase decisions, consumers typically follow their internal preferences, or brand attitudes, as a guide for brand selection (Neal, 2000). Further analysis of the connotation of consumers' brand attitudes shows that when consumers purchase branded products, they often consider the rational and emotional side so that brand trust and brand emotion become the critical factors in consumers' minds to determine the willingness to purchase branded products (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Brand supporters defend and discuss brands due to their strong trust and emotional attachment, even in digital environments (Bigné et al., 2023).

Positive brand attitudes, through the influence of positive brand perceptions and emotions, will increase the purchase intention of a particular brand (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Previous studies have found that brand emotion and trust positively affect loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, in addition to actively improving the experience of branded products and striving for consumers to enhance brand trust, the industry also began to shape consumers' positive brand emotions, hoping to win the movement and support of consumers (Maduretno & Junaedi, 2022).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Brand emotions

Brands can evoke emotional responses from consumers (Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Consumers' emotions toward a brand encompass passion, attachment, and more. Consumers generally have positive evaluations of brands. Positive evaluations and favorable emotional reactions to a brand enhance purchase intentions and generate positive word-of-mouth. These effects make consumers willing to pay a higher price when

emotionally connected to a brand (Thomson et al., 2005). Additionally, they are more likely to forgive a brand when it fails to meet expectations (Bauer et al., 2009).

In the past, scholars have mainly discussed positive emotions only (Albert & Valette-Florence, 2010), but Watson and Tellegen (1985) argued that personal emotions should be categorized into positive and negative emotions. A positive emotional response to a brand indicates that the consumers have a favorable impression of the brand, which enriches the brand's value in consumers' minds. Conversely, a negative emotional response to a brand reveals that the consumers are dissatisfied with the brand in question, which will be rated very low in consumers' perspectives. Russell (1979, 1991) suggested that the brand effect can be characterized as pleasantness-unpleasantness or arousal-anxiety. This notion assesses whether consumers feel happy or unhappy when using a particular brand and whether they like or dislike it. In other words, consumers' emotional responses to the brand reflect their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with its products and their preference or aversion to the brand's image.

2.2 The influence of brand emotion and brand trust on purchase intention

When a consumer decides to purchase a product, the selection process among brands varies from person to person. Previous studies have shown that brand emotion and trust influence consumers' brand choices. According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), a consumer must have a specific awareness of the brand's products to develop brand emotion and trust. If consumers are unaware of a brand, they will likely buy any brand randomly. However, if they know the brand, they may purchase based on its emotional appeal or trust.

Lau and Lee (1999) proposed that trust is an individual's expectation of a person or object's motive in various transactional scenarios, even when facing risk. In the consumer market, brand trust refers to consumers' perception that benefits and advantages from a brand are reliable and accountable and that they feel secure in their interactions with the brand. As a result, they trust the quality of the product functions the brand offers (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). When consumers trust a brand in their purchasing decisions and trust the quality and reliability of the products provided, their uncertainty about the brand will be reduced (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Consumers' willingness to buy and loyalty to the brand will increase (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The studies above demonstrate that brand trust significantly impacts consumer behavior. If companies can enhance consumers' trust in their brands, they can strengthen their relationship with consumers and cultivate their loyalty, ultimately increasing customers' purchase intention. This strategy can lead to an intention to purchase and the potential for repeat purchases.

More and more companies recognize the significance of emotional branding and are striving to master the fundamental principles of creating emotional brands. Connecting with consumers and cultivating strong brand emotions can enrich consumer loyalty and boost the company's financial performance. Consumers also develop attachments to brands; once brand attachment is established, it can lead to increased consumer loyalty (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Consumers who are firmly attached to a brand will treat it as a part of themselves and believe it represents their thoughts and feelings. As a result, the brand captures consumers' attention and stays in consumers' minds. Consumers will be more proactive in maintaining a relationship with the brand and continue their purchasing behavior towards the brand (Park et al., 2010), primarily when a consumer develops a strong emotional attachment to the brand, which will lead to the establishment of a solid emotional preference for the brand. In particular, when consumers develop a strong emotional preference for a brand, they will be more willing to pay for the actual purchase (Chernev et al., 2011). Competing brands can be easily overlooked when consumers strongly prefer a brand and a solid connection to themselves (Park et al., 2010).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) pointed out that when a product or service evokes a positive emotional response from consumers, it also generates a positive sense of trust in the service provided by the product. This trust can surpass brand trust in consumer satisfaction with the product and its functional performance attributes (Aaker, 1996). Giovanis and Athanasopoulou (2018) investigated consumers' brand relationships and brand loyalty in technology-mediated services. It was found that the cognitive aspect of consumers' brand relationships was the main factor influencing their behavioral intentions, followed by the affective aspect. The emotional facet of brand relationships significantly impacted consumers' price tolerance, while trust had no direct effect (Aureliano-Silva et al., 2022). It is evident that the brand raises a solid emotional connection in the consumers' psyche. This attachment leads to a higher purchase intention towards the brand than brand trust. Therefore, this study presents the below hypothesis.

H1: Brand emotion has a higher positive effect on purchase intention than brand trust.

2.3 Relationship between brand emotion, quality, and loyalty

The emotional or functional value of a product influences consumers' purchasing behavior. Emotional value refers to a product's capacity to evoke specific feelings and emotions, which triggers positive associations with the product. Functional value refers to consumers' decisions to purchase a product or service based on intended purposes, explicitly focusing on its functionality, profitability, or performance. Gundlach et al. (1995) argued that the sensory and emotional connection between consumers and brands is significant in analyzing the relationship

between consumer and brand loyalty. They suggested that for consumers to commit to a particular brand, they must have a positive emotional response, such as happiness, liking, and excitement. Dick and Basu (1994) suggested that the level of emotional connection between consumers and brands is significant, and it is essential for consumers to have positive emotional responses to a specific brand. They also suggested that brand loyalty increases when positive emotions are evoked.

On the other hand, when consumers purchase certain brands, they only consider the brands' quality, functionality, design, and practicality. In addition, when consumers discuss their favorite brands, they often describe their products as having exceptional quality, reliable performance, and attractive design, among other characteristics. These are unique to the brands and not easily replicated by others. These are the competitive advantages that brands possess and cannot be substituted by other brands (Batra et al., 2012). Consumers are also drawn to a brand due to these factors, and they make purchases and exhibit loyalty to the brand by continuing to make repeat purchases. This study formulates hypotheses H2, H3, and H4 based on the above exploration.

H2: High quality positively affects loyalty.
H3: Brand emotion positively affects loyalty.
H4: High quality positively affects loyalty through brand emotion.

Some scholars suggested that the consumers' brand emotion should be measured using a single dimension. However, other scholars argued that brand emotion should be measured using a multidimensional approach because it encompasses various factors. For example, consumers may develop an emotional attachment to a brand due to memories or a longing for the past youthful period triggered by the purchasing environment or interaction with the marketer, known as the nostalgic preference (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991). Alternatively, consumers experience a boost in self-esteem and self-worth by purchasing a product (Ahuvia, 2005). Batra et al. (2012) identified seven core elements of brand liking in the literature: "self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence (strength), and anticipated separation distress." Factors influencing brand liking and loyalty include perceptions of quality, word-of-mouth recommendations, and resistance to negative information.

Batra et al. (2012) discovered that utilizing a multidimensional measure of brand sentiment to predict loyalty is more effective than relying on a single dimension. However, Batra et al. (2012) only analyzed mobile phone products. Instead, this study will analyze various products and brands to explore which of the seven core elements of brand sentiment constitutes brand emotion and significantly impacts purchase intention. Furthermore, prior studies have rarely investigated the differential impact of brand trust and emotion on consumers' purchase intentions. This study compares the effect of brand emotion and trust on consumers' purchase intention across various products.

3. Research Method

3.1 Pre-test

In order to confidently choose the right products and brands for formal studies, the pre-test selected 10 product categories that university consumers frequently encounter daily, based on Chernev et al. (2011) and the Eastern Integrated Consumer Profile (E-ICP). These categories include casual wear, jeans, sports shoes, coffee chains, watches, lady cosmetics, mobile phones, cameras, laptops, and motorcycles. The titles of the product categories are factual and unambiguous. University students were selected as pre-test participants to ensure the clarity of the questions and identify any potential issues that may arise during the experiment. Ambiguities or misunderstandings were corrected based on the pre-test sample. This information, although valuable, will not be included in the formal research analysis.

Ninety students enrolled in a college in southern Taiwan were selected to participate in this study for the quantitative survey, with a validity rate of 53.3% based on 48 valid responses. The study included 28 female subjects (58.3%) and 20 male subjects (41.7%) aged between 20 and 30. Among them, 16 (33.3%) were aged 20 or below, and 32 (66.7%) were aged between 21 and 25. Respondents were asked to choose the two product types they have the most experience purchasing or using daily and their top two favorite brands among the selected product categories in the order of preference. The pre-test results show that casual wear and mobile phones received the highest scores among the ten product categories. The most preferred brands for each product type were identified as well. UNIQLO and ZARA were the top two favorite brands in the casual wear industry. iPhone and SAMSUNG were the most popular mobile phone brands. The results demonstrate the participants' apparent preference for these brands, indicating their popularity and market dominance.

3.2 Data collection

The study consisted of two sub-studies. Study 1 investigated how brand emotion and trust affect respondents' purchase intention for casual wear and mobile phone products. The questionnaire comprised four sections. The first

section included five questions adapted from Rossiter and Bellman (2012) that measured brand emotion (Cronbach's alpha=0.942). Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "The brand represents me, and I have a strong emotional connection to the brand." The language used in the survey was clear, concise, and objective to avoid jargon and personal bias. The questions followed a logical sequence and were presented in a formal tone. Specific terms and abbreviations were used consistently throughout the survey, and the language adhered to industry standards. The survey was free from grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Metrics and units were strictly adhered to, and non-essential fillers were removed. The second part assessed brand trust (Cronbach's alpha=0.932), which was measured using three questions: "I believe that the brand is good," "I believe that the brand is reliable," and "I believe that the brand has a good reputation." The third section contained three questions regarding purchase intention, measured by "actual purchase," "demand share," and "purchase share," the same as defined by Rossiter and Bellman (2012). The fourth section comprised three questions about personal information.

Study 2 aimed to analyze the differences in the importance of factors affecting brand liking when purchasing casual wear or mobile phone products. The questionnaire, modified by Batra et al. (2012), consisted of nine sections. The first section was self-brand integration (Cronbach's alpha=0.968), with ten questions: "Can this brand represent me?" "Can this brand reflect my personality?" "Can this brand show the real me?" "Can I use this brand to express my identity?" "Can this brand reflect my ideal self?" "Can this brand help me present a better version of myself?" "Can this brand help me become my ideal self?" "Can this brand help me get closer to my ideal self?" "Can this brand help me achieve my goals?" and "The brand will give me greater purpose, make my life feel worthwhile, and add meaning."

The second part comprises passion-driven behaviors (Cronbach's alpha=0.951), such as willingness to spend more time and money on the brand, frequent usage on appropriate occasions, preference for the brand, and recognition of its value in one's life. The brand mentioned holds sentimental value to consumers due to past experiences and family influence, leading consumers to pursue and own it. These factors have influenced consumers' purchasing decisions, resulting in strong brand loyalty. The given statement includes a total of 10 questions. The third section measured the strength of the emotional connection (Cronbach's alpha=0.971) through 10 questions. These included statements such as "I feel that this brand suits me," "When I first heard of this brand, it felt right," "This brand matches my taste," "I have an emotional connection to this brand," "It feels like a good friend of mine," "I believe my personality aligns with this brand," "Does using this brand make me feel excited?" "Using this brand brings me happiness and joy," "This brand gives me peace of mind and calmness," and "This brand relaxes me."

The fourth section of the survey assessed the participants' long-term relationship with the brand. This section consisted of three questions: "I will continue to use this brand in the future," "This brand will become part of my life in the future," and "I think this brand will still be with me in the future." The Cronbach's alpha for this section was 0.959. The fifth section assessed Participated Separation Distress (Cronbach's alpha=0.947) through questions such as "Is this brand indispensable in your life?" "Would you miss this brand if it were absent from your life?" "Would you feel scared if this brand were missing from your life?" and "Would you feel anxious if you do not have this brand?" totaling four questions. The sixth section assessed the overall attitude towards the brand, with nine questions measuring positive valence (Cronbach's alpha=0.933). These questions included statements such as "This brand is not significantly different from my ideal brand," "I am satisfied with this brand," "I like this brand," "I frequently use this brand," "I feel anxious when I do not have access to this brand," "I have a favorable opinion of this brand and often talk about it with others," "It frequently comes to mind," "I imagine situations where I would use it," and "I am quick to say good things about it." The seventh section assessed quality beliefs (Cronbach's alpha=0.935). It comprised of three questions: "This brand's products are very functional," "This brand's products are efficient," and "This brand's products are of good quality." The eighth section evaluated brand loyalty, measured by Cronbach's alpha of 0.864, and consisted of three questions asking respondents: If customers hear damaging information about this brand, they may question it, but if they have a positive perception, they are likely to remain loyal and recommend it to others. The final part of the study included three questions about personal information, asking respondents about their gender, age, and departmental grade.

Measurement variables in this study were either cited from the literature or modified to fit the study's context. Purchase intention and personal data were measured on a Likert seven-point scale (1 for strongly disagree, 7 for strongly agree). The study was conducted with university students who were informed of the process and reminded to read each question's description in detail before filling out the questionnaire. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire based on their views and thoughts. Upon completion, a small token of appreciation was given to thank them for their cooperation. Additionally, a lucky draw was held to encourage participation. The questionnaire took approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Seven hundred ninety-four questionnaires were distributed; four were invalid, and 790 were valid.

3.3 Measurement reliability and validity

The Cronbach's alpha values for all components of this study were above 0.7, which exceeds the standard of greater than 0.70 suggested by DeVellis and Thorpe (2022), indicating that the questions being measured were reliable. Based on the literature review, the scales used in this study were deemed suitable and relevant. Therefore, the questions in the formal questionnaire were measured using the scales proposed by the scholars after the survey. As

a result, they can be considered to have a high degree of content validity. To determine the validity of the astringent, the Composite Reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.7, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The factors' Composite Reliability in this study ranged from 0.891 to 0.972, and the Average Variance Extracted ranged from 0.733 to 0.895, indicating that the factors had good explanatory power for the observed variables.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 Sample structure

Study 1 conducted convenience sampling and collected 277 valid questionnaires after excluding incomplete and invalid ones. Of these, 102 were completed by male participants and 175 by female participants. Most participants (50.9%) were under 20 years old. The Department of International Business had the highest number of participants (50.2%), followed by the Department of Accounting (11.2%) and the Department of Finance and Economics (8.7%). Regarding grade level involvement, first-year students constituted the highest percentage at 38.6%, while fourth-year students had the lowest participation at 17.3%.

Five hundred fourteen university students participated in Study 2's questionnaire survey, with 251 male and 263 female respondents. The age distribution shows that 285 respondents were below 20 years old (inclusive), accounting for 55.4% of the total sample. The experimental test received the most enthusiastic participation from three departments: Business Administration (33.1%), International Business (28.4%), and Creative Commodity Design (14.0%). Regarding grade level, first-year students constituted the majority (38.7%), followed by sophomores (26.5%).

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

To test H1, Study 1 examined the effects of the independent variables "brand emotion" and "brand trust" on the dependent variable "purchase intention" using correlation analyses in two industries: "casual wear" and "mobile phones." The results of the analyses are summarized in Tables 1 to 5, indicating significant coefficients. The impact of brand emotion on consumers' purchasing willingness is significantly more influential than brand trust, and H1 is confirmed.

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 Brand Emotion	1		
X_2 Brand Trust	0.594**	1	
Y Purchase Intention	0.421**	0.348**	1

* : p<0.1 ; ** : p<0.05 ; *** : p<0.001

Table 1 Correlation analysis of brand emotion, brand trust, and purchase intention of the whole sample

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 Brand Emotion	1		
X_2 Brand Trust	0.585**	1	
Y Purchase Intention	0.295**	0.282**	1

* : p<0.1 ; ** : p<0.05 ; *** : p<0.001

Table 2 Correlation analysis of brand emotion, brand trust, and purchase intention of UNIQLO

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 Brand Emotion	1		
X_2 Brand Trust	0.462**	1	
Y Purchase Intention	0.434**	0.243**	1

* : p<0.1 ; ** : p<0.05 ; *** : p<0.001

Table 3 Correlation analysis of brand emotion, brand trust, and purchase intention of ZARA

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 Brand Emotion	1		
X_2 Brand Trust	0.547**	1	
Y Purchase Intention	0.482**	0.289**	1

* : p<0.1 ; ** : p<0.05 ; *** : p<0.001

Table 4 Correlation analysis of brand emotion, brand trust, and purchase intention of iPhone

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 Brand Emotion	1		
X_2 Brand Trust	0.730**	1	
Y Purchase Intention	0.558**	0.552**	1

* : p<0.1 ; ** : p<0.05 ; *** : p<0.001

Table 5 Correlation analysis of brand emotion, brand trust, and purchase intention of SAMSUNG

According to the second-order model of brand emotion in Table 6, we can see that the factor "self-brand integration" has a loading of 0.889, the factor "passion-driven behaviors" has a loading of 0.968, the factor "positive emotional connection" has a loading of 0.995, the factor "anticipated separation distress" has a loading of 0.873, the factor "long-term relationship" has a loading of 0.937, the factor "positive overall attitude valence" has a loading of 0.888, and the factor "attitude certainty and confidence" has a loading of 0.867. The "positive emotional connection" greatly impacted brand emotion among the seven dimensions.

Measurement index	Factor loadings	Measurement error
self-brand integration	0.889	0.210
passion-driven behaviors	0.968	0.063
positive emotional connection	0.995	0.010
anticipated separation distress	0.873	0.238
long-term relationship	0.937	0.122
positive overall attitude valence	0.888	0.211
attitude certainty and confidence	0.867	0.248

Table 6 Factor loadings of the two-stage measurement model of brand emotion

The high-order structural model of brand emotion achieved a satisfactory fit with the empirical data, as indicated by GFI = 0.975, CFI = 0.990, NFI = 0.988, and RMSEA = 0.064. This result is consistent with the study by Batra et al. (2012). Table 7 displays the path analysis of the overall model of brand emotion. The path coefficient from "high quality" to "brand emotion" is 0.736, significant at p < .001*** (t ≧ 3.291). The path coefficient from "high quality" to "loyalty" is 0.256, also substantial at p < .001*** (t ≧ 3.291). When "brand emotion" is the mediator between "high quality" and "loyalty," the path coefficient is 0.064, indicating a satisfactory fit of the model to the empirical data. When "brand emotion" results from "high quality" on "loyalty," the path coefficient is 0.736 * 0.701 = 0.516, more significant than the direct effect path coefficient of 0.256. Therefore, "brand emotion" has a mediating effect. Each path reaches a considerable level, validating the hypotheses of this study (H2, H3, and H4), as illustrated in Fig. 1.

Path	Sign	Standardized Coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value
Brand Emotion <--- High Quality	+	0.736	0.023	14.630	***
Loyalty <--- High Quality	+	0.256	0.021	8.536	***
Loyalty <--- Brand Emotion	+	0.701	0.071	15.760	***

* : t ≧ 1.960, p < .05; ** : t ≧ 2.576, p < .01; *** : t ≧ 3.291, p < .001

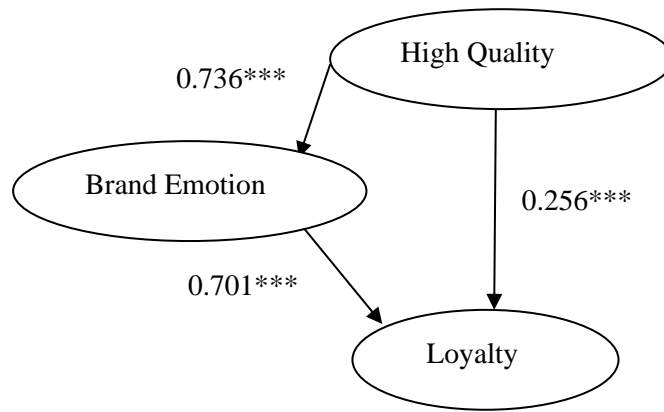**Table 7 Summary of Path Analysis Results of Brand Affective Hierarchical Structure Model**

Fig. 1 Coefficients of High-order Brand Emotional Structuring Paths

This study uses the high-order model of brand emotion to compare the influence of "high quality" and "brand emotion" on "loyalty" among different brands in the mobile phone industry. The path coefficients for mobile phone brands in Table 8 show that in the iPhone brand, the path coefficient of "high quality" to "brand emotion" is 0.699 and p < .001. The path coefficient of "high quality" to "loyalty" is 0.140 with a significance level of p < .05. When "brand emotion" is the mediating variable between "high quality" and "loyalty," the path coefficient is 0.699*0.8 = 0.559, more significant than the direct effect path coefficient of 0.140. From the Samsung brand perspective, "brand emotion" is the mediator of "Loyalty" too. The path coefficient of "high quality" to "brand emotion" is 0.730 and p < .001, indicating a significant relationship.

Similarly, the path coefficient of "high quality" to "loyalty" is 0.254 with a significance level of p < .001, also verifying a significant relationship. When "brand emotion" is the mediating variable between "high quality" and "loyalty," the path coefficient is 0.730*0.693=0.506, more significant than the direct effect path coefficient of 0.254. The results indicate that "brand emotion" has a mediating effect. Therefore, hypotheses H2, H3, and H4 of the present study are valid. Furthermore, when comparing the path coefficients of iPhone and Samsung, it is evident that the emotional attachment to the iPhone has a more significant impact on loyalty than that of Samsung.

Brand Name	Path	Sign	Standardized Coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value
iPhone	Brand Emotion <--- High Quality	+	0.699	0.062	7.880	***
	Loyalty<--- High Quality	+	0.140	0.066	2.477	*
	Loyalty<--- Brand Emotion	+	0.800	0.160	8.333	***
Samsung	Brand Emotion <--- High Quality	+	0.730	0.060	8.050	***
	Loyalty<--- High Quality	+	0.254	0.062	4.152	***
	Loyalty<--- Brand Emotion	+	0.693	0.139	7.635	***

$*$: t $\geqq$ 1.960, p < .05; $**$: t $\geqq$ 2.576, p < .01; $***$: t $\geqq$ 3.291, p < .001

Table 8 Path coefficients of brand emotional high-order structural patterns in the mobile phone industry

5. Conclusion

This study confirms the brand emotion measurement proposed by Batra et al. (2012) and compares the impact of sentiment factors on purchase intention. The findings can be helpful for future researchers who aim to explore the effect of brand sentiment factors on purchase intention and develop a new model for measuring such factors. Additionally, the study investigates the motivation of consumers to purchase products from different categories and brands. The study found that product brands with an emotional connection to consumers are more likely to generate purchase intention and increase brand loyalty, regardless of the product category. Therefore, it is recommended that industry players focus on building emotional brands to improve customer loyalty. For instance, companies may incorporate emotional appeals in their marketing advertisements or train their sales staff to engage with customers dynamically during the sales process. This procedure may help to win over customers and increase their purchase intention.

In this study, the sample was selected from students of a university in southern Taiwan for convenience, and the selection of brands was based on those commonly encountered by this population. Therefore, the samples

must result in some heterogeneity and prevent random selection. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies focus on non-university students or conduct cross-region sampling studies to ensure the generalizability of the results. Future researchers could use qualitative interviews to select brands and products for more accurate results

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