

Moderating Role of Rational Thought Process in Measuring the Relationship between Emotional Attachment and Brand Trust

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to explore the moderating effect of rational thought process to measuring the relationship between emotional attachment and brand trust. The theoretical model has been drawn and tested by using hierarchical multiple regression model. To get more appropriate results, a CASC scale instrument that was developed by (Buck et al. 2004) that consist of rational thoughts and emotions has been adopted. The data was collected from the sample of 296 participants representing the main users including students and job holders of Pakistan who consumed carbonated drinks in their routine life. Statistical software SPSS version 16.0 employed for factor analysis, correlation and regression analysis. The significant and positive result shows that emotional attachment has a directly or indirectly impact on brand trust through the moderation effect of rational thoughts. This study provides firms to create emotional advertisements according to the rational behavior of consumers and develop different strategies to make strong brand trust of products in the mind of consumers.

Keywords: emotional attachment, brand trust, rational thoughts.

1. Introduction

The high competition in the market captivates the mind of marketers to establish various strategies to achieve competitive edge in the market place. Most of the firms understand the actual consumer's assessment and seek the forms of advertisement to develop the brand loyalty with the customer for long term. Firms in order to attract consumers towards their brands and to develop the brand trust in the mind of consumers as well as emotional attachment; they create emotional advertisements. In early 1980s, the rational attention of the consumer sincerity and brand trust has found (Abdolvand & Nasimi, 2012). It has been determined that emotional extents like contentment and incitement

moderate the relationship among advertisement and attitudinal factors (Olney, Holbrook, & Batra, 1991).

The main objective of this study is to explore the effect of emotional attachment on brand trust including dimensions like validity, sincerity, compassion and the moderating effects of rational thoughts along with primary emotions, negative emotions, positive emotions, social emotions and individualistic emotions. For this reason, the Pakistani carbonated drinks like Pepsi and coke market of consumers were selected in the context of beverages industry of Pakistan. The main purpose of choosing the beverage industry in Pakistan was that most of the consumers take carbonated drink in their meals in daily routine. Pepsi and coke invent emotional advertisements according to Pakistani events and festivals as well, that is the reason Pakistani consumers are emotionally attached with it. The study is based on the moderating effect of rational thought process of consumers among emotional attachment through advertisements and brand trust.

Most of the firms used advertisement as a strong tool of developing the image of their product or brand in the mind of consumers to grab them towards their brands (Afzal, Butt, Mahmood, Israr, & Sajid, 2013). Goueron (2006) proposed that the self-determination and trustworthiness attributes have a positive and significant relationship on validity and sincerity by employing hierarchical regression method, while self-determination has a positive and significant relationship on validity and sincerity has a positive and significance relationship with trustworthiness and validity. All personality attributes of brand have not the same relationship on brand trust. Moreover, validity and carefulness attributes have a positive and significance relationship on brand trust including integrity, validity, benevolence) the sincerity attribute has a positive and significant relationship with validity and benevolence (Goueron, 2006, 2008). Brand identity has a positive and significant relationship with brand attachment (Dolatbadi, Kazemi, & Rad, 2012). The study conducted by Valette et al. (2008) used the five constructs of the matured brand development through barometer that describe the average 32.4 percentage of brand attachment (Valette-Florence, de Barnier, & Ambroise, 2008).

Goueron (2006) also proposed that trust has a positive and significant relationship with emotional attachment towards brand. Mattila (1999) stated that advertisements that centered mainly on rational fundamentals that do not react to change the mood, while emotional fundamentals mainly stimulate the feelings of happiness and sadness that related to their interest (Mattila, 1999). Heath argues that the most of the advertisements are prepared over indifferent and program knowledge and information to new neuron interlinks that are build up in human brain (Heath, 2012). (Buck et al., 2004) create scale that was rely on MacLean's triune theory based on brain, called CASC (Communication Analytic and Syncretic Cognitions) scale. The CASC scale can estimates the effects according to the four constructs that are consist of rational and three other constructs like primary, individualistic and social emotions (Kovacic & Podgornik). There is no prior study found in this context, in which rational thought process taken as a moderator. The study analyze the related literature according to emotional attachment, brand trust and rational thoughts process and hypotheses developed to test the direct effect of moderating variable that is rely on the theoretical model made. Moreover, literature analyze for available moderating variable rational thought process which has an impact on the dependent and independent variables. The main objective of the study is to find the moderating impact on brand trust and emotional attachment. And to find the relationship

between brand trust and emotional attachment. Afterwards, the research methodology and analysis of the conclusion are explained. Finally, the managerial implications, limitations of the research and future research directions also discussed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Emotional Attachment

In collective psychology theory, attachment can be define as an emotional associated bond among an individual and a specific object (Bowlby, 2012)and according to marketing theory, customers can also develop and provide feelings with full linked with brands. Thus, brand attachment creates the bonding between consumers and specific brand which employs emotions and feelings with that brand. Marketers have motive behind emotional attachment of consumers with brand for many reasons; attachment helps to minimize the negative feelings and it raises the positive knowledge of the products and motivates consumers to pay freely and makes brand loyalty. These brand emotions and feelings comprise one motion, affection and relation (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Attachment is a link which is developed by a person from their babyhood with their parents, ensuing in their life. Later, it can also advance to many other people and things as well as brands (Leets, De Becker, & Giles, 1995). The consumer's inner thoughts play an important role in developing attachment against a specific brand bygone the span of time (Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). Consumers give importance to the brand in form of emotional link with brands, it means consumers love a product or service offered by the brand which requires a lot of practical and psychological components to be offered by the brand. (Vlachos, Theotokis, Pramatar, & Vrechopoulos, 2010).

In the literature of branding, emotional brand attachment shows the closeness of the individual towards a brand in the form of strong intellectual and emotive impression resting in the mind of consumers (Park, MacInnis, & Priester, 2008). Human attitude is strongly have an impact one motions, not entirely by sense. Consumers are usually emotional and perceptive with their attitude that developing through the emotional focus of the brain, and heart imposed gut feelings and usually independent of informed control (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). Pawle et al. (2006) gave evidence that feelings and emotions are composed in the form of proud-self, while perceptions are composed of basis consciousness. They employ hierarchical regression to estimates the results. Their result also indicates that actions in the proud-self constantly anticipate in the actions which assure that feelings and emotions will constantly build pre-cognitively and pre-delicately forward any knowledge or information transform can take place (Damasio, 2000).Bornstein(1989) believed that the consumers who have less information are less involved with emotional perspective in advertisements, the less superior they are expected to work, because the observer has limited opportunity to rationally assessed, deny and decline their efficiency(Bornstein, 1989). Heath et al.(2006)also argued that if advertisements desire to develop a heavy brand relationships, it requires to consolidate the strong levels of emotional wiliness and this emotional satisfaction will be more competent, if less thoughts is compensated to it (Heath, Brandt, & Nairn, 2006). Emotional attachment with brands has a significant former of brand loyalty and this

relationship produce important to the marketers to get the aggressive feedback by maintain the customers with few cost (Thomson et al., 2005).

2.2 Brand Trust

According to the literature of psychology, most of the researchers determine trust in two modes, and those are intellectual and emotional trust. First of all, intellectual trust is explained as good rational logics that why the commodity of trust listed to build trust (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). It is explained as assessing the loyalty, competency and equality of the credible object and shows the economic perception of trust as enlightened preferred. Secondly an emotional trust is the affection that guided in the form of trust that is rely on current emotional attitude on arts, captivation, endowment and indicator of benevolence. Usually trust-based attitude revealed from a combination of emotional and intellectual trust.(Riegelsberger, Sasse, & McCarthy, 2005).Trust on brand can be explained as the readiness of the fair consumer to build on the competency of the brand to achieve its declared actions. Moreover, trust has been established to be anticipating of loyalty in the market of consumer. Brand trust can also be explain as the attachment of the consumers that consist on the competency of the brand to build its regular components(Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Author proposed consumer trust is a basic function in developing heavy customer relationships and feasible market share(Urban, Sultan, & Qualls, 2000). Brand trust can also be developed by implementing attitude of safety, loyalty and honesty about their brands to consumers (Doney & Cannon, 1997). According to Yim et al. (2008), consumers demanded emotional relationship with services and product brands, a lot of components are necessary to build the consumer brand emotional attachment (Yim, Tse, & Chan, 2008).

2.3 Rational Thoughts Process

It is required to indicate the strategic and rational behavior like a commitment. Rational thought process claims would expected better fitted for those products that disputed to those with minor involvement. This argument is sustained by Petty et al.(1983) who found controversy related arguments for a fabricated products that are more important held down the conditions of high involvement than under low involvement conditions by using qualitative approach. Rational claims would also be suggested as particularly competent when the beneficiary is positively biased towards the product. In these precedents, the absorbed and in attentive instructions would incident the betterment of positive thoughts which influence the supported position (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983).

Brand trustworthiness revealed from a rational and emotional process that is rely on the appraisal of the brand performance and honor, while sincerity is an emotional and social trust resulted to build on consumer thoughts of brand adaptation and design towards the consumer (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011). There are other many researches which have studied on brand trust, they found that services owners used emotional advertisements more than rational advertisements (Javalgi & Cutler, 1993). Rational advertisements generated from the traditional instructions prepare the structure of decision making where the consumer is made to make relevant and rational decisions. Firms use advancements in structuring to change the concept of viewers' attitude about the advertised brand and focus on their impressive power of clashes about brand characteristics. Such claims

linked with viewer’s self-interest by displaying product benefits like showing a product’s economy, quality and value in market or its performance (Armstrong, Adam, Denize, & Kotler, 2014).

Brand trust is implied as a rational construct explaining the readiness of the consumer to consist on the brand to build its certain components(Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman, & Yague-Guillen, 2003). Heath (2006) also argues that decisions of brand are not always rational, but we hardly think about them, an individual only make decisions in which they have interest, affections or having emotions for that product. Individual are physically ineffective of making decisions that are rely on perfectly on rational thoughts. Perceptions of brands give full consideration to the rational and significantly but generally ignore their neural, experiential or practical attitudes(Cooper & Branthwaite, 2002).In other words, the consumer surprises if the brand, as an illustrated body or object according to their interest. In short, brand integrity revealed from a rational and emotional process that is based on the computation of the brand performance and honor, while sincerity is an emotional and social attitude and trust resulted to build on consumer thoughts about brand adaptation and design towards consumer. In above discussed literature, no study has been found in which rational thought process taken as a moderator between emotional attachment and brand trust in the context of Pakistan carbonated industry.

3. Conceptual Model

The basis for theoretical framework of this research was on the emerging theory. It includes different characteristics of fields; specifically philosophical attitudes and physiological or motivational expectancy. The application of this theory can be observed in forms of constructs of consumer emotional attachment. It also helps us to measure that how emotional attachment can measure brand trust in customers by using inherently or absolutely expressed form of communication. Expectancy value theory explained that individuals are goal-oriented and they develop attitude due to the trust and the values present in their mind set (Fishbein, 1963; Mondy, Woods, & Rafi, 2008).

A conceptual model has been confined which is explained in Figure 1. The model describes the consumer’s emotional attachment through advertisement to develop brand trust and rational thoughts process which includes primary, negative, positive, social and individual emotive that plays moderating role between emotional attachment and brand trust. On the basis of these hypotheses the research framework is provided in figure 1.

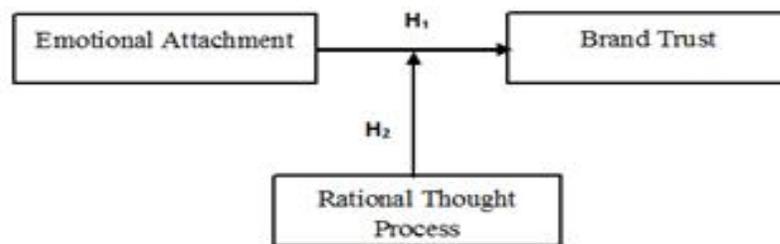


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

Thus, the above discussed literature leads us to formulate the following hypotheses:

- **H₁:** There is a positive and significant relationship between emotional attachment and brand trust
- **H₂:** Rational thought process moderates the relationship between brand trust and emotional attachment.

By using the literature of the study and the theoretical framework developed, this study expected to explore the relationship among the emotional attachment and brand trust and rational thought process by presenting the moderating role between dependent and independent variables.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research design for this factual study is descriptive. It has been suggested that the quantitative research method was inspired with positivism and relied on assortment of quantifiable measurements, which allowed assumptions of the hypotheses and the development of relationships (Burns & Burns, 2008). In extension, Creswell (2013) found that for an issue of extensive and expressive research, quantitative access would be most relevant and suitable.

4.2 Data Collection

The methodologies of this study generally confide on the primary data and data were collected through well designed questionnaire. The study applied convenient sampling techniques to gather the data (Creswell, 2013). Starnes et al. (2010) also found that an impartial random choice of individuals was necessary so that the sample defined the population in the long run (Starnes, Yates, & Moore, 2010). Total sum of 300 questionnaires were given to the participants and 296 questionnaires were received that is 98.6 percent response rate. The questionnaire comprised of two parts. First part explained the data that was associated with consumer's demographics like age, gender and second part of questionnaire explained consumers' thinking about the variables that are presented in theoretical model like brand trust, emotional attachment and rationality. Buck et al. (2006) represented a tool of measurement known as CASC scale with five points Likert Scale comprises on strongly disagree to strongly agree, which is used in this study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) software have been used to analyze the results.

4.3 Regression Tests

The adoption of the regression model was due to its capability to employ for the modeling and analysis of the integral data contains the values of a dependent variable, independent variable and moderating variable as a predictor or analytical variable. Regression modeling was a tool for explaining the causal relationships between two or more variables. The regression coefficient gave the courage of this relationship. When the value of regression was 1, the dependent variable was absolutely described by the independent variable. If the value of regression was 0, there was no relation between the two variables (dependent and independent). The regression coefficient that was indicated by R gave strength to relationship (Marx & Larsen, 2006). The F-test value explains that model is fit, there is clue that the emotional attachment has linear correlation with the brand trust. The critical value for the test comprises on the sample size. For this study, a

5% confidence interval has been selected which is very common for all researches. Hierarchical multiple regression method is employed. The values of R^2 , ANOVA (F-value), Durbin Watson, values of β and β_0 are useful for application of results. There are few researches which are tested by these multiple regression values like (Irwin & McClelland, 2001) research.

5. Results

5.1 Validity and Reliability Analysis

Reliability and validity has been determined on the constructs of emotional attachment, brand trust and rational thought process. The reliability of constructs has been identified by using Cronbach’s alpha. The value of reliability test is 0.6 or less usually determined unsatisfactory results. For the sample selected for this study, the table1 shows Reliability Statistics of 96 items. The overall value of Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.923 which is considerably good as it is greater than 0.7. This shows that the data was collected from respondents is reliable. These values are compositely reliable and internally validated as suggested by (Cortina, 1993).

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.923	96

5.2 Descriptive Analysis

The mean score of respondents on brand trust is 3.1929 with standard deviation of 0.71272. The mean score of respondents on rational thought process is 2.8644 with standard deviation of 0.49720. The mean score of respondents on emotional attachment is 2.8678 with standard deviation of 0.59236, by which it means that consumer mind set is significantly affected by Brand trust and emotional attachment as mention in table 2.

Table2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand Trust	300	3.1929	.71272
Rational Thoughts	300	2.8644	.49720
Emotional Attachment	300	2.8678	.59236

5.3 Frequency Analysis

The study engaged the constructs and dimensions for measurement scale on analytically validated scales from prior researches. The demographic aspects of this research is suppressed in table 3, on higher percentage of females that was 53.7 percent than males

that was 46.3 percent. In terms of age 16-23 years old, 24-30 years old, 31-37 years old and 37-45 years old having percentages are 44.7, 23.7, 22.3 and 9.3 percent respectively.

Table 3: Frequency Analysis

	F	%
Gender		
Male	139	46.3
Female	161	53.7
Age		
16-23	134	44.7
24-30	71	23.7
31-37	67	22.3
37-45	28	9.3

In order to confirm the hypothesis of study regression analysis was conducted.

5.4 Regression Analysis

Table 4: Coefficient (Dependent variable: Brand Trust)

Model	R	R Square	B	t-Statistics	F	Sig.	Un-Standardized B	Durbin-Watson
1	0.454 ^a	0.206	0.454	8.797	77.392	0.000	1.626	1.587
							0.546	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Attachment

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

$$\text{Brand Trust} = 1.626 + 0.546\text{Emotional attachment} \text{-----Eq. (1)}$$

Table 4 shows that when emotional attachment was regressed on brand trust, it explained 20.6% in brand trust variability that is caused by emotional attachment with brand, with significant F-statistics (F=77.392, b=0.454, t=8.797, p<0.01), which proves first hypothesis. The Durbin-Watson test has value 1.519 which shows no autocorrelation

exist in model. Equation 1 indicates that one unit in emotional attachment would change brand trust by 0.546 units in the mind of consumers.

Table 5: Coefficient (Dependent Variable: Brand Trust)

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	B	t-Statistics	F	Sig	Un-Standardized B	Durbin-Watson
1	0.454 ^a	0.206	0.206	0.454	8.797	77.392	0.000	1.626	1.587
								0.546	
2	0.493 ^b	0.244	0.037	0.215	3.831	47.809	0.000	0.433	1.519
								0.308	

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Attachment
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Attachment, Rational Thoughts
- c. Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

Brand Trust = 0.546 + 0.433rational thought process + 0.308 emotional attachment-----
----- Eq. (2)

Table 5 shows that when emotional attachment and rational thought process was regressed on brand trust, it explained 20.6% and 24.4% variability with significant F-statistics (F=77.392, 47.809, b=0.454, 0.215, t=8.797, 3.831, p<0.01), thus proving second hypothesis. Equation 2 indicates that one unit change in emotional attachment would change brand trust by 0.433 units and one unit change in rational thought process would change brand trust by 0.308 units. The Durbin-Watson test has value 1.519 which shows no autocorrelation exist in model. Table 5 shows coefficient table in which regression is run by considering two predictors emotional attachment and rational thought process with outcome variable, brand trust This establishes unique association that each predictor (emotional attachment and rational thought process) has with the outcome (brand trust). This proves partial moderation when relationship between emotional attachment and brand trust is still significant. This study explains the impact of emotional attachment on brand trust with moderation effect of rational thought process in carbonated drink sector of Pakistan. The result of this study revealed that both hypotheses H₁, H₂ are supported for this study .This study contribute to literature by providing empirical evidence that marketers and advertisers can retain their valuable strategies by appreciating the perception and views of their customers through their rational thoughts towards advertisements by considering the importance of empowering them.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Brand trust was the most important variable that is significantly and positively related with the independent variable emotional attachment. The main purpose of this research

was to check the moderating effect of emotional attachment in advertisement of carbonated drinks in Pakistan and brand trust that was developed in the minds of consumers. The results showed that emotional attachment with advertisement of carbonated drinks such as Pepsi, Coke has a significant relationship with the brand trust that was developed in the consumer's minds in Pakistani context. The findings also revealed that rationality acted as a moderator between emotional thoughts and brand trust. The rational thoughts include primary emotions (sense of power), negative emotions (afraid, angry, irritated disgusted), positive emotions (hope, happy, proud), social emotions (sense of affiliation) and individualistic emotions (proud) that play moderating role because when emotional attachment increases than these rational feelings developed and create strong brand trust in the mind of consumers. Prior studies have found significant links between the three dimensions of trust in the brand that was proposed by (Gurviez & Korchia, 2003), reliability, sincerity and benevolence and certain attributes of brand identity.

The results mentioned in above tables indicate the presence of positive and significant relationship between the emotional attachment and brand trust. So the H₁ hypothesis is therefore validated and accepted. In second Hypothesis, rational thought process acted as a moderator between emotional attachment and brand trust, therefore H₂ also validated and accepted.

The results administered an important recommendation for firms. It is recommended that firms should target their attention on the importance of emotional attachment in advertisements on developing brand trust in the mind of consumers about carbonated drinks. They can develop emotional advertisements to grab the consumers towards their product. The organization can also create advertisements in the context of rational thoughts of the consumers and use it as a business strategy. Developing brand trust in the mind of consumers is the most important component in all over the world.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are few confinements of this research. These limitations include use of structured questionnaire, quantitative data analysis and focus on the single carbonated drink sector and cultural issues. For further study it is suggested to include some other theoretical variables on brand trust across diversified sectors and cross cultural settings. Future researchers can also test mediating and moderating techniques of other variables in relationship between emotional attachment and brand trust by employing sophisticated analytical approaches. The survey of this research has been conducted on a small sample size because of short time span and convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data. Due to this reason, there is the possibility of an undiscovered biasness that might be present in the results. Therefore, a large sample size would be essential to get a better result for future study. This study will be qualitative which can also be conducted by using observation and interviews method. Future studies can focus on other manufacturing and services sector. The current research has been conducted on low involvement products; in future it can be extended to high involvement products. In future, researchers can do the longitudinal study.

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