Exploring Brand Love: A Systematic Literature Review

By Ramayani Yusuf & Istiharini

Abstract & Scope

The Power of Emotional Attachment

Core Concept

Brand love is a deep emotional attachment to a brand, moving beyond rational evaluation and transactional loyalty.

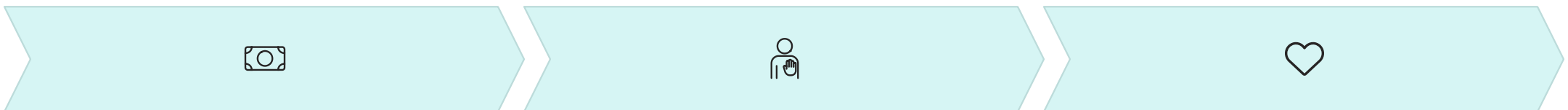
Methodology

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA framework. 1,830 articles screened; 22 selected for analysis (2010–2025).

Key Findings

Identifies conceptualisation, key antecedents, and managerial implications of brand love, noting growth in digital contexts.

The Evolution of Consumer-Brand Relationships



Transactional Focus

Early marketing emphasised exchange of goods/services for money.

Relational Marketing

Shift to building long-term loyalty and customer satisfaction.

Emotional Branding

Recognition that deep emotional attachment drives lasting loyalty, similar to human relationships.

Consumers use brands to fulfil not just functional needs, but also affective and symbolic needs, expressing identity and values.

Key Antecedents of Brand Love

The review identifies several foundational factors that drive the formation of deep emotional attachment to a brand.

Brand Trust

The primary prerequisite; consumers must believe the brand is reliable and consistent.

Brand Experience

Positive functional and emotional interactions strengthen brand love.

Brand Image

Positive perception of the brand's reputation and image fosters emotional closeness.

Perceived Quality

Consistent, recognised quality reinforces satisfaction and affective attachment.

The Strategic Outcomes of Brand Love

Emotional attachment yields powerful long-term effects, protecting brands from competitive pressure.

Brand Loyalty

Consumers remain faithful even when competitors offer similar value.

Positive Word of Mouth

Consumers voluntarily advocate for the brand through recommendations and positive reviews.

Willingness to Pay Premium Price

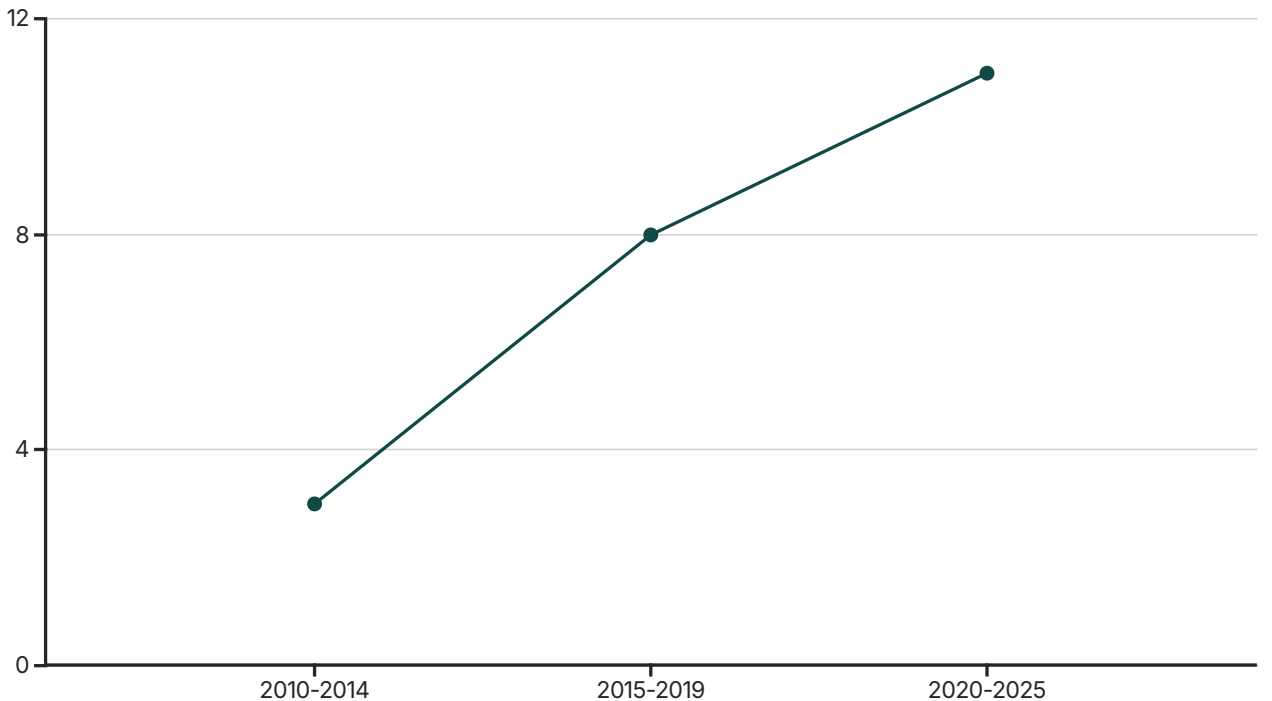
Strong emotional ties lead to a readiness to pay more than for competing brands.

Advocacy

Consumers actively defend and support the brand against external criticism.

Research Growth and Digital Context

Research on brand love has accelerated since 2015, with a significant focus on digital platforms.



The Digital Shift (2020–2025)

The latest literature highlights that brand love is increasingly formed through intensive digital interactions:

- Social media platforms.
- E-commerce experiences.
- Virtual brand communities.
- User-generated content and influencer marketing.

Methodology: The PRISMA Process

A systematic and transparent approach was used to ensure comprehensive analysis of the literature.

Identification

Initial search using keywords (e.g., "brand love," "brand trust and love") across four major databases (1,830 articles).

Screening

Filtering out duplicates and articles not meeting inclusion criteria (peer-reviewed, 2015–2025, explicit brand love focus).

Eligibility

Assessing articles by abstract and full content for direct relevance to brand love themes.

Inclusion

Final selection of 22 articles for detailed content and thematic analysis.

Managerial Implications: Building Emotional Bonds

Marketers must move beyond functional value to create authentic and meaningful emotional experiences.

Focus on Trust and Experience

Ensure brand reliability and deliver consistently positive interactions, as these are the core foundations of love.

Leverage Digital Communities

Utilise online platforms for intensive interaction, fostering personal connections and shared identity among consumers.

Emotional Storytelling

Develop brand narratives and associations that "fill the emotional space" of consumers, making the brand part of their self-identity.

Identified Research Gaps

Despite rapid growth, several areas require further investigation to fully understand brand love in contemporary contexts.

Local Contexts

Limited research in Southeast Asian markets, where collectivist cultures may influence how brand love is developed and expressed.

New Generations

Need for studies focusing on Gen Z and Alpha, who are digital-native and highly critical of sustainability issues.

Sustainability & Ethics

The link between brand love and brand activism, CSR, or environmental consciousness remains underexplored.

AI & Algorithms

How personalised content and AI-driven interactions affect the emotional bond between consumers and brands.

Conclusion: Brand Love as a Competitive Shield

> Brand love is a crucial element for building strong, sustainable consumer-brand relationships, acting as a powerful shield against market fluctuations and competitive pressures.

Key Takeaways

- Brand trust, experience, image, and quality are the foundations.
- Outcomes include high loyalty, advocacy, and premium price willingness.
- Future research must address digital, cultural, and generational gaps.