

ROLE OF BRAND HATE ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONSUMER PERSONALITY TRAITS AND BRAND LOYALTY

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Abstract: *This research examines relationship between consumer personality traits comprising of extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness and brand loyalty. Further, this relationship is tested by introducing a mediating variable namely Brand hate. Brand hate is the negative emotional effect of the consumer towards the brand. Convenience sampling was used to collect the primary data of the respondents. The study is carried out on a sample of 250 respondents. Theoretical model was tested through structural equation modelling using SPSS 24 and Amos 22. It is found that all personality traits variables studied have a direct relationship with brand loyalty. Mediation results indicate that brand hate fully mediates the relationship amongst extroversion-brand loyalty and conscientiousness-brand loyalty. Furthermore, partial mediation of brand hate exists between agreeableness-brand loyalty and openness to experience-brand loyalty. This research presents new perspectives for constructing a prudent model of consumer personality traits and brand loyalty by incorporating brand hate as the mediator. Findings, implications, and limitations are discussed towards the end of the paper.*

Keywords: *Consumer Personality, Brand Hate, Brand Loyalty, Personality Traits*

INTRODUCTION

As customers, one prefers not just to buy those products that are really needed, but also those products which one perceives as being congruent with his/her “self-concept.” An individual wants such products which could reflect with one’s personality. Marketers are taking a note of it and offering products that exceed customer’s expectations (Breschi, 2019). This influences customer to make repeat purchases, which ultimately leads to brand loyalty. But, what if a brand does not meet the expectations of the customer? What if customer start developing hate for a certain brand? Does this affect the relationship between what customer perceives about themselves and what makes them loyal to a certain brand?

It would be appropriate to state that personality of an individual helps in determining his/her purchase behavior. Studies conducted in the past provide evidence for the same (Azzadin et al., 2012; Onu & Garvey, 2014; Udo-Imeh, 2015; Middlebrook, 2019). Personality pertains to distinctive psychological attributes that give rise to consistent and long-lasting reactions towards one’s surroundings (Kotler, 2010). Traits such as extraversion, openness, agreeableness,

conscientiousness, and neuroticism, describes personality of an individual (John & Srivastava, 1999). These five factors, when combined together, came to be known as the OCEAN model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to (Mulyanegara, Tsarenko & Anderson, 2009), extraversion is a trait that characterizes itself as enthusiastic, confident, and highly emotionally expressive. Conscientiousness comprises of thoughtful and goal-oriented behaviour (Mulyanegara et al., 2019). Agreeableness is predicated on characteristics including benevolence, companionship, generosity, and selflessness (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Neuroticism is described as a tendency to encounter uncomfortable and disconcerting thoughts, feelings as well as emotions (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Openness is described as being receptive to newer ideologies, thoughts, and experiences and has been directly connected to innovation and creativity (Shaver & Brennan, 1992).

Since each individual has a distinct blend of personality traits and each one is unique, they may encounter different emotions and thoughts and behave differently in the same scenario (Durukan & Bozaci, 2011). So, can this combination of characteristics, helps in identifying whether an individual will stay loyal to a brand or not? (Lin, 2010; Durukan & Bozaci, 2011) agree to this statement. Relationship, both

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indirect and direct, amongst personality traits and brand loyalty have been proved by these researchers.

Loyalty is a bias towards a brand manifested over a period of time. (Mellens, Dekimpe & Steenkamp, 1996). Loyalty indicates a repeat purchase of a brand, which is because of the fondness of the customer towards the brand (Ishak & Ghani, 2013). According to them, loyalty takes place when customers are aware that the brand's product delivers the desired product attributes and quality at the best possible price. Brand Loyalty is studied as a combination of behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (Amin & Nika, 2018). Behavioral loyalty is purchasing a regular brand for a long period. It takes into consideration the proportion or pattern of purchases. On the other hand, attitudinal loyalty is the inclination to stay loyal to the concerned brand, that is expressed by the aim to purchase it as a key preference.

Now a question arises. Can a brand and the customer reach at a state of incongruence? Can hate towards the brand affect the loyalty of a customer? Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017) found that brand hate, which comprises of "*symbolic incongruity*" and "*ideological incompatibility*", does affect the brand loyalty. Brands engaged in unethical activities (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009) and which do not comply with the customer's self-image, often ends up being hated (Kressmann, 2006). PepsiCo and Nestlé had to face a boycott by customers over palm oil's apparent connections to cutting trees and violations of human rights (Bryson & Atwal, 2019). Researchers have gone to the extent of describing brand hate as the severe damaging affective element of the brand's attitude (Bryson, Atwal & Hultén, 2013). Brand hate has been found as an antecedent of brand loyalty (Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015). If a brand acts incongruent to what its customers expect, avoidance is bound to happen. Brand avoidance leads to customer being less loyal (Hegner, Fetscherin & van Delzen, 2017). Brand hate leads to brand loyalty, but can the same be stated for the association amongst personality of customer and hatred towards the brand? Relationship between personality and hatred towards the brand has been conceptualized by (Kucuk, 2019), where it was found that certain personality traits of an individual makes him/her hate a brand more. Additionally, it was found that if a brand's performance is poor, it is likely to be hated more by individuals who are confident and competitive.

In the light of previous research work done in the similar field, the present study aims to identify the relationship amongst customer personality traits and brand loyalty. Further, the mediation effect of brand hate in this relationship is assessed. On the basis of this, two objectives for the study are set; Firstly, to assess the relationship amongst consumer personality traits and brand loyalty. Secondly, to assess the impact of brand hate on the relationship amongst consumer personality traits and brand loyalty.

On the basis of review of literature, this paper describes the three variables of the study, viz., consumer personality,

brand hate and brand loyalty. The literature review section is followed by the theoretical framework, research methodology, which is preceded by the analysis, conclusion and managerial implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Personality

Personality, derived from a Latin word *persona*, literally means mask. Personality is a mixture of an individual's unique pattern of feelings, thoughts, and behaviour (Lumen, n.d). Personality traits are the leading facets of an individual's personality which ascertain his/her behavior and are presented in a variety of social and personal contexts (Lumsden & MacKay 2006). In consumer behavior, big-five personality model have been most widely used. The Big Five Model narrows down the wide range of personality adjectives to just five key personality traits (Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001; Goldberg, 1990). The five-factor personality model gives a constructive and universally applicable categorization for the study of individual differences (Shi et al., 2009). According to Mulyanegara et al. (2019) Extraversion entails a dynamic attitude towards the social world, including characteristics like social interaction, confidence, and optimistic emotion. The second factor, i.e., Agreeableness compares pro-social and communal orientation towards one another with hostility and contains characteristics such as selflessness, tenderness, trust, and humility. Third factor, i.e., Conscientiousness' explains socially recommended self-control that promotes task-and goal-oriented behavior, like thinking before acting, planning for the future, trying to follow standards and rules, preparing, orchestrating, and setting priorities. Fourth factor, Neuroticism compares mental stability and even-tempereness with negative feelings, like feeling nervous, nervous, and depressing. Finally, the fifth factor, i.e., Openness to experience explains the scope, intensity, inventiveness, and intricacy of a person's psychological and experimental lives (Mulyanegara et al., 2019).

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty pertains to a firm's inner attitude to a point that contributes to consumers' psychological connections towards the brand and the organization. Loyalty is a form of customer reaction that is articulated over time which involves some decision-making process (Huang, 2015). Loyalty is described by Oliver (1980) as a strong commitment to substantiate the favored product consistently in the long run, a philosophy that creates monotonous same-brand purchases,

notwithstanding contextual impacts and marketing efforts that will have the ability to cause switching behavior. Amin and Nika (2018) studied brand loyalty as a combination of behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. DuVall (2016) has explained the difference between the two. Behavioral loyalty is exhibited when customers who seem to be loyal, behave in such a way as they are stranded. e.g., presence of only one grocery store in one's locality, bounds them to be behaviorally loyal to that brand. On the other hand, affectively loyal customers (the ones who absolutely adore the brand) will always prefer to buy the same brand every time, out of choice, from more than one available grocery stores/brands in one's locality.

Personality and Brand Loyalty

Research conducted in the past have not established or rejected the direct relation between the personality traits of consumer and brand loyalty. Rather an indirect approach was applied by Remetei (2018) to understand this relationship. Out of five personality traits, only two traits, viz., Conscientiousness and openness, even though weak, but were found to be correlated with avoidance. Apart from big-five personality traits, Menidjel, Benhabib and Bilgihan (2017) found that customers who score high on innovativeness trait and are variety seekers are positively associated with brand loyalty. The literature review clearly indicates that there is a gap to study, a direct relationship between big-five personality traits and brand loyalty. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Extraversion has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty.

H2: Agreeableness has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty.

H3: Conscientiousness has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty.

H4: Openness to experience has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty.

Personality and Brand Hate

Products offered by a brand might be liked by an individual, whereas others might hate it. Research has been conducted in past to understand the relationship amongst individual personality traits and brand hate. Kucuk (2019) found that individual ranking more on the conscientiousness trait are prone to the hatred towards the brand. This trait was referred to as "dependable". Furthermore, an anxious individual is also likely to be more expressive towards brand hate. As dependable persons are extremely conscious and are better able to monitor brands' wrong doings than most other customers and, as a result, feel a strong hatred for that brand.

Other traits of personality were not found to be significantly affecting brand hate. Brand hate is considered as the blend of "symbolic incongruity" and "ideological incompatibility" (Hegner, Fetscherin & van Delzen, 2017). A brand should always take into consideration of the customer-self (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009), and make sure of not indulging in unfair or unethical activities (Kressmann, 2006), to avoid a brand being hated by customers.

To build on the findings of Kucuk (2019), this research tries to establish relationship amongst customer personality traits and brand hate. As there remains a gap for understanding how traits like openness to new experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and, agreeableness, are prone towards hatred of the brand.

Brand Hate and Brand Loyalty

A brand which is not liked by an individual is most likely to get any of the following reactions from the customer. Either the customer will spread negative word-of-mouth or he/she will avoid the brand, altogether (Hegner, Fetscherin & van Delzen, 2017). Hatred towards the brand is demonstrated by customers turning their backs on a particular brand's product and hence trying to avoid the brand by switching to a competitor's brand. Relationship between brand hate and brand loyalty have been studied in the essence of customers avoiding the brand (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Park, Eisingerich & Park, 2013). The present research attempts to examine the mediating role of brand hate in affecting brand loyalty. Therefore, the hypotheses proposed are:

H5: Extraversion has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty mediated through Brand Hate.

H6: Agreeableness has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty mediated through Brand Hate.

H7: Conscientiousness has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty mediated through Brand Hate.

H8: Openness to experience has a significant impact on Brand Loyalty mediated through Brand Hate.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the hypothesis developed on the basis of available literature, this research tries to examine the relationship amongst customer personality and brand loyalty. To add rigor to the study, mediating effect of brand hate is tested on this relationship.

Consumer personality traits, viz., "extraversion", "agreeableness", "conscientiousness", and "openness" (John & Srivastava, 1999; Costa & McCrae 1992) have

been taken as the independent variable for the study. On the other end of the framework, brand loyalty, which comprises of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Amin & Nika, 2018), have been taken as the dependent variable. The role of brand hate (Hegner, Fetscherin & van Delzen, 2017), as a mediating variable will be assessed after checking the direct relationship amongst customer personality traits and brand loyalty. In this study, brand hate is studied as a composition of symbolic incongruity and ideological incompatibility. Conceptual framework is shown in Fig. 1

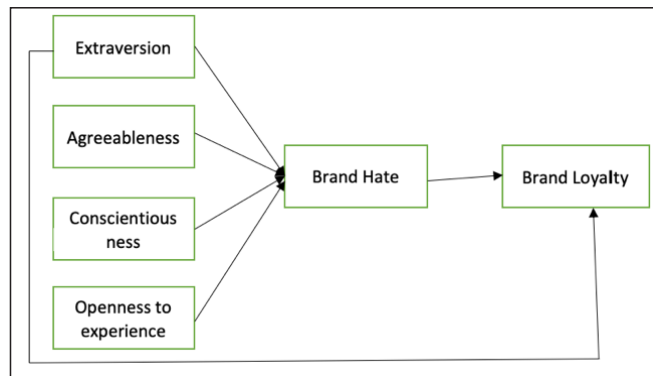


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

For this research, data from 250 respondents were collected (Table 1). Out of this, 51% were male and 49% were female respondents. Most of them were married, making up 53% of the total sample. Majority (54%) belonged to the age group of 36-49 and 37% of the total respondents were undergraduates.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics		Percentage
Gender	Men	51
	Women	49
Marital Status	Married	53
	Unmarried	47
Age Group	22-35	46
	36-49	54
Education	Under Graduate	37
	Graduate	33
	Post Graduate	23
	Other	7

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Before factor analysis the relevance of data should be verified through “Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy” and “Bartlett’s sphericity test”. KMO value was calculated as .823, higher than the prescribed limit of 0.6 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity value was 0.000 (as shown in table II below), which is significant at 5%, (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). Thus, the given factors have zero correlation.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.823
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2905.214
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

Using PCA (Principal Component Analysis) and varimax rotation, the relationship between different variables was checked under factor analysis. Only six factors were found to be significant out of 18 variables on the basis of percentage explained having Eigen value more than 1 as shown in Table III below. These factors explained 82.004% of the cumulative variance. Items having factor loading lower than 0.5 were not used, hence removed (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The reliability of the data was checked with the help of Cronbach’s alpha. Overall reliability value came out to be 0.824 above the permissible limit of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.995	33.307	33.307
2	2.859	15.884	49.191
3	1.882	10.455	59.646
4	1.555	8.636	68.282
5	1.409	7.827	76.109
6	1.061	5.895	82.004

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is an exploratory technique due to the researcher’s limited control on variables used as a measure for the latent construct, and therefore confirmatory factor analysis is used for uni-dimensionality and constructs validation (Ahire, Golhar & Waller, 1996). AMOS 21.0 was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Convergent Validity

Three common approaches are followed by researchers in order to ensure convergent validity: Composite Reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.7; Average Variance Explained (AVE) must be more than 0.5, and standardised factor loading must be more than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). As presented in Table 4 below, the values of CR and AVE were above the threshold limit of 0.7 and 0.5 respectively (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012). Therefore, the data shows adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

It is a research construct methodology designed to evaluate different conceptual principles that are not associated with each other. To ensure discriminant validity, when compared, the square root of the AVE and the diagonal value must be greater than that of the non-diagonal values (Kesharwani & Tiwari, 2011; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4 represents the construct correlation matrix. All the diagonal values are more than the non-diagonal values (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012), thus confirms the construct discriminant validity.

Table 4: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Bp_Con	Brand_Loyalty	Brand_Hate	BP_Ext	BP_Open	BP_Agr
Bp_Con	0.804	0.673	0.080	0.034	0.820					
Brand_Loyalty	0.944	0.737	0.187	0.050	0.082	0.858				
Brand_Hate	0.917	0.734	0.187	0.089	0.197	0.432	0.857			
BP_Ext	0.877	0.781	0.176	0.085	0.204	0.238	0.419	0.884		
BP_Open	0.827	0.706	0.124	0.047	0.283	-0.002	0.171	0.352	0.840	
BP_Agr	0.790	0.653	0.026	0.009	0.029	-0.047	0.129	0.161	-0.037	0.808

Model Fit of Theoretical Model

This study accepted the views of the following researchers so as to assess the overall model adequacy: Schreiber (2008); McDonald and Ho (2002); Boomsma, (2000). GFI, AGFI, NFI, and CFI are the goodness of fit measurement indices indicates strong evidence of uni-dimensionality in the

model (Byrne, 2013). RMSEA is the badness of the fit measurement indices that represent the difference in fitness of the model. Key model statistics represents that all the latent factor modelled simultaneously, with CMIN (χ^2) = 170.501, (df)=120, CMIN/ df (χ^2/df) = 1.421 which is less than the threshold value of 4, GFI = 0.933, AGFI = 0.904, NFI = 0.943, CFI = 0.946, and RMSEA = 0.41 in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Fit Indices

	Model Fit	Cut-off Criteria	Model Statistics
1	CMIN		170.501
2	Df		120
3	CMIN/Df	< 4	1.421
4	GFI	> 9	0.933
5	AGFI	> 8	0.904
6	NFI	> 9	0.943
7	CFI	> 9	0.982
8	RMSEA	< .8	0.41

Result Interpretation

After evaluating the validity and reliability, a structural model was analysed. As shown in the model, consumer personality is considered as an independent variable (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness) and brand

loyalty as dependent variable, with brand hate as variable mediating the relationship. As shown in the Table 6, all hypothesis are proved to be significant at 5%. Extraversion (0.317) has maximum significant impact on brand loyalty followed by openness to experience (.186), Agreeableness (.153), and Conscientiousness (.085).

Table 6: Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Brand Loyalty	<---	BP Agreeableness	.153	.077	1.985	.047	Supported
Brand Loyalty	<---	BP Conscientiousness	.085	.075	1.128	.039	Supported
Brand Loyalty	<---	BP Openness	.186	.079	2.353	.019	Supported
Brand Loyalty	<---	BP Extraversion	.317	.065	4.870	***	Supported

Mediation Analysis

Approach developed by Preacher & Hayes (2008) was adopted for testing of mediation effect. This approach is considered advanced over Baron and Kenny (1986) method as it directly

examines the indirect effect of bootstrapping between predictor and criterion variables (Efron & Tibshirani, 1981). Recent Literature Preacher and Hayes (2008) introduced the bootstrapping technique for estimation of mediation effect, now it is easy to avoid power problems (MacKinnon, 2007).

Table 7: Mediation Analysis

Parameter	Total Effect	p Value	Direct Effect	p Value	Indirect Effect	p Value	Type of Mediation
Extraversion→Brand Hate→Brand Loyalty	0.260	0.001	0.061	0.4085	0.198	0.001	Full Mediation
Agreeableness→Brand Hate→Brand Loyalty	0.123	0.034	0.052	0.029	0.071	0.03	Partial Mediation
Conscientiousness →Brand Hate→Brand Loyalty	0.094	0.033	-0.011	0.889	0.104	0.000	Full Mediation
Openness to experience →Brand Hate→Brand Loyalty	0.093	0.017	0.001	0.039	0.092	0.010	Partial Mediation

From the above Table 7, it can be inferred that brand hate fully mediates the relationship of Extraversion ($\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.40$) and Conscientiousness ($\beta = -0.011$, $p = 0.889$) with Brand Loyalty as the p value of direct effect is above the value of 0.05. Agreeableness and Openness to experience with brand loyalty partially mediated by Brand hate.

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The present research confirms the direct relation of consumer personality traits with brand loyalty. The findings are in contradiction to (Khani, 2013). Individual who are more social, active, assertive, and emotionally positive, have the maximum impact on the brand loyalty trait. Thereby, concluding that extraversion has the direct and most positive effect on brand loyalty. This research also tested the mediation impact of brand hate on the relationship of consumer personality and brand loyalty. Amongst the four personality traits, extraversion and conscientiousness fully mediates the relationship amongst personality traits and brand loyalty. Whereas, agreeableness and openness to experience mediates this relationship partially.

Marketers should keep in mind the personality of the consumer who is buying the product. As there is a direct relation between personality and brand loyalty, marketer should identify which type of personality is more influential in keeping the loyalty high. For instance, Woodland is considered as brand displaying adventure and thrill. Therefore, extrovert individuals are more attracted towards it. Further, the role of brand hate should not be ignored by the marketer. Especially for the individuals displaying extraversion and conscientious traits. Marketer should make sure that the product is congruent with the image of the consumer and not indulge in any unethical activities.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

This study was conducted on a 250 sample collected from Delhi and Noida. To get a better understanding of generalization, future research can be conducted on a bigger sample and a larger geographical area. This study has identified just four traits of personality, which leaves a scope for further study to personality using different personality models. Furthermore, this study has identified the mediating role of brand hate only. Research to be conducted in future

can also include the role of brand love, along with brand hate.

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