

# Investigating the Effect of Brand Consciousness on Cognitive, Affective and Conative Brand Loyalty

Suha Fouad Salem and Zunirah Binti Mohd Talib

**Abstract---** *The current study was aimed to examine the effects of brand consciousness and brand love on different types of brand loyalty in respect to fast fashion industry. A total of 300 usable responses obtained via a self-structured questionnaire were analysed using the structural equation modelling approach. The findings demonstrate that all hypotheses with regard to the link between brand consciousness, brand love, and stages of brand loyalty were supported. Nonetheless, the link between the brand consciousness and affective loyalty as well as conative loyalty was not supported in which brand consciousness had indirect effect on affective loyalty and conative loyalty through brand love. Notably, the current study is the first to report the impact of brand consciousness and brand love on every level of brand loyalty within the setting of fast fashion industry. The results of the study is promising to facilitate the sellers for establishing an effective brand positioning and marketing approaches for being viable in the market.*

**Keywords---** *Brand Love, Brand Consciousness, Brand Loyalty, Fast Fashion.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In any business, building a strong brand is an important goal. This is an essential part of a business that promotes overall success as well as ensuring long-term growth and advancement in the marketplace (Al-Jubari, Hassan, & Liñán, 2018). On that account, various approaches have been used to maintain the customers and decrease the proportion of customers changing brand. Nevertheless, it is common for the customers to switch from one brand to another in evolving markets including Malaysia. As such, there have been increased research to evaluate brand loyalty and various business domains including purchase behaviour, purchase intention, marketing, and branding (Salem & Salem 2018 ). Back & Parks, (2003) revealed that functional as well as symbolic concerns determine the importance of a brand. Evidence has shown that loyalty is resulting from an information process encompassing three levels namely cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, and conative loyalty that are determined by consumers' perception in relation to a brand. In the recent years, there have been rapid advancements in the fast fashion industry. Hence, in order to adopt fast fashion model, numerous brands have improved their business model. Consequently, this has urged the companies to follow the current fashion development in order to meet the consumers' demand at an affordable rate (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). In general, the information on the consumers' behaviour in relation to fast fashion have been scant in which a recent study proposed that the empirical research should be conducted in order to understand the consumers' behaviour with respect to the fast fashion industry. Also, it is essential to examine the information on the development of brand loyalty via various stages of loyalty for consumers in the fast fashion industry (Zhang et al., 2014). Hence, this study is aimed to evaluate the link between brand consciousness

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(BC), brand love (BL) and the three stages of brand loyalty to establish in depth data on brand loyalty.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Brand Consciousness (BC)**

The consumers with mental process that is concentrated on choosing popular brands' goods are referred as brand conscious consumers (Wolter, Brach, Cronin Jr, & Bonn, 2016) . Generally, the brand conscious consumers are categorized according to their consumption behaviour as they possess various stages of brand consciousness (Zhan & He, 2012) . Furthermore, the brand conscious customers assess the product quality via the brand name that could influence the purchase decision process (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). As a result, brand conscious customers are highly biased due to their perceived linked knowledge towards a brand and the source of information (Ferreira & Coelho, 2015). The attraction for consumers to become loyal towards a brand would be higher if there are many sources of information available for a brand. Therefore, it is anticipated that brand consciousness could certainly affect the cognitive brand loyalty (COBL). It should be noted that the brand conscious consumers are fixed to a specific brand as they think that purchasing the brand mirror their status symbols and prestige that lead to affective stage of brand loyalty (ABL) (Jayasuriya, Azam, Khatibi, Atan, & Dharmaratne, 2018). Evidence has shown that brand consciousness positively influences the consumers 'attitude than imposing negative impact due to the exceptional emotional bond with a brand and this lead to conative stage of brand loyalty (COBL) (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). Hence, the hypothesis is formed as follows:

H1. Brand consciousness has a positive relationship with CBL; (H2) ABL; and (H3) COBL.

H4. Brand consciousness has a significant impact on BL.

### **2.2 Brand Love (BL)**

BL is referred to positive emotions that make consumers attach to a brand (Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014). Firm consumer-brand association promotes establishment of viable brands and enhance brand loyalty (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). Salem & Salem, (2019) demonstrated that understanding the mechanism of customers attachment towards a brand could retain the emotional relationship between customers and their brand. Consequently, this results in better establishment of consumer royalty for a certain brand. Nonetheless, the association between brand love and various stages of loyalty has been scant. Hence, hypothesis were formed as follows:

H5: BL has a positive relationship with CBL; (H6) ABL; (H7) COBL.

### **2.3 Brand Loyalty**

Previous studies have defined customer brand loyalty as customers' repurchase intentions concerning only a specific brand as well as their guarantees to buy the brand (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016). Meanwhile, behavioural loyalty specifies repurchase frequency of the goods (Oliver, 1999). Behavioural loyalty is restricted to evaluate the real magnitude of loyalty for a specific brand (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016). Meanwhile, attitudinal loyalty describes the attitude of customers concerning a particular brand. Previous research have demonstrated that

attitudinal loyalty comprised of obligation and desire to buy the brand (Yoshida, Heere, & Gordon, 2015). The brand loyalty comprises three phases in which every stage depends on completing the preceding phase (Kang, Tang, & Lee, 2015). The first stage refers to cognitive loyalty (CBL) where consumers' perceptions are moulded by former evidence relating to the brand that they possess and the stage of their anticipation that they must attain. An affective loyalty (ABL) is the second stage in which customers demonstrate high emotional attachment with the brand. Consequently, this leads to positive attitude and worthy experience that results in satisfaction (Lee & Workman, 2015). As such, maintaining customers satisfaction promotes conative loyalty (COBL). Hence, the current study formed the hypotheses as below:

H8: CBL has a positive relationship with ABL

H9: ABL has a positive relationship with COBL

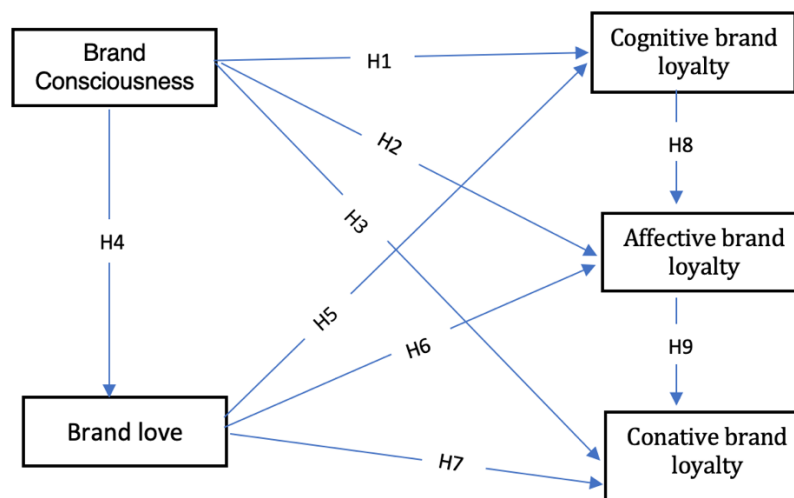


Figure 1: Research Model

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Questionnaire Design

The data collection was performed using a questionnaire that included three main parts. The first part comprised of questions pertaining to experience of respondents for purchasing fashion products from any of popular fast fashion brands for the duration of preceding three years. The second part included information pertaining to respondents' demographic characteristics. The third section of questionnaire comprised of evaluation of structural link between the constructs. A total of four items were adopted from a previous study in order to form research constructs for examining brand consciousness (Sprotles & Kendall, 1986). Meanwhile, brand love was evaluated via six items that were adopted from (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The brand loyalty stages were measured using the items adopted from a previous (Oliver, 1999). A structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) were utilized to empirically test the measurement and structural model as presented in figure 1.

## IV. RESULTS

### 4.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

Reliability of the items, content validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity were evaluated to assess measurement model. Table 1 demonstrates the reliability values of more than 0.7 for all the constructs to validate the internal consistency (J. F. Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Tarofder, Azam, & Ali, 2018; Aldholay, Isaac, Abdullah, & Ramayah, 2018). The AVE and composite reliability are summarised in Table 1 that indicates the adequate convergent validity. The assessment of the loadings and cross-loadings of items demonstrated that frequently an indicator's loadings on its own construct were superior than all of its cross-loadings with other construct.

Table 1: Construct Validity

| Construct                     | Item | Loading | AVE   | Cronbach's alpha | Composite Reliability |
|-------------------------------|------|---------|-------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Brand Consciousness (BC)      | BC1  | 0.781   | 0.640 | 0.806            | 0.872                 |
|                               | BC2  | 0.749   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | BC3  | 0.832   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | BC4  | 0.812   |       |                  |                       |
| Brand Love (BL)               | BL1  | 0.803   | 0.701 | 0.914            | 0.933                 |
|                               | BL2  | 0.839   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | BL3  | 0.858   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | BL4  | 0.865   |       |                  |                       |
| Cognitive Brand Loyalty (CgL) | BL5  | 0.831   | 0.733 | 0.878            | 0.9165                |
|                               | BL6  | 0.825   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | CgL1 | 0.804   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | CgL2 | 0.868   |       |                  |                       |
| Affective Brand Loyalty (AL)  | CgL3 | 0.870   | 0.804 | 0.878            | 0.925                 |
|                               | CgL4 | 0.879   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | AL1  | 0.907   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | AL2  | 0.894   |       |                  |                       |
| Conative Brand Loyalty (CnL)  | AL3  | 0.889   | 0.701 | 0.858            | 0.903                 |
|                               | CnL1 | 0.853   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | CnL2 | 0.875   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | CnL3 | 0.846   |       |                  |                       |
|                               | CnL4 | 0.771   |       |                  |                       |

### 4.2 Structural Model

Table (2) presents the assessment of hypothesis testing. The results support the relationship between brand consciousness and Cognitive Brand loyalty (H1) as the path coefficient is 0.224 with t-statistics of 2.93. Nevertheless, H2 and H3 reflected the association amongst brand consciousness and affective as well as conative brand loyalty were not supported with path coefficient of 0.041 and 0.053, and t-statistics of 0.837 and 1.142, correspondingly. Moreover, the relationship between brand consciousness and brand love (H4) were supported with path coefficient of 0.541 and t-statistics of 8.46. H5, H6, and H7 support a relationships between brand love and cognitive, affective as well as conative brand loyalty with path coefficient of 0.618, 0.489 and 0.344, correspondingly, and t-statistics of 9.649, 6.907 and 4.326, correspondingly. Furthermore, H8 revealed a positive association between cognitive brand loyalty and affective brand loyalty with path coefficient of 0.370, and t-statistics of 5.397. Meanwhile, H9 revealed a positive association between affective and conative brand loyalty with path coefficient of 0.460, and t-statistics of 5.503 were also supported.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Path                 | Path coefficient( $\beta$ ) | T Statistics | P Values | Decision      |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| H1         | BC $\rightarrow$ CgI | 0.224                       | 2.931***     | 0.001    | Supported     |
| H2         | BC $\rightarrow$ AL  | 0.041                       | 0.837        | 0.201    | Not Supported |
| H3         | BC $\rightarrow$ CnL | 0.053                       | 1.142        | 0.127    | Not Supported |
| H4         | BC $\rightarrow$ BL  | 0.541                       | 8.461***     | 0.000    | Supported     |
| H5         | BL $\rightarrow$ CgL | 0.618                       | 9.649***     | 0.000    | Supported     |
| H6         | BL $\rightarrow$ AL  | 0.489                       | 6.907***     | 0.000    | Supported     |
| H7         | BL $\rightarrow$ CnL | 0.344                       | 4.326***     | 0.000    | Supported     |
| H8         | CgL $\rightarrow$ AL | 0.370                       | 5.397***     | 0.000    | Supported     |
| H9         | AL $\rightarrow$ CnL | 0.460                       | 5.503***     | 0.000    | Supported     |

\*\*\*t-values: 1.96 (5%); \*\*\*t-values: 2.58 (1%)

**Note:** Note AL (Affective Brand Loyalty), CnL (Conative Brand Loyalty), CgL (Cognitive Brand loyalty), BL (Brand Love), and BC (Brand Consciousness)

## V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings showed that brand consciousness reflected a positive impact on conative brand loyalty. According to Wallace's et al., (2014) individuals that would like to purchase a product, specifically the extraordinary involvement products, frequently search for external or internal info that could increase their understanding of the brand. However, excessive brand consciousness might not influence their contentment (affective loyalty) or in fact their commitment towards buying a particular item brand (conative loyalty). Nevertheless, the current research demonstrates that brand consciousness ultimately impact on cognitive, affective and conative brand loyalty through brand love. The strategy of fast fashion brands should enhance the individual consciousness towards a brand, which will increase the emotional attachment with a brand. As a result of building an emotional relationship with their customers, companies will develop their customers' loyalty to their brand in every stage of brand loyalty. On the other hand, the current study demonstrated that cognitive brand loyalty reflected a superior effect on affective brand loyalty that resulted in conative brand loyalty. On that account, the results were in agreement with a preceding research, which demonstrated that consumers could establish positive perceptions concerning brands that fulfil their anticipations. Consequently, this forms satisfaction as well as encourage them to repurchase a product regularly (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). Also, a customer satisfaction could form if the information regarding the brand meet the customers' expectation over the alternative brands from the competitors. This scenario is known as an affective brand loyalty that could cause the customers to choose or fix to buy the product (conative brand loyalty). The theoretical input of the current was to form a conceptual model for establishing the brand loyalty concerning fast fashion goods Malaysia. In terms of practical input, the current research has introduced novel parameters for the industry segmentation by emphasising the advantages of forming approaches that would concentrate on customers who are brand conscious. Importantly, it is crucial for the managers to understand the various stages of consumers' loyalty, which reveals their assurance towards a business (Fournier & Yao, 1997). As such, this would enhance their capability to react accordingly using suggested advertising approach.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The current study is aimed to evaluate the link between brand consciousness (BC), brand love (BL) and the three stages of brand loyalty to establish in depth data on brand loyalty. In the context of fast fashion industry, the brand love is regarded as an essential component of the brand loyalty building. The current study has several study limitations and suggestions for further research despite of its benefits towards the practical and theoretical understanding. Firstly, further studies should explore the variations with regard to culture, industries and societies. Secondly, age and gender should be considered as moderating variables for the statistical analysis. Thirdly, qualitative approach should be undertaken in order to discover novel parameters as the predicting strength of conative loyalty was nearly 63 %, which indicating a 37 % unexplained variance.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are grateful to the management and Science University. This research funds by management and Science University through research management center (RMC) under the project code of SG-027-022018-FBMP-20180710001.

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