

Exploring the Dichotomy Between Brand Addiction and Brand Love: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Purpose: Brand love and addiction reflect two levels of commitment to the relationship between the consumer and the brand. The usual assumption is that brand love is positive and brand addiction is negative. Yet, is this always the case? This study investigates an alternative, more nuanced view where brand love and addiction can be both positive and negative. Different conditions are studied to assess this alternative view, considering harmonious passion, obsessive possession, love for material possessions, and the relationship after a scandal.

Design/methodology/approach: The study involved a survey of 417 respondents in Vietnam. We employed a two-stage approach to test the validity and reliability of the measurement model and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses. We further analyzed the mediation effects using the bootstrapping method.

Findings: The findings support our proposed nuanced view where both types of passion positively influence both brand love and addiction. Further, we find that brand love has *both* positive and negative outcomes. Similarly, brand addiction has *both* positive and negative outcomes. These relationships are demonstrated considering, in particular, two outcomes: brand support after a scandal and love for material possessions. The findings further show that brand love and addiction have similar mediating roles.

Originality/value: The current study challenges the usual assumptions that brand love is positive and brand addiction is negative. Interestingly, the study shows that, under many circumstances, brand love operates similarly to brand addiction and vice versa. Therefore, we suggest a more nuanced comprehensive viewpoint on brand love and addiction and their relationships with passion, emotional attachment, and consumer behavior.

Keywords: Brand addiction, brand love, harmonious passion, obsessive passion.

1 Introduction

Brand love and addiction are two important concepts in consumer-brand relationships (Zhang et al., 2024, Junaid et al., 2022, Deng et al., 2024, Cui et al., 2018, Mrad, 2018). Brand love is referred to as a satisfactory emotional attachment to a brand (Le, 2023, Shimul and Phau, 2023).

It is often the consequence of positive consumer experiences, which lead to positive emotions, positive reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, and love declarations (Gumparthy and Patra, 2020, Mrad, 2018, Gao and Shao, 2024). Brand addiction is referred to as a compulsive identification with the brand, single-minded favor towards the brand (exclusiveness), compelling desires and urges to consume anything related to the brand, and diminished decision autonomy (Francioni et al., 2021, Mrad et al., 2020). This phenomenon can be observed in various domains, including sports, music, vehicles, and fashion, where brand personality becomes integral to the consumer's identity and behavior (Fennis and Pruyn, 2007, Rodrigues et al., 2024).

The existing literature emphasizes the negative effects of brand addiction. For instance, Junaid et al. (2022) identify three possible consequences: trash-talking, excessive spending, and anxiety. Mrad (2018) also underlines the "dark side" of brand addiction, including psychological states such as dependence, compulsion, obsession, and irritability, and negative behaviors such as loss of control, failure to withstand impulses, and dismissal of social and recreational activities in favor of brand-related interactions. In the same vein, other studies have mostly emphasized negative behaviors, states, and attributes of brand addicts (Fournier and Alvarez, 2013). On the other hand, the existing literature also emphasizes the positive effects of brand love (Gumparthy and Patra, 2020). Examples include sustained purchase and use practices, trust and loyalty, and positive word of mouth.

Based on prior studies, one may assume a polarized view over brand love and addiction, where the former is just associated with positive and the latter with negative outcomes. Challenging this assumption, the present study explores an alternative, more nuanced view where brand love and addiction can have both positive and negative outcomes. This alternative view is important as we believe that both love and addiction can have dynamic relationships with consumers and brands (Mrad et al., 2020, Le, 2023). For instance, recent studies have started to examine the dynamic relationship between addictions and brands from both positive and negative sides (Junaid et al., 2024, Rodrigues et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand both aspects so that brands can manage the factors that drive affirmative and adverse outcomes.

For that purpose, this study aims to examine the proposed nuanced view. It aims to examine the factors that can have dynamic relationships with brand addiction and love. It also aims to explore the different roles of brand addiction and love on consumers with emotional

engagement with brands. This view is aligned with recent propositions towards exploring brand addiction from a positive perspective (Junaid et al., 2024).

We adopt the Dualistic Model of Passion and Attachment Theory as theoretical foundations for this study. Attachment Theory considers the emotional attachment between the self (consumer) and an object (brand) (Bowlby, 1979), while the Dualistic Model of Passion considers the emotional state in which the consumer interacts with the brand (Mrad et al., 2020, Le, 2023). These conceptualizations offer a foundation for studying brand love and addiction using a common set of concepts. Using these conceptualizations, we can better understand the emergence of brand love and addiction concerning different emotional ties.

Thus, the present study explores the following research question (RQ): Which factors influence the positive and negative outcomes of brand love and addiction, considering the emotional ties of consumer-brand relationships?

This study is expected to provide three main contributions to the literature. First, we provide a more balanced view of brand love and addiction's positive and negative outcomes. Second, we show that some types of emotional ties strongly affect brand love and addiction in some conditions. In particular, both types of passion, harmonious and obsessive, positively influence brand love and brand addiction. Third, we find that brand addiction can contribute to a positive consumer-brand relationship, e.g., willingness to support a brand after a scandal. This extends the body of studies on brand addiction from a positive perspective (Junaid et al., 2024).

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory stems from the psychology field. It concerns attachment formation and posits that humans develop pathways of enduring relations and bonding between the self and various objects (including people, animals, things, and brands). The development of attachment is an important aspect to consider. The beginning of attachment involves proximity, and further steps involve developing a secure base and self-exploration (Bretherton, 2013). Attachment is recognized to shape the individual's lifestyle, personality, and bonds with others (Bowlby, 1979, Shimul and Phau, 2023).

This theory has been applied in marketing for discussing the strength of long-term emotional attachments consumers develop with brands and proposing scales that express that attachment

(Thomson et al., 2005, Kim and Bae, 2024, Jiao et al., 2024). Besides the strength of attachment, various related aspects have been studied, including romance (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011), sacrifice (Beldona and Kher, 2015), possession (Park and John, 2011), love (Loureiro et al., 2012, Shimul and Phau, 2023), and addiction (Mrad et al., 2020, Babić-Hodović et al., 2023). Focusing on brand love and addiction, the current study uses Attachment Theory to characterize relationships between consumers and brands.

2.2 *Dualistic Model of Passion*

The Dualistic Model of Passion identifies two emotional states influencing how people engage in activities: harmonious and obsessive. In a harmonious state, a person cherishes the relationship (Vallerand et al., 2003, Vallerand et al., 2023). This leads the consumer to possess and/or use the brand, enjoy and value it, and invest in it (Fournier, 1998). People in this harmonic state connect with brands without feeling obliged to follow societal and other external forces (Mehta et al., 2020). Thus, harmonious passion is associated with positive outcomes, as consumers desire to participate in brand-related activities and companies exploit and protect their offerings.

The state of obsessive passion is more intense. It is characterized by a strong internal push to engage in the relationship (Mageau et al., 2005) and difficulties quitting it (Curran et al., 2015). Consumers in this state consider the brand an essential part of their identity (Maduku et al., 2023, Vallerand et al., 2003). As consumers become obsessed with the brand, the relationship may start interfering with other aspects of their lives (Harrigan et al., 2018, Japutra et al., 2025). Thus, obsessive passion is viewed in its association with adverse outcomes.

2.3 *Integrated view*

We adopt an integrated view of Attachment Theory (Bretherton, 2013, Bowlby, 1979) and Dualistic Model of Passion (Batra et al., 2012, Vallerand et al., 2003). Through this integrated view, we can understand that passion is involved in creating brand love and addiction: a certain level of passion is required to engage regularly with specific activities, and long-term engagement with those activities may result in brand love or addiction. As noted by Batra et al. (2012), brand love (and addiction) is a more abstract or high-order concept than passion in that the former depends on the latter. Still, it also involves more complex constructs, such as self-identity, duration of the passion, and things done in the past.

Harmonious and obsessive passions reflect different states of mind in which a person internalizes into one's self and engages in an activity (Vallerand et al., 2003). In that sense, passion is more dynamic, transient, or episodic than brand love and addiction. For instance, it depends on contingencies, mental pressures, and external events. Linking different passion states with varying attachment types to brands can build a more dynamic and nuanced framework for analyzing the continuum from healthy to problematic consumer-brand interactions.

Taking this integrated view and the theoretical foundation discussed above, one may observe the following:

- Passion involves strong emotional attachment;
- Brand love may involve passion in a harmonious emotional state;
- Brand addiction may involve passion in an obsessive emotional state.

From these statements, we should not immediately assume that brand love is attached to positive outcomes and brand addiction is attached to negative outcomes of the relationship with the brand. They indicate different emotional states in the context of strong emotional attachment. Thus, there is a need to verify further this assumption. This leads us to define our research questions further:

- RQ1: Considering consumer-brand relationships' emotional ties, how do harmonious and obsessive passions influence brand love and addiction?

As we also want to investigate whether brand love and addiction can exhibit both positive and negative outcomes, we consider two specific output variables: love of material possessions (Sternberg and Kastely, 1990, Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011) and willingness to support brands after scandal (Kapoor et al., 2022):

- RQ2: How do brand love and addiction influence the a) willingness to support a brand after a scandal and b) love of material possessions?

These two output variables have been selected because they epitomize essential consumer-brand relationships in today's highly competitive, dynamic, and socially mediated markets. Furthermore, the former variable is usually viewed as a positive outcome (Kapoor et al., 2022) and the latter as a negative outcome (Darrat et al., 2023). By examining the range of positive

and negative outcomes, we investigate the varying roles of brand love and addiction in customer relationships. This is aligned with our integrated view.

We now review the literature on brand love and addiction to develop a conceptual framework to answer these questions.

3 Conceptual Development and Hypotheses

3.1.1 Relationships between harmonious passion and brand love/addiction

Harmonious passion describes a balanced and controlled emotional state, where the individual manages their passion for a brand effectively, maintaining a stable emotional state. The related literature suggests that harmonious passion positively impacts brand love (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). This happens because the proximity, even intimacy, with the brand strengthens the emotional bonds, leading to more profound affectionate sentiments over time (Simpson and Steven Rholes, 2017). Affection also plays an important role, as the consumer-brand relationship develops similarly to interpersonal relationships (Le, 2023, Mageau et al., 2009). Considering that the positive relationship between harmonious passion and brand love is a traditional view from past research, we express it as a confirming hypothesis (CH) (Bordens and Abbott, 2014). This allows us to retest the relationship in a more expansive research model:

CH1 Harmonious passion positively influences brand love.

On the other hand, we also inquire about the possibility that harmonious passion may lead to brand addiction, leading us to consider the following research hypothesis (RH):

RH1 Harmonious passion positively influences brand addiction.

This hypothesis is relevant because, while prior studies suggest that passions can lead to brand addiction, they do not specify which types of passion, i.e., can it be a harmonious passion? The hypothesis aligns with positive addiction theory (Junaid et al., 2024), where brand addiction can be developed from a positive emotional state like harmonious passion. We highlight that we formulate CH and RH hypotheses to distinguish the new from traditional assumptions while exploring and refining the relationships between the variables under study (Bordens and Abbott, 2014).

3.1.2 Relationships between obsessive passion and brand love/addiction

Obsessive passion describes a state where the individual overestimates the object of passion, places it above all other aspects of life, and defends the object obsessively, sometimes finding it difficult to accept defeat or rejection (Maduku et al., 2023). The related literature suggests that obsessive passion often leads to brand addiction. Consumers with obsessive passion may exhibit a higher propensity for impulsive behavior (Farah and Ramadan, 2020). Compulsive shop visits, obsessive brand-related news consumption, and irrational brand purchases are examples of brand addiction (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010). Mrad et al. (2020) also demonstrate that obsessive passion leads to dependency and indulgence. Therefore, we consider the following CH:

CH2 Obsessive passion positively influences brand addiction.

On the other hand, we also inquire about the possibility that obsessive passion may lead to brand love:

RH2 Obsessive passion positively influences brand love.

This hypothesis is justified, considering that obsessive passion may not necessarily lead to irrational behavior, anxiety, irritability, and other “dark” states and responses. Instead, strong emotions may propel people to prefer, for example, texting versus voice calls, online versus traditional shopping, e-book versus book reading, and online recommendations versus personal examination, to mention obsessive passions related to technology (Maduku et al., 2023). In other words, this possessive passion may be what compulsively creates brand love.

3.1.3 Relationship between brand love/addiction

Brand love reveals higher intensity as consumers develop feelings akin to interpersonal affection for an object and start internalizing the brand into their self-concept (Francioni et al., 2021). Those who experience brand love are often willing to invest considerable time and resources with the brand (Fournier, 1998). This deep-seated affection can lead to intense brand loyalty (Mrad et al., 2020). Emotional intensity may increase even further as the consumer starts making irrational decisions, engages in uncontrollable behaviors, and develops mental anguish (Thomson et al., 2005). Such emotional intensity is then reflected as brand addiction (Francioni et al., 2021, Mrad et al., 2020). Considering that the relationship between brand love and addiction has already been discussed in the literature, we present the following CH:

CH3 Brand love positively influences brand addiction.

3.1.4 Impact of brand addiction/love on the willingness to support a brand after a scandal

Recent literature has started to explore brand addiction's positive outcomes (Junaid et al., 2024, Mrad and Cui, 2017). In the current study, a particular output we consider is the customers' willingness to support a brand after a scandal (Kapoor et al., 2022). In practice, scandals and reputational damage to a brand can occur due to various issues, such as product failures, financial scandals, and social media canceling. Despite these challenges, brand love and addiction often compel consumers to remain supportive. Brand love can lead consumers to overlook, forgive, and see through past scandals (Nagar and Kour, 2018). This behavior is reinforced when consumers perceive that a company is responsive to negative feedback and committed to repairing the relationship (Song et al., 2019). In the case of addiction, addicted consumers tend to stay with the brand in any situation, including scandals (Le et al., 2024). Thus, having brand addicts can help mitigate negative impacts and move forward after a scandal. Given this understanding, we hypothesize:

RH3 Brand love positively influences the willingness to support a brand after a scandal.

RH4 Brand addiction positively influences willingness to support a brand after a scandal.

3.1.5 Impact of brand love/addiction on love for material possessions

The literature shows that brand love significantly affects the consumers' willingness to acquire products (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Those with deep emotional or psychological ties to the brand may use it for self-expression (Sajtos et al., 2021). Thus, it is logical to suggest that brand lovers want, within reason, to accumulate brand products.

Brand addicts will seek to accumulate an extensive collection of the brand's products, even if that implies excessive spending. Material possession evokes strong emotions and personal attachment (Aaker and Keller, 1990, Watson et al., 2015). This addiction often stems from a profound infatuation with the brand, leading to a heightened desire for ownership. Recent research indicates that such heightened desire is part of self-identity (Kumar and Kaushal, 2021).

Despite the differences, we suggest that brand lovers/addicts share a common goal: accumulating the brand's products. Consequently, we hypothesize that brand love and addiction influence material possession:

RH5 Brand love positively influences material possessions.

RH6 Brand addiction positively influences material possessions.

Fig. 1 presents the six proposed research hypotheses and three confirming hypotheses, forming the research model of the current study. In addition, prior literature suggests possible mediating roles of brand love and addiction. As such, we further develop the following hypotheses.

3.1.6 Mediating roles of brand love/addiction

In the proposed model, it is apparent that the harmonious and obsessive forms of passion affect the two output variables. For instance, an obsessive passion leading to brand love may lead consumers to resist negative information about a product (Maduku et al., 2023). A more harmonious form of brand love may still positively impact the willingness to support the product, albeit with lesser intensity, as the consumer critically analyzes available information and controls the relationship with the brand. The same could be said about the love for material possessions, where harmonious and obsessive passion may lead toward different levels of determination to own the brand's products, from mild to compulsive (Fournier, 1998, Cui et al., 2018). Investigating these mediating effects provides relevant insights into brand behavior. Therefore, we propose the following RHs:

RH7 Brand love mediates the impact of (a) harmonious and (b) obsessive passion on the willingness to support the brand after a scandal.

RH8 Brand addiction mediates the impact of (a) harmonious and (b) obsessive passion on the willingness to support the brand after a scandal.

RH9 Brand love mediates the impact of (a) harmonious and (b) obsessive passion on the love for material possessions.

RH10 Brand addiction mediates the impact of (a) harmonious and (b) obsessive passion on the love for material possessions.

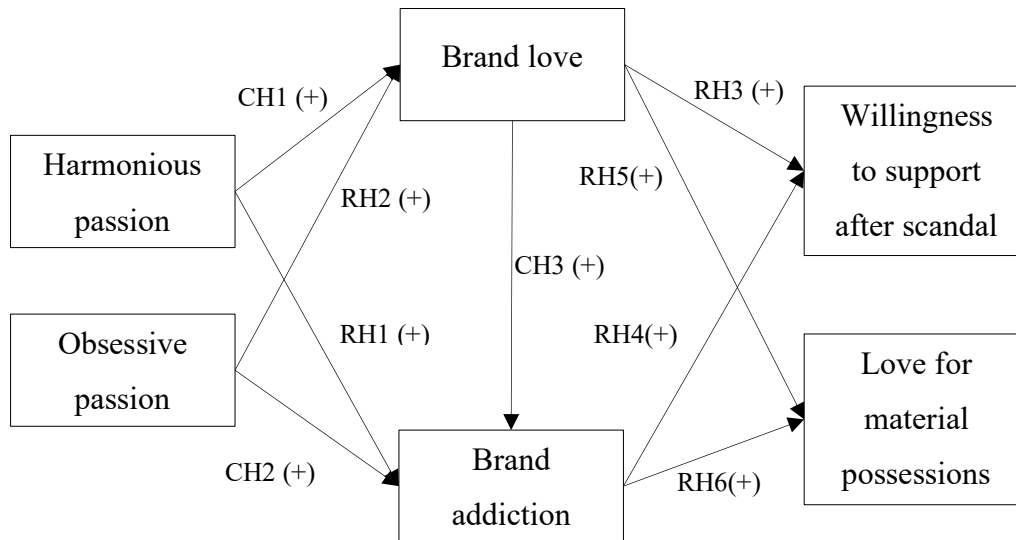


Fig. 1. Research model.

Overall, Fig. 1 presents a research model operating our integrated view. The model is based on the Dualistic Model of Passion and Attachment Theory, which highlights the connections among harmonious passion, obsessive passion, brand love, brand addiction, willingness to support a brand after a scandal, and material possessions. In particular, our model suggests that harmonious passion influences brand love (CH1) and brand addiction (RH1) and that obsessive passion influences brand addiction (CH2) and brand love (RH2). Further, brand love influences brand addiction (CH3). Both brand love and addiction affect the willingness to support a brand after a scandal (RH3 and RH4). And both brand love and addiction influence material possessions (RH5 and RH6). The model also allows us to examine the mediating roles of brand love and addiction (RH7, RH8, RH9, and RH10).

4 Methods

4.1 Sample

The current study was conducted in Vietnam, one of Southeast Asia’s fastest-growing internet economies, which experienced a 36% growth rate in 2020 and 16% in 2024 (Statista, 2023, Vietnamplus, 2024). This study targeted consumers who had purchased technology products through e-commerce in Vietnam. To ensure clarity, a preliminary test of the developed questionnaire was conducted with ten students and researchers who had recently purchased at least one technological device. All elements in the questionnaire were translated into Vietnamese using a translation/back-translation technique.

The participants were invited to participate voluntarily in this study in high-traffic areas such as schools, supermarkets, and convenience stores. Participants were approached directly and asked to complete a structured questionnaire. A screening question was used to ensure that only individuals with recent experience purchasing technological products were included. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, a practical and cost-effective approach commonly used in exploratory research (Etikan et al., 2016). The questionnaires were supplied offline. As a token of appreciation, the participants were offered an English learning e-book (500,000 Vietnamese Dong, approximately 20 US dollars) via email or a link with a QR code.

The questionnaire included a screening question to identify individuals who had recently purchased, used, or intended to buy technological devices. Those who answered affirmatively were asked to provide the brand name and proceeded to the main questionnaire. The participants were also asked to provide demographic information, including gender, education, and age. A set of 432 questionnaires were acquired, of which 417 were completed (96.52%), and 15 were discarded for being incomplete. Demographic information about the respondents is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of participants (N = 417).

	Count	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	209	50.1
Female	204	48.9
Other	4	1.0
Education		
Primary	3	0.7
High school	21	5.0
Vocational degree	169	40.5
Undergraduate	153	36.7
Post-graduate degree	71	17.0
Age (in years)		
18-25	66	15.8
26-35	145	34.8
36-45	160	38.4
Above 45	46	11.0

4.2 Scores

All constructs were assessed using previously validated measures from the related literature, of which a 7-point Likert scale was used. Brand love was assessed using six measures from Bagozzi et al. (2017). Brand addiction was assessed using 11 measures from Mrad and Cui (2017). The assessment of harmonious/obsessive passion was adopted from Vallerand et al. (2003). The willingness to support a brand after a crisis was assessed using four measures from Bhattacharjee et al. (2013). Lastly, love for material possessions was assessed using three measures introduced by Sternberg and Kastlely (1990) and Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011).

5 Analysis and findings

5.1 Measurement reliability and validity

We started with a descriptive analysis, which shows that the data are normal with all skewness and kurtosis values within bounds of two (Table 2). Further, we employed a two-stage approach to analyze the measurement's reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2021). We checked for internal consistency: Cronbach's alphas (CA) were higher than 0.70, and composite reliability (CR) varied between 0 and 1. We also analyzed convergent validity: standardized loadings were above 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was higher than 0.50, as presented in Table 3. Discriminant validity has been established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 4). We also analyzed potential common method variance (CMV) through a full collinearity test using SmartPLS. The ranges of VIF values were less than five, suggest that collinearity is not an issue in the current model (see Table 3) (Hair et al., 2021). To enhance the robustness of SEM model, we applied bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) in SmartPLS, as it provided bias-corrected confidence intervals and ensured stable path estimates. Additionally, Appendix A presents the detailed measurements used in this study, and Appendix B shows other SEM test results. Together, these results show adequate reliability and validity, enabling us to proceed with testing the hypotheses.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
Brand addiction (BA)				
BA1	4.621	1.864	-0.958	-0.293
BA2	3.945	2.025	-1.188	0.041
BA3	4.659	1.723	-0.819	-0.314
BA4	3.532	2.003	-1.141	0.278

BA5	4.504	1.774	-1.010	-0.094
BA6	3.633	2.030	-1.198	0.227
BA7	4.367	1.800	-0.908	-0.185
BA8	4.537	1.815	-0.947	-0.230
BA9	4.053	1.826	-0.915	-0.149
Brand love (BL)				
BL1	5.772	1.326	1.166	-1.142
BL2	4.921	1.404	-0.421	-0.323
BL3	5.463	1.464	0.424	-0.914
BL4	5.233	1.461	0.007	-0.709
BL5	5.094	1.66	-0.211	-0.743
BL6	5.168	1.615	-0.316	-0.658
Harmonious passion (HP)				
HP1	4.890	1.657	-0.465	-0.519
HP2	4.935	1.594	-0.191	-0.611
HP3	4.801	1.575	-0.434	-0.430
HP4	5.237	1.636	-0.229	-0.742
Obsessive passion (OP)				
OP1	3.144	2.056	-0.934	0.545
OP2	3.487	1.867	-1.006	0.182
OP3	3.182	1.912	-1.020	0.412
OP4	3.010	1.849	-0.846	0.523
OP5	3.189	1.826	-1.072	0.332
OP6	3.089	1.848	-1.020	0.391
OP7	3.254	1.892	-1.100	0.262
Willingness to support the brand after a scandal (WTS)				
WTS1	4.926	1.732	-0.990	-0.363
WTS2	4.820	1.666	-0.685	-0.387
WTS3	4.902	1.620	-0.471	-0.458
WTS4	4.614	1.673	-0.483	-0.400
Love for material possessions (MP)				
MP1	4.842	1.641	-0.644	-0.450
MP2	4.614	1.610	-0.474	-0.364
MP3	4.806	1.630	-0.343	-0.552

Table 3. Model Assessment

Variable	Loading	VIF
Brand addiction (BA)	AVE=0.640; CA= 0.930; CR=0.931	
BA1	0.808	2.431
BA2	0.775	2.534
BA3	0.790	2.274
BA4	0.799	2.602
BA5	0.796	2.374
BA6	0.804	2.768
BA7	0.847	3.060
BA8	0.792	2.394
BA9	0.790	2.211
Brand love (BL)	AVE=0.672; CA= 0.902; CR=0.906	

BL1	0.773	2.064
BL2	0.791	2.031
BL3	0.843	2.466
BL4	0.848	2.575
BL5	0.854	2.883
BL6	0.807	2.167
Harmonious passion (HP)	AVE=0.774; CA= 0.902; CR=0.912	
HP1	0.883	2.856
HP2	0.918	3.653
HP3	0.896	2.800
HP4	0.819	2.053
Obsessive passion (OP)	AVE=0.760; CA= 0.947; CR=0.950	
OP1	0.787	2.310
OP2	0.877	3.310
OP3	0.904	4.119
OP4	0.895	4.426
OP5	0.891	4.368
OP6	0.906	4.282
OP7	0.834	2.586
Willingness to support the brand after a scandal (WTS)	AVE=0.852; CA= 0.942; CR=0.943	
WTS1	0.916	3.799
WTS2	0.941	4.920
WTS3	0.909	3.342
WTS4	0.926	4.068
Love for material possessions (MP)	AVE=0.887; CA= 0.936; CR=0.939	
MP1	0.951	4.802
MP2	0.951	4.820
MP3	0.923	3.327

Table 4. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion).

	BA	BL	HP	MP	OP	WTS
BA	0.800					
BL	0.553	0.820				
HP	0.383	0.385	0.880			
MP	0.583	0.535	0.511	0.942		
OP	0.563	0.336	0.223	0.493	0.872	
WTS	0.597	0.581	0.379	0.571	0.379	0.923

Note: BA: Brand addiction; BL: Brand love; WTS: Willingness to support the brand after a scandal; MP: Love for material possessions.

Table 5. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

	BA	BL	HP	MP	OP	WTS
BA						
BL		0.599				
HP		0.411	0.424			

MP	0.622	0.579	0.551		
OP	0.601	0.354	0.231	0.522	
WTS	0.633	0.627	0.409	0.606	0.400

5.2 Hypothesis testing (structural model)

We adopted structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. Fig. 2 shows the fit statistics of the structural model. The R^2 values ranges from 0.149 to 0.486 for the variables, which indicates moderate explanatory power in the structural model. The results presented in Table 6 show that, as expected, CH1 and CH2 were supported. More interestingly, they also show that RH1 and RH2 were supported. That is, obsessive passion positively influences both brand love and addiction. Likewise, harmonious passion positively influences both brand love and addiction. Together, these findings suggest that, to some extent, brand love operates similarly to brand addiction, being attributed to harmonious or obsessive passion.

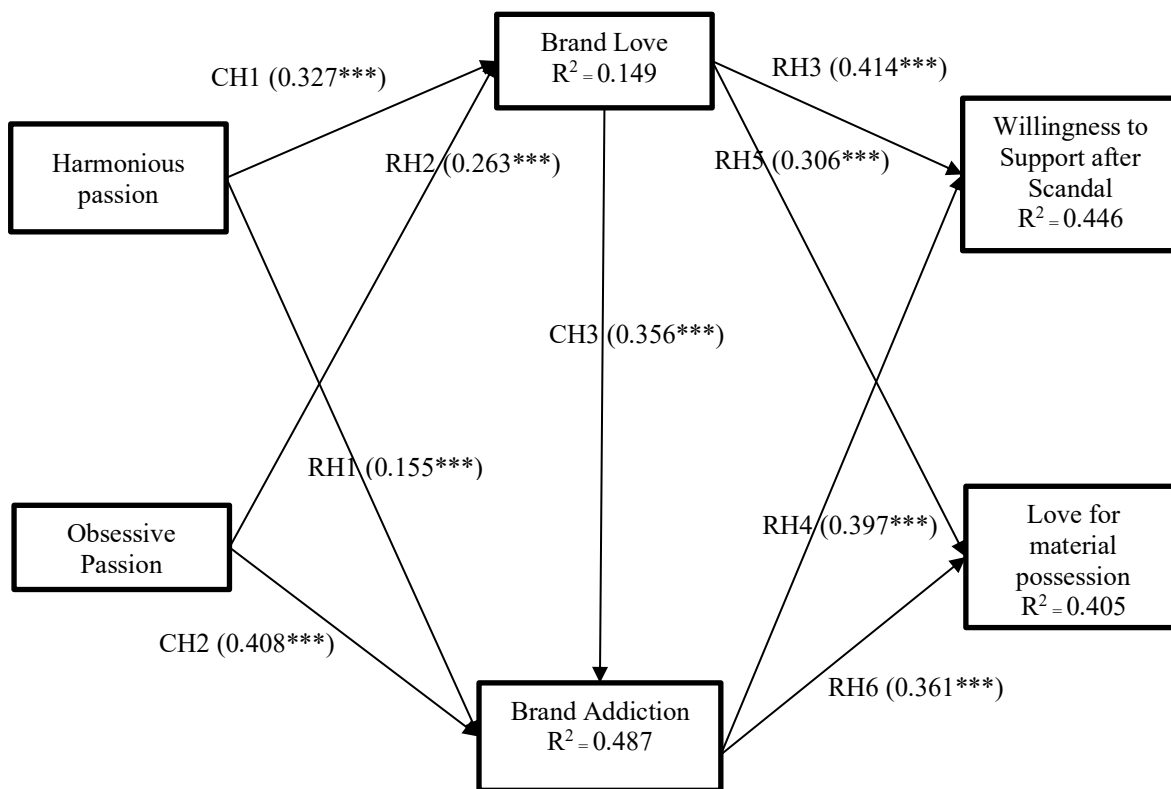


Fig. 2. Results of structural model analysis.

As a result, the findings support our nuanced view that both types of passions positively influence both brand love and addiction. We now consider the relative strength of the influencing relationships with f^2 values (Table 6, second column from the right). As shown

through the f^2 values, the effect of obsessive passion is much stronger than the effect of harmonious passion on brand addiction ($f^2 = 0.284$ versus $f^2 = 0.039$). This indicates that obsessive passion plays a substantial role in driving brand addiction, which is consistent with literature suggesting that obsessive passion leads to more intense and often unhealthy brand engagement (Vallerand et al., 2003). Consumers with harmonious passion, having a balanced and voluntary connection to the brand, are less likely to develop addictive tendencies (Mageau et al., 2009).

Table 6. Structural model results.

Hypothesis		β	St Dev.	t-value	p-value	f^2	Results
CH1	HP → BL	0.327	0.057	5.694	0.000	0.129	Supported
RH1	HP → BA	0.155	0.042	3.648	0.000	0.039	Supported
CH2	OP → BA	0.408	0.037	10.970	0.000	0.284	Supported
RH2	OP → BL	0.263	0.047	5.579	0.000	0.084	Supported
CH3	BL → BA	0.356	0.041	8.761	0.000	0.194	Supported
RH3	BL → WTS	0.414	0.046	7.872	0.000	0.163	Supported
RH4	BA → WTS	0.397	0.044	8.966	0.000	0.197	Supported
RH5	BL → MP	0.306	0.052	5.894	0.000	0.109	Supported
RH6	BA → MP	0.361	0.056	7.428	0.000	0.200	Supported

Note: BA: Brand addiction; BL: Brand love; HP: Harmonious passion; OP: Obsessive passion; WTS: Willingness to support after a scandal; MP: Love for material possessions.

The results suggest that brand love can lead to brand addiction and thus support CH3. This is supported by recent literature (Le, 2023, Rodrigues et al., 2024) and aligns with positive addiction theory (Junaid et al., 2024).

Considering the outcomes of brand love and addiction, the findings are that RH3, RH4, RH5, and RH6 are accepted. We find that brand love has *both* positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand, customers who love a brand are more willing to support the brand after a scandal. In other words, brand love leads to emotional attachment that encourages support for the brand in a positive and sustainable manner (Le, 2023). On the other hand, brand love further develops material possessions, which can be considered unhealthy behavior. Similarly, we find that brand addiction has *both* positive and negative outcomes. It leads to both a willingness to

support a brand after a scandal and a love for material possessions. Together, these findings identify nuances in brand love and addiction outcomes.

If we further compare the relative strength of each predictor, brand love and brand addiction have similar effects on the willingness to support a brand ($f^2 = 0.163$ versus $f^2 = 0.197$). This suggests that both factors significantly drive consumer support for the brand. In other words, brand love and addiction can be used interchangeably for supporting brand after scandal.

Further, while both brand love and addiction lead to a love for material possessions, brand addiction has a relatively stronger influence on material possessions than brand love ($f^2 = 0.200$ versus $f^2 = 0.109$). This indicates that customers with addictive tendencies toward a brand are more likely to accumulate material possessions related to the brand than those who simply love the brand. While brand love fosters a more balanced, emotional attachment, leading to possessive yet measured consumption (Batra et al., 2012), brand addiction leads to intense consumer-brand attachment that manifests in a stronger desire to possess brand-related items (Watson et al., 2015).

5.3 The mediating role of brand addiction/love

We now focus on RH7, RH8, RH9, and RH10, considering the mediating roles of brand love and addiction. The mediation effects were analyzed using the bootstrapping method (Chen et al., 2023), with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). A mediating effect is confirmed when the confidence interval does not contain zero (Hair et al., 2021).

The results reveal significant indirect effects (see Table 5), which support all proposed hypotheses. Regarding RH7a (HP → BL → WTS) and RH7b (OP → BL → WTS), the findings are that brand love plays a significant mediating role between both types of passion and willingness to support. The coefficients are 0.118 for harmonious passion and 0.095 for obsessive passion, showing that brand love has a balanced emotional impact on consumer support.

Regarding RH8a (HP → BA → WTS) and RH8b (OP → BA → WTS), the findings are that brand addiction also mediates the effect between both types of passion and willingness to support. Combining the above findings, we note that brand love and addiction have similar mediating roles. If we further compare the relative strength of each predictor, brand addiction

has a stronger influence through obsessive passion ($\beta = 0.162$) than harmonious passion ($\beta = 0.061$).

Table 7. The mediating roles of brand addiction and brand love.

Hypotheses		β	St Dev.	t-value	p-value	Results
RH7a	HP → BL → WTS	0.118	0.029	4.133	0.000	Supported
RH7b	OP → BL → WTS	0.095	0.021	4.423	0.000	Supported
RH8a	HP → BA → WTS	0.061	0.020	3.126	0.002	Supported
RH8b	OP → BA → WTS	0.162	0.025	6.387	0.000	Supported
RH9a	HP → BL → MP	0.100	0.026	3.802	0.000	Supported
RH9b	OP → BL → MP	0.081	0.022	3.662	0.000	Supported
RH10a	HP → BA → MP	0.064	0.022	2.850	0.004	Supported
RH10b	OP → BA → MP	0.169	0.030	5.618	0.000	Supported

Note: BA: Brand addiction; BL: Brand love; HP: Harmonious passion; OP: Obsessive passion; WTS: Willingness to support after a scandal; MP: Love for material possessions; β : path coefficient

Regarding RH9a, RH9b, RH10a, and RH10b, the indirect effects are also statistically significant. Thus, brand love mediates the relationships between both types of passion and material possessions. In a similar role, brand addiction mediates the relationships between both types of passion and material possessions. These findings again support the assumption that brand love and addiction, in certain circumstances, have similar mediating roles.

Regarding the strength of the effect, we note that $OP \rightarrow BA \rightarrow MP$ shows the strongest effect with a coefficient of 0.169 (last row of Table 7). This suggests that brand addiction, especially driven by obsessive passion, leads to a higher likelihood of love for material possessions. Comparing this effect with brand love, we note that the effect of brand love on material possessions is weaker (especially through obsessive passion), representing healthier outcomes (Batra et al., 2012).

6 Discussion and Conclusions

This study sheds light on how passion and emotional attachment influence consumer behavior toward brands. We challenge the reductive assumptions that harmonious passion leads to brand love and positive outcomes and that obsessive passion leads to brand addiction and negative

outcomes (Junaid et al., 2022, Le, 2023, Gumparthy and Patra, 2020). This reductive approach leads to dimensional reduction, where passion is equated as similar to emotional attachment.

Our approach highlights a spectrum of idiosyncratic relationships between passion, emotional attachment, and relationship outcomes. Our findings suggest that both types of passion (harmonious and obsessive) can lead to brand love and addiction and can generate both positive and negative outcomes (Table 6). These idiosyncratic relationships are demonstrated considering, in particular, two outcomes: brand support after a scandal and love for material possessions.

These idiosyncratic relationships should be considered from static and dynamic viewpoints. From a static viewpoint, we find strong support for the reductive assumptions mentioned above (i.e. the support of CH1, CH2, CH3, RH3, and RH6). Our findings are aligned with the current literature on the positive aspects of brand love (Shimul and Phau, 2023, Baumeister and Leary, 1995, Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), e.g., brand love enhances consumers' positive behaviors to support brands after scandals (Nagar and Kour, 2018). Further, the findings are also aligned with the literature on the negative aspects of brand addictions (Junaid et al., 2022, Mrad et al., 2020, Le, 2023).

However, we also found significant support for more idiosyncratic relationships, for instance, where obsessive passion can contribute to brand love; harmonious passion can contribute to brand addiction; brand love can contribute to material possession; and brand addiction can contribute to the willingness to support a brand after a scandal (the support of RH1, RH2, RH4, and RH5). These findings are new when considering the current literature on brand love and addiction.

From a dynamic viewpoint, we note two interesting things. First, the relationships are dynamic between passions, emotional attachments, and outcomes. We can take brand addiction as an example. It is not simply that negative obsessive passion leads to brand addiction, which in turn leads to negative outcomes such as material possessions. We find a more dynamic mix of positive and negative relationships, where both harmonious and obsessive passion lead to brand addiction, leading to positive and negative outcomes (e.g., support for a brand after a scandal and material possessions) (see Table 6). These dynamic relationships can also be seen through the mediating effects of brand addiction between passions and outcomes (see Table 7).

Second, we should consider that passion and emotional attachment have different dynamics, with the former being short-term or episodic and the latter being long-term. The current research shows that passion and emotional attachment have different roles in customer relationships (see Table 6 and Table 7). Consequently, we suggest that one should not conflate the short-term and long-term impacts. A more dynamic understanding of brand relationships requires understanding how short-term fluctuations may end up influencing long-term attachments and outcomes.

6.1 Theoretical implications

This study makes several theoretical contributions by examining the idiosyncratic relationships between passion, emotional attachment, and positive and negative outcomes of the consumer-brand relationship. First, it reinforces the perspective that brand love and brand addiction are behaviors resulting from expanding the self (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that consumers connect with brands to express their identity (Ahuvia et al., 2022, Alvarez et al., 2023, Rahman et al., 2021). This research extends brand literature by showing that harmonious and obsessive passion are two precursors of consumer behavior toward a brand. It further points out that when consumers engage with brands, they share the same routes, leading to brand love and addiction. When investigating the mechanism forming attachment behavior, the study confirms the hierarchical relationship between brand love and brand addiction (Fournier, 1998; Le, 2023; Rodrigues et al., 2024).

Second, a key contribution of this research is to highlight that brand love and addiction operate similarly and can generate both positive and negative outcomes. These findings challenge the traditional reductive approach, which conflates passion, emotional attachment, and outcomes. They also differ from past studies, suggesting different effects of brand love and brand addiction on outcomes (e.g., the former is often associated with positive outcomes (Batra et al., 2012), whereas the latter is linked with adverse outcomes (Junaid et al., 2022)).

Finally, this study extends the literature by investigating two particular brand relationships, considering the willingness to support the brand after a scandal and the love for material possessions (Bhattacharjee et al., 2013, Sternberg and Kastely, 1990, Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011, Ahuvia et al., 2020). These two specific outcomes epitomize two very different types of outcomes, one positive and the other negative, which improves our understanding of the relationships between passion, emotional attachment, and positive and negative outcomes. As

such, we call for further research to understand the links to other types of outcomes and potential patterns.

6.2 *Practical implications*

A highly abstract model like the one discussed in this study can be challenging to utilize in practical conditions. Nevertheless, we identify some relevant avenues. One avenue is building brand concepts that continuously resonate with consumers' perceptions of their identity (Ahuvia et al., 2022). This becomes critical for brand managers, as consumer perceptions and outlooks can quickly change, following business and social dynamics. Another avenue concerns how brands control events and actions toward generating specific outcomes. A better understanding of the links between passion for action, certain types of actions, and resulting outcomes can help brands decide which events to generate and which actions to support or not support. For instance, when facing a scandal, a brand can immediately generate positive events, such as recognizing problems, giving assurances, and demonstrating transparency and responsiveness. As another example, identifying behaviors associated with obsessive passion may lead brands toward an active attempt to reduce access to problematic actions.

Overall, the main point is that brands should be able to influence passion in the short term and emotional attachment in the long term. As noted above, this has to be done by influencing events and actions. The former can be done through usual channels like marketing and social media. The latter requires using technology to mediate the consumer-brand relationship and focusing on personalization and contextualization (e.g., personalized offerings, tailored experiences, and co-creation opportunities).

6.3 *Limitations and future research*

Data were collected from a single country. Expanding the research to multiple countries could enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this study examines technological brands associated with innovation and youth; future studies should investigate other types of products/services since consumer behaviors can differ significantly (Aaker et al., 2004). This study focused on the respondents' favorite brands. So, it is not representative of products/services consumers engage with not by choice but by necessity. Future studies should investigate the mechanism using other product types, such as food, fashion, and music. Moreover, additional research is needed to understand how some idiosyncratic relationships

emerge. Future research is also necessary to understand the dynamic relationships between passion and emotional attachment, considering, for example, emergent events such as scandals. Investigating negative behaviors associated with brand addiction, such as vandalism or disparaging comments about competitors, is also crucial (Cui et al., 2018, Mrad et al., 2020, Mrad and Cui, 2017). Furthermore, it is essential to examine how brands could identify warning signs of actions that may damage a brand's reputation and how they could send signals or even influence action (Farah and Ramadan, 2020, Japutra et al., 2019). Finally, the present study also does not shed light on how consumers transition between brand love and addiction (Tan et al., 2019).

6.4 Conclusion

Different relationships between consumers and brands, including brand love and addiction, have received much attention from the recent literature (Rodrigues et al., 2024, Ahuvia et al., 2020). A polarized assumption is that brand love is positive, and brand addiction is negative. However, the current study challenges this assumption by adopting a more nuanced view, examining these variables in both positive and negative consumer-brand relationships. The study shows that brand love and addiction are affected by both types of passion and that they lead to both positive and negative consumer behaviors. Our study further shows that, under many circumstances, brand love operates similarly to brand addiction and vice versa. Therefore, we suggest a more nuanced dynamic viewpoint on brand love and addiction and their relationships with passion, emotional attachment, and consumer behaviors.

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Appendix A: Measurement scales

Variable / Item	
Brand addiction (BA)	
BA1	I try very hard to get everything from my favorite brand.
BA2	I often fail to control myself from purchasing products of my favorite brand.
BA3	I often find myself thinking about my favorite brand.
BA4	I tend to give up some life activities and duties such as the occupational, academic and familial in order to fulfil some activities related to my favorite brand.
BA5	I tend to allocate certain portion of my monthly income to buy the products of my favorite brand.
BA6	I usually remember tenderly the previous experience with my favorite brand.
BA7	I experience a state of impatience immediately before I can get hold of the products of my favorite brand.
BA8	I follow my favorite brand's news all the time.
BA9	I usually plan when the next purchase of my favorite brand will be.
Brand love (BL)	
BL1	To what extent do you feel that your favorite brand says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person.
BL2	To what extent do you feel yourself desiring to use your favorite brand products?
BL3	Please express the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to your favorite brand?
BL4	Please express the extent to which you believe that you will be using the favorite brand for a long time.
BL5	Suppose the favorite brand were to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety.
BL6	On the following scales, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the favorite brand.
Harmonious passion (HP)	
HP1	This activity allows me to live a variety of experiences.

HP2	The new things that I discover with this activity allow me to appreciate it even more.
HP3	This activity allows me to live memorable experiences.
HP4	I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.
Obsessive passion (OP)	
OP1	I cannot live without it.
OP2	The urge is so strong. I can't help myself from doing this activity.
OP3	I have difficulty imagining my life without this activity.
OP4	I am emotionally dependent on this activity.
OP5	I have a tough time controlling my need to do this activity.
OP6	I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity.
OP7	My mood depends on me being able to do this activity.
Willingness to support the brand after a scandal (WTS)	
WTS1	I would continue to support this brand.
WTS2	The brand should be allowed to remain in the market.
WTS3	I would contribute to this brand's campaign.
WTS4	I would feel comfortable wearing a T-shirt in support of the brand.
Love for material possessions (MP)	
MP1	I am likely to pay a little bit more for using the favorite brand products.
MP2	Price is not an important factor in my decision to remain with the favorite brand products.
MP3	I am willing to pay more for the favorite brand products or services.

Appendix B: Structural modeling tests

This section presents other tests that we conducted in the structural modelling. The correlation results are presented in Table 8. The predictive power results are presented in Table 9.

Table 8. Correlations.

	BA	BL	HP	MP	OP	WTS
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BA	1.000					
BL	0.553	1.000				
HP	0.383	0.385	1.000			
MP	0.583	0.535	0.511	1.000		
OP	0.563	0.336	0.223	0.493	1.000	
WTS	0.597	0.581	0.379	0.571	0.379	1.000

Note: Note: BA: Brand addiction; BL: Brand love; WTS: Willingness to support the brand after a scandal; MP: Love for material possessions.

Regarding predictive power, the analysis results confirm that the model has strong predictive relevance for Brand Addiction ($Q^2 = 0.377$), Love for Material Possessions ($Q^2 = 0.342$), and Willingness to Support the Brand ($Q^2 = 0.222$). The predictive relevance for Brand Love ($Q^2 = 0.201$), while lower than the others, still meets the acceptable threshold of $Q^2 > 0$. Together, these results show that the model has meaningful predictive power. Additionally, the low RMSE and MAE values further confirm the accuracy of the model's predictions for all constructs (see Table 9).

Table 9. Predictive power (Q^2).

	Q^2_{predict}	RMSE	MAE
BA	0.377	0.793	0.627
BL	0.201	0.899	0.695
MP	0.342	0.815	0.644
WTS	0.222	0.886	0.715

Note: BA: Brand addiction; BL: Brand love; WTS: Willingness to support the brand after a scandal; MP: Love for material possessions.