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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

This research studied the importance of brand love, its antecedents and consequences in the context of Smartphone industry; and examined the effects of each dimension of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, and brand experience on brand love. The study also investigated the moderating role of self-esteem between brand love and brand loyalty relationship. The data was collected from the 351 students (users of Smartphone) from four universities of Islamabad, Lahore and Bahawalpur, through simple random sampling. Hypotheses were tested by using regression analysis. The result of the study indicated that each dimension of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience positively and significantly affected brand love. The findings of this study revealed that brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand image and brand experience contributed in generating brand love and brand loyalty. The study also found that consumer characteristics and brand trust did not create brand love and brand loyalty. This study contributed in literature by examining brand love as a mediator and self-esteem as a moderator. Brand experience was found as the stronger antecedent of brand love. The finding of the study provided several useful managerial implications for strategy formulation at organization level.

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1. Introduction

Roberts (2005) in his book on love marks states that “all you need is love (p. 40)”. The term love inclines to mesmerize thoughts of romance and the feelings of love for another person. Though the word love can also be used to define in what way somebody feels about an object, action or even
about the brand (Ahuvia, 2005; Whang et al., 2004). Though, this concept has been discussed very narrowly; there are some scholars and marketers who are very curious to enlighten its unique dimensions (Albert et. al., 2009). Brand love has been identified as a key consumer brand relationship variable; however, limited research studies available to identify what generates a love for the brand and what are its outcomes (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Consumer characteristics can play an important part as an antecedent of brand love (Mulyanegara et. al., 2009; Rauschnabel et al., 2013). The brand relationship attributes are very effective because of its importance for understanding the notion of brand love (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Previous researches have also demonstrated that customers can experience a love like emotional state for their brand (Batra et al., 2012). Past few decades have witnessed a marvelous transition in the world economy from simple and mechanize structure to most rapid world economy (Baraldi et al., 2010; Shafique & Mehmood, 2008). Due to global competition, there is a significant transition in the Pakistan’s mobile industry. Basic mobile phone devices constitutes about 90% market share five years ago, but this trend is changing now. Customers are shifting towards Smartphones instead of basic mobile phones. At present it captures more than 20% share of the mobile phone market. Out of that, Smartphones alone account for more than 10% of the market (Baloch, 2013). In today’s competitive environment, expansion of multinational brands competing in various geographic markets raise the serious issue as to how globally and nationally brands can be managed (Uslu, Durmuş, & Kolivar, 2013). As companies grow and establish, it is very easy for brand values to become dilute, and this creates a risk of losing loyal consumers. That’s why companies are facing the dilemma in managing brand love. The Smartphone industry is fast growing industry and gradually get global acceptance (Barnes & Scornavacca, 2004). The strategy to attract this segment needs to focus on identification of factors that are essential in generating brand love for Smart Phone and resultant brand loyalty to achieve strategic marketing organizational objective. Thus, present study fulfill the gap by probing the consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand trust, brand identity, brand image and brand experience as antecedents of brand love and brand loyalty as its consequences. Moreover, this study examine which dimensions of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience has greater effect on brand love. This study investigates the mediating role of brand love between antecedents and consequences, and self-esteem as a moderator between brand love and brand loyalty relationship. The objectives of this research were to investigate brand love, its antecedents and consequence in the context of Smartphone industry; examined each dimension of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, and brand experience on brand love. This study was mediated by brand love and investigated self-esteem as a moderator between the relationship of brand love and brand loyalty.

The current study consists of following research questions (RQ).

- Do consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand trust, brand identity, brand image and brand experience positively impact brand love and brand loyalty?
- What is the impact of each dimension of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience on brand love?
- Does brand love mediate the relationship between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand trust, brand identity, brand image, brand experience and brand loyalty?
- Does self-esteem moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty?

2. Literature

2.1 Brand Love

A degree of emotional association a contented customer may have for a specific brand and its
associated dimensions (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). A number of research studies of brand love advocates that it has anywhere from anyone (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006) to eleven dimensions (Albert et al., 2008), with most studies presented differing conceptualizations. Aron and Aron (1986) first propose the self-inclusion theory of love. Later on, marketing researchers adapt this theory (Ahuvia, 1993). This theory postulates that individual’s needs to associate with others to feel loved. As a result, Ahuvia (1993) suggested that once a brand touches both higher and desire state of integration with the customer’s wisdom of self, then a customer senses for the brand. Brand love comprises of passion, affection and feeling for the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

2.2 Consumer Characteristics

Personality has been discussed through different theoretical perspectives and each of them provide contribution to existing research (Jonh, 1999). The concept attachment style initiated from the interpersonal attachment theory. Bowlby (1979) firstly proposed this idea and then developed by other researchers (Bell, 2010; Gillath et al., 2008). Attachment theory stated that individuals born with an inherent psychobiological system that provoked them to become emotionally involved with others (attachment figure). Attachment style refers to a self-implicated emotional bond between the brand and its customers (Park et al., 2010). Consumers developed affection to some brand when it was embedded in their psyche and when the brand offered them some sense of security from the hectic environment (Thomson et al., 2005). The significance of need for affect lies in defining individual variances in the inclination to approach or avoid emotionally stimulating situations and activities are crucial (Maio & Esses, 2001). A general trend showed that high need for affect results into greater association with the emotion after experience (Maio & Esses, 2001; Maio et al., 2004).

2.3 Brand Relationship Attributes

In the last decade of the 20th Century, there was a growing interest in the relationship between consumers and brands (Loureiro, 2013). Fournier (1998) suggested that the quality of this relationship evolves as a result of meaningful actions taken by both the brand and the consumer. These actions can either strengthen, weaken, or even end the relationship, ultimately determining its quality. As a result, a model for brand relationship quality was proposed, consisting of six key dimensions: love and passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and brand partner quality.

2.4 Brand Identity

The core construct of brand communication with its stakeholder is brand identity (Hatch & Shultz, 2000). Brand identity is mainly about user’s perception regarding the brand and state of associations that consumers contain in mind when thinking about the brand (Louis & Lombart, 2010). Kapferer (2008) proposed brand identity consisting of brand personality, brand physique, brand culture, brand relationship, consumer reflection and consumer self-image. The brand personality is the characteristics of brand as a person. Physique covers product appearance, characteristics, symbols and attributes. Brand culture reflects the norms, values and guiding principles of the brand. Brand reflection projects the image of brand users. Lastly, the self-image is the concept that projects consumer internal self as brand users.

2.5 Brand Image

Keller (2003), brand image is strong and unique association for the brand in memory which results in favourable perceived quality and a positive attitude towards the brand. Many brand factors identified by different authors as features of brand equity e.g. perceived quality of a service and its
brand associations, can be analysed as relevant to brand image and its direct effects. The brand image may include symbols, words, unique colour, and slogans that convey a clear message of the brand (Berry, Lefkowith, & Clark, 1988). The brand image of cellular networks plays significant role in the network choice as consumers may attempt to highlight their self-image by buying that network that are matched with their personality. The consumer may perceive that a cellular network is desirable as compared to its competing brand because of the differential image that it conveys (Schiffman & Sherman, 1991). A brand image means the perception of consumers’ about a brand (Keller, 2008). The insight of the customer about the features of the particular brand and services provided by the company is inclined by the perceptions about specific brand (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994).

2.6 Brand Trust

Brand trust has been recognized in maintaining consumer and supplier association (Agustin & Singh, 2005; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust is a customer’s strong belief that can depend on the supplier to render services, while social value can be defined as customer’s opinion about enjoyed benefits versus the expenses bear to keep the ongoing exchange relationship (Agustin & Singh, 2005). According to Amine (1998) trust in buying brand may be seen as the power of its credibility and reinforce the repeat purchase behaviour of consumers. Previous study of Fehr (1988) examined that brand love has not been related with brand trust; and brand trust often seems to enlighten feeling of love between partners. However, previous studies revealed that brand love is relational construct and logically related with other relational construct i.e. brand trust. Larzelere and Huston (1980) advocated that brand trust is a key factor in developing brand love and also related to intimacy. Moreover, Albert and Merunka (2013) also advocated that brand trust is essential aspect in creating brand love.

2.7 Brand Experience

Brand experience is define as the feeling of customers about brand at the time of interaction with the particular brand, whether it is the brand image anticipated in promotional activity, through first individual interaction, or the level of superiority related to individual dealing they obtain (Alloza, 2008). According to Ambler et al., (2002), brand experience is generated while consumers use specific brand, pursue knowledge about brand, promotion, and actions. All the activity of marketing, associated with the particular brand, impact customers' attitude in relation to the specific brand (Ambler, 2000). Brand experiences consists of feelings, spirits, perceptions and behavioral responses aroused by brand associated stimuli (Oliver el. al., 1997). Brand experience is significantly different concept from various other concepts related to brand and consumer-focused containing personality, involvement, attachment and customer delight (Zarantenello & Schmitt, 2000). Customer delight can be considered as an effective element of satisfaction and characterized by arousal and positive effect (Oliver et. al., 1997). Brakus et al., (2009), it is not necessary that brand experiences occur only after usage in contrast to customer delight.

2.8 Brand Loyalty

The concept of loyalty was first suggested by Day in (1969) as a multidimensional construct. Brand loyalty is deeply held commitment of consumer to repurchase a specific brand continuously instead of situational impacts and marketing efforts having the potential to cause changing behaviour (Oliver, 1997). For three decades, brand loyalty attained attention from marketing researchers (Back, 2005; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brand loyalty was consequence of the customers’ decision-making process (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Loyal customers spent money on
repurchase of brand and its services. Highly satisfied customers recommended companies to other customers and satisfaction of customers was helpful in creating long term relationships. In today's intensely competitive business atmosphere, many organizations face challenges in gaining market share, growing profitability, and achieving a huge part of customers’ money (Hahn & Kim, 2009). The four stages loyalty model was proposed by Oliver (1997). This model consisted of cognitive, affective, intellectual, and action loyalty. The importance of brand love is emphasized by researchers as it predictor (Batra et al., 2012; Keh et al., 2007; Oliver, 1999).

2.9 Mediating role of brand love

Brand love is an essential concept for researchers and marketers to understand. Previous studies suggests that there is a need to investigate mediating role of brand love relationship with the factors which can play vital role in shifting positive perception of the consumers towards specific brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Loureiro, 2013; Yasin & Shamim, 2013). The present study delineates the mediating role of brand love between antecedents (consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand trust, brand identity, brand image and brand experience) and consequences (brand loyalty) of brand love.

2.10 Self Esteem

Self-esteem is the own judgment and evaluation of one’s personality (Rosenberg, 1965). The term self-esteem characterises as a sociometer that observes whether a person is being in or out and encourages the individual to involve in behaviours which overcome the chance of future denial (Leary et al., 1995). Moreover, customers with high self-esteem frequently exhibit a high desire to attach to others who are close to them to proclaim their self-respect (Park & Maner, 2009). Thus the present study investigates self-esteem as a moderator between brand love and brand loyalty relationship. The moderating effect of self-esteem provides precious information about brand love in the attainment of unique edge to increase brand loyalty.
2.11 Hypotheses

H1: Consumer characteristics predicts brand Love.
H1a: Personality predicts brand love.
H1b: Need for affect has positive effect on brand love.
H1c: Attachment style has positive effect on brand love.

H2: Brand relationship attributes have positive effect on brand love.
H2a: Love and passion predicts brand love.
H2b: Self-connection predicts brand love.
H2c: Interdependence predicts brand love.
H2d: Personal Intimacy positively affects brand love.
H2e: Brand partner quality positively influences brand love.
H2f: Commitment predicts brand love.

H3: Brand identity predicts brand love.

H4: Brand trust predicts brand love.

H5: Brand image predicts brand love.
H6: Brand experience predicts brand love.
H6a: Sensory experience predicts brand love.
H6b: Affective experience predicts brand love.
H6c: Behavioural experience predicts brand love.
H6d: Intellectual experience predicts brand love.
H7: Consumer characteristics have positive effect on brand loyalty.
H8: Brand relationship attributes predicts brand loyalty.
H9: Brand identity predicts brand loyalty.
H10: Brand trust predicts brand loyalty.
H11: Brand image predicts brand loyalty.
H12: Brand experience predicts brand loyalty.
H13: Brand love predicts brand loyalty.
H14: Brand love mediates between consumer characteristics and brand loyalty.
H15: Brand love mediates between brand relationship attributes and brand loyalty.
H16: Brand love mediates between brand identity and brand loyalty.
H17: Brand love mediates brand trust and brand loyalty relation.
H18: Brand love mediates brand image and brand loyalty relation.
H19: Brand love mediates brand experience and brand loyalty relation.
H20: Self-esteem moderate brand love and brand loyalty relation.

3. Research Methodology

To attain the objectives of the study survey design was used. The data were analyzed with the help of SPSS. Multiple regression used to measure the causality of construct. To measure the constructs, well established scales were adapted from literature. All the items were measured by using ratio scale, that “0” represented disagreement while higher Scale represented a more agreeable attitude, 1 represent less agreement while 5 represented strong agreement. Target population of the study was the university students using Smartphone belonging to Islamabad, Bahawalpur, and Lahore. The individuals (students) using smartphones were the unit of analysis. Simple random sampling technique (probability sampling) was used for data collection. Data collected from the students enrolled at The Islamia University Bahawalpur, Superior University Lahore, National University of Modern Languages, and SZABIST. The students were randomly selected for data collection. The sample size consisted of 351 students. A total 480 questionnaires were distributed and 378 were returned; 351 responses were included in the study. Thus, the response rate was 73%. According to Universal Accreditation Board, when the population size will be 4000, then a random sample of 351 from given population would be considered useful (Board, 2003).

4. Result and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Reliability of variables (N=351)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Relationship Attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand Image</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Correlation

|      | PE | R  | NF | A   | CC | PA | SC | BI | IN | PQ | BR | B   | A   | S   | C   | N   | N   | P   | C   | BR | B   | I   | E   | E   | E   | E   | E   | E   | E   | L   |
|------|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PE   | 1  |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| R    |    | 1  |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| NF   | .30|    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| A    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | .83 | .67 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| AS   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| CC   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | .83 | .70 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| A    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| PA   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| S    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| SC   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| C    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| BI   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| N    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| IN   |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 00 | *  
| 7  | *  
| PQ | .22 .119 4 .31 .35 .38 .42 .3 1  
| 4** 9** 7** 9** 7** 9** 4** 9  
| PC | .162 6 .23 .54 .58 .61 .47 1  
| 06 ** 9** 7** 2** 3** 0** 9** 6**  
| BR | .14 .192 4 .36 .77 .83 .81 2 1  
| 6** 3** 1** 4** 2** 8** 4** 91  
| BI | .10 .152 9 .26 .41 .41 .37 2 1  
| D 9** 0** 8** 9** 5** 9** 7** 7** 3** 1  
| BT | .11 .19 9 .25 .35 .38 .32 7 1  
| 6** 0** 8** 6** 7** 6** 0** 3** 5** 9** 2** 8** 9** 1  
| BI | .13 .167 9 .25 .30 .25  
| 0** 4** 3** 0** 9** 2** 5** 8** 5** 05 0** 1  
| SE | .13 .125 6 .29 .50 .55 .53 4  
| 3** 0** 7** 7** 6** 8** 3** 9** 4** 8** 0** 8** 4** 1  
| AE | .181 8 .21 .47 .57 .55  
| 0** 7** 4** 6** 0** 71 2** 3** 0** 1** 7** 9** 4** 1  
| BL | .12 .14 .28 .48 .5 .2  
| 8** 7** 3** 4** 3** 2** 7** 17 2** 7** 8** 5** 5** 5** 1  

\* denotes significance at p < .05  
** denotes significance at p < .01
For listed all hypothesis, regression method was adopted. However, prior to running the regression various assumptions were also checked.

**Table 3: Regression analysis of personality traits, need for effect, attachment style and brand love**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t-stat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFA</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>2.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>8.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Regression analysis of brand relationship attributes dimension and brand love**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t-stat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>105.44</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>132.56</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BINT</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>116.58</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>10.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>19.447</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>4.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>PQ</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>79.07</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>8.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.304</td>
<td>152.32</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>12.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant level 0.01**

**Significant level 0.05**

Linear regression was used to analyse the hypotheses (H1a, H1b and H1c).
Linear regression was used to analyse the hypotheses (H2a, b, c, d, e and f).
N = 351, R = .763, R square = .583, Adjusted R square = .576; F= 80.087 (p < 0.00);
Dependent Variable: Brand love Predictors: CCA = Consumer characteristics,
BT = Brand Trust BRA = Brand Relationship Attributes BID = Brand Identity
BIM = Brand Image BEX = Brand Experience

Table 5: Regression analysis of CCA, BRA, BID, BT, BIM, EXP and brand love

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Er</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.188</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>-.657</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>1.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRA</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.163**</td>
<td>2.978</td>
<td>2.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BID</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.139**</td>
<td>2.670</td>
<td>2.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>1.369</td>
<td>2.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIM</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.112*</td>
<td>2.275</td>
<td>2.013</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEX</td>
<td>.544</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.444**</td>
<td>8.479</td>
<td>2.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance, p < .01  *Significance, p < .05

Hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6) were analyzed through multiple regression analysis in this step.

Table 6: Regression analysis CCA, BRA, BID, BT, BIM, EXP and brand loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Er</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td></td>
<td>.810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.013</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRA</td>
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<td>.254**</td>
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</tr>
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<td>BID</td>
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<td>.046</td>
<td>.103*</td>
<td>2.127</td>
<td>2.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>2.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIM</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.202**</td>
<td>4.382</td>
<td>2.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEX</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.379**</td>
<td>7.754</td>
<td>1.176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 351, R = .798, R square = .637, Adjusted R square = .630; F= 100.463 (p < 0.00);
**Significance, p < .01  *Significance, p < .05

Dependent Variable: Brand loyalty
Hypotheses (H7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12) were analyzed through multiple regression analysis.
Dependent Variable: Brand Love

The result supported the hypothesis (H13) that brand love predicts brand loyalty.

### 4.1 Mediation Result

Mediation hypotheses were analyzes Model 4 of PROCESS by Andrew F. Hayes was used (Hayes, 2012). According to Hayes (2012) the mediation model the effect of X on Y is divided into two parts i.e. the direct effect and indirect effect. The direct effect is the effect of independent variable X on the dependent variable Y when mediator is included in the model. In figure the direct effect is denoted by $c'$ (Hayes, 2012). The indirect effect denotes the effect of X on Y through mediator. Hayes (2012), the indirect effect is denoted by “ab” which is calculated by multiplying “a” coefficient with coefficient “b”. The sum of indirect affect and direct affect results in total effect of X on Y which is denoted by “c”. Given that $c = c' + ab$ reveals that indirect effect of X on Y via mediator M is the difference between the total effect of X on Y and direct effect of X on Y when mediation is included in the model i.e. $c' = c - ab$ (Hayes, 2012).

### Table 7: Regression analysis dimensions of brand experience and brand love

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t-stat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>182.61</td>
<td>.586**</td>
<td>13.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>190.45</td>
<td>.594**</td>
<td>13.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>195.32</td>
<td>.599**</td>
<td>13.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>85.65</td>
<td>.444**</td>
<td>9.255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance, p < .01
Dependent Variable: Brand Love

### Table 8: Regression analysis of brand love and brand loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model (Constant)</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Er</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.752**</td>
<td>21.334</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 351, R = .752, R square = .566, Adjusted R square = .565; F= 455.149 (p < 0.00);
**Significance, p < .01
Dependent Variable: BL = Brand loyalty
The result supported the hypothesis (H13) that brand love predicts brand loyalty.

### Table 9: Mediation Analysis Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequent</th>
<th>M(BRAND LOVE)</th>
<th>Y(BRAND LOYALTY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent</td>
<td>Coeff</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X(CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M ( BRAND LOVE )</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>i1</td>
<td>1.486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R = .281, R² = 0.079
F(1,350) = 22.19, p = 0.00
R = 0.758,R² = 0.574
F(2,349) = 171.7, p = 0.000

**Significance, p < .01
**Significance, p < .05
4.2 Moderation Analysis

For checking the moderated effect of self-esteem on brand love and brand loyalty process by Hayes Model 1 was used. Following table summarizes the results for the moderation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Coeff</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Coeff</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X (BRA)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
<td>c'</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M (BRAND LOVE )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>i1</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
<td>i2</td>
<td>.773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance, p < .01

Table 10
Mediation Analysis Summary

Results show that moderation does not exist. Thus the hypothesis H20 did not accepted.

5. Discussion

The finding reflects that the composite effect of consumer characteristics did not significantly affect brand love. The results were contrary to the hypothesis (H1), difference in the cultures could be the reason of contradictory result. The study found that extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism did not affect brand love, whereas only openness was predicting brand love significantly (Rauschnabel et al., 2013). In Pakistan, economic situation is not good which has major impact on person’s purchase behaviour. The findings of the study highlighted that each consumer’s characteristic (personality traits, need for affect and attachment style) positively affected brand love (H1a, b c). The results were consistent with previous studies (Rauschnabel et al., 2013; Voorn, 2013). Brand relationship attributes positively affected brand love (H2). Results of hypotheses (H2a, b, c, d, e and f) had shown significant effect in generating brand love. The finding of this study showed that brand identity affected brand love positively and significantly (H3). The study indicated that no significant relationship exist between brand trust and brand love (H4). The finding of Albert and Merunka (2013) study also supported current research finding. The findings of this research revealed that brand image had significant effect on brand love (H5). The finding of the study showed that brand experience and its four dimensions significantly affected the brand love (H6, a, b, c and d). The effect of consumer characteristics on brand loyalty (H7) was also insignificant. The difference in culture was one of the reasons why consumer characteristics had insignificant affect brand love and loyalty. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) argued that in cultures, one wants to fit in more than one wants to stand out in the crowd. The findings of the present study revealed that brand relationship attributes and brand identity enhanced brand loyalty (H8; H9). The results of this study showed that brand trust did not significantly affect brand love and brand loyalty (H10). Contrary to the current study findings, previous studies determined that brand trust enhanced brand loyalty (Chiou & Droge, 2006; Lau & Lee, 1999). The findings of the research showed that brand image, brand experience and brand love positively affected brand loyalty (H11; H12; H13) and results were significant also. H14, H15, H16, H17, H18, and H19 stated that brand love mediated between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image, brand experience, and brand loyalty relationship. However, partial mediation existed between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image, brand experience and brand loyalty

R = .634, R² = 0.402
F(1,350) = 140.38, p = 0.00

R = .797, R² = 0.635
F(2,349) = 241.56, p = .000
relationship. Hypothesis H20, self-esteem moderates between brand love and brand loyalty. The findings of the study indicated that self-esteem did not moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. Rosenberg’s (1965) advocated that if self-esteem is low it will create self-rejection and dissatisfaction.

6. Managerial Implications

Smartphone is a strong and unique brand in terms of its feature, quality and durability. Marketing strategies should focus more on personality traits because it creates positive brand love. Manager should also focus on consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience dimensions in creating and maintaining customers’ long term relationship with brand. It is extremely useful for marketers to identify that how different aspects of brand experience and brand relationship attributes contribute towards building brand love of their Smartphones. As the effect of different aspect of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, and brand experience may differ from one geographic location to another and from one segment to other segments. Personality traits play an important role on a company’s performance. This study verify that consumers with higher attachment style have positive love towards Smartphone brands which means Smartphone companies should take them as the core audience. Brand loyalty provides an economic assistance to industry beyond repurchase where the amount of attaining new customers is significantly higher than that of maintaining existing customers.

7. Academic Implications

The current study had the following academic implications:

• This was the first published study within context of Pakistan, to investigate the consumer characteristics as antecedent of brand love. Hence, the finding contributed value in existing literature.

• Second, this study examined each dimension of brand relationship attributes and brand experience as predictor of brand love. Hence, the findings added value in literature and enhanced the scope of brand and consumers’ relationship.

• Third, mediating role of brand love between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image, brand experience, and brand loyalty relationship. Hence, the findings of the study related to mediation relationship added value in literature and open new frontiers for further research.

8. Future Recommendations

This study offers future directions. The data were collected from Smartphone users and mostly respondent were students. Future studies should focus on every user who is using a Smartphone. Moreover, future study can be conducted to investigate the moderating effect of age, gender, and lifestyle on consumer-brand relationship.

9. Conclusion

This study empirically investigated the antecedents and consequences of brand love and examined dimensions of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience on brand love. Moreover, this study probed the mediating role of brand love between the consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image, brand experience and brand loyalty. Further, this study concluded that self-esteem significantly moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty relationship in the context of Smartphone brand. The study was limited to Smartphone brands. Data was collected from the individuals
who were user of Smartphones and belonged to four different universities located in Islamabad, Lahore and Bahawalpur through simple random sampling. Hypotheses were tested with a sample of 351 respondents by using regression analysis. The result of this study indicated that each dimension of consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes and brand experience positively and significantly effect on brand love. The finding of this study revealed that brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand image and brand experience contributed in generating brand love and brand loyalty. Contrary to what was expected, the finding of the study could not find any significant effect of consumer characteristics and brand trust in creating brand love and brand loyalty. This study contributed in literature by examining brand love as a mediator between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image and brand experience and brand loyalty. The results clearly illustrated that mediation existed between consumer characteristics, brand relationship attributes, brand identity, brand trust, brand image, brand experience and brand loyalty. Moreover, results suggested that self-esteem did not contributed in literature as a moderator between brand love and brand loyalty relationship. Brand experience was the stronger predictor of brand love than other tested antecedents. Future research need to be conducted to examine the moderating effect of age, gender and lifestyle. The finding of the study provides several useful managerial implications related to brand love and brand loyalty. The findings offer opportunities to organization to formulate appropriate strategies to promote brand love and foster brand loyalty.

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