Research Article

Impact of Emotional Branding on Brand Trustworthiness with mediating role of Brand Commitment

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Abstract

Human emotions play a vital role in cognitive processes, decision-making, purchasing behavior, and social interactions. In any market, consumer engagement with brands is not just transactional; it is intensive, deep-rooted, stable, and emotionally attached. Establishing trust and loyalty between customers and brands has become increasingly crucial, extending beyond mere satisfaction based on benefits. As a result, emotional branding and emotional marketing are gaining significance and recognition among practitioners and marketing researchers, as they enhance credibility for customers. This descriptive study primarily aims to analyze the mediating role of brand commitment in the relationship between emotional branding and brand trustworthiness.

A convenience sampling technique was adopted to gather 308 samples using an online questionnaire. The sampling adequacy for the study was determined by the KMO and Bartlett's test, yielding a value of 0.935. Data were analyzed using correlation, stepwise regression, and mediation analysis in SPSS and JAMOVI to assess the mediating role of brand commitment in the relationship between emotional branding and brand trustworthiness. The findings indicate a robust and positive relationship among emotional branding, brand trustworthiness, and brand commitment. The stepwise regression model revealed that emotional branding antecedents significantly predict both brand trustworthiness and brand commitment. Furthermore, mediation analysis confirmed that emotional branding antecedents significantly impact brand trustworthiness, with brand commitment serving as a mediator, thus validating the mediation analysis.

This study recommends that brand trustworthiness can be improved through emotional branding strategies, leveraging the mediating effect of brand commitment activities. Consequently, marketers can achieve a higher level of brand trustworthiness and commitment by enhancing emotional branding strategies with their customers. The research concludes that emotional branding strategies are significant predictors of brand trustworthiness, with brand commitment playing a vital mediating role in this relationship. Future research could explore these dynamics in different geographical areas and consider additional variables, such as brand satisfaction, brand love, and brand attachment, to further enrich the model.

Keywords: Brand Commitment. Emotional Branding. Brand Trustworthiness. Mediating Role.

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1 Introduction

Brands are essentially patterns of familiarity, relatedness, trust and reassurance that exist in the minds of people. The unique identities are created through promotions, customer service, social responsibility, reputation, and visuals. Branding is the process of identifying, creating, and managing the intellectual assets to shape the perception of a brand in stakeholders' minds. ("Why is Product Branding Vital for Your Business?") These perceptions are created on the basis of individual reception. These Strategies are impactful and emotions can be effectively capitalized. In the retail environment, enterprises must distinguish themselves from the competitors to get the attention of consumers' by connecting to their hearts. Aligning brand values with personal values creates a sense of self-congruence and stronger emotional connection (Fournier, 1998; Malär et al., 2011).

Emotional branding has transcended a buzzword to become a crucial element in today's marketing landscape. By forging emotional connections with consumers, brands can unlock a range of benefits and achieve sustainable success. Emotional branding is defined as the practice of creating a strategic connection with consumers by evoking their emotions and aligning with their values and identities (Batra & Kohli, 2011; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarges, 2010). Emotional branding strategy would be useful to engage their customers through fulfilling their requirements. Further creation of strong Brand Attachments is achieved by the right Emotional branding strategy (Akgün, Koçoğlu, & İmamoğlu, 2013). Consumers connected Emotionally are 52% more Individuals that possess a higher level of aspiration and are not merely content with a certain brand are deemed to be more valued Otley's (2016) and they are highly profitable (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012).

Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2007) and Bradley's (2010) argued that manipulating emotions raises ethical concerns, requiring transparency and responsible branding practices and Strong emotional engagement leads to higher brand equity and financial performance (Witzenburg, 2004). Further, Hsu, Hsu, and Cheng's (2017) mentioned that Emotionally-driven brands are often preferred and chosen over competitors and Emotional branding helps brands stand out in a crowded market and create a unique identity. Emotional branding fosters trust by creating a perceived authenticity and emotional resonance with consumers(Bhattacharya & Mukherjee, 2014). Positive emotions arising from brand interactions increase satisfaction and the perceived value of brand offerings (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nörström, 1999; Rust & Oliver, 2012). Emotional connection to a brand fosters loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth (Malär et al., 2011; Whan Park et al., 2010).

Brand commitment plays a very crucial role in the process of customer retention and creates good connection with the customer towards the respective brands. And also Brand commitment is signifying a deep and enduring connection between a consumer and a brand and it is reflecting an emotional attachment towards the brand. Brand commitment is defined as "the psychological state that binds a customer to a specific brand on the basis of an affective-based attachment, a cognitive-based evaluation, and a behavioral-based intention" (Chaudhury & Ghosh, 2007). Brand commitment has a significant impact on various aspects of consumer behavior and brand performance. Also helps to achieve enhanced brand advocacy, stronger brand resilience and increased customer loyalty and retention.

Emotional investment by a customer on brand through loyalty, expectation to obtain functional and emotional benefits from the brand is Brand Commitment (Danes et al., 2012). According to Chang and Wu's (2014), customers' expectation to establish a long-term relationship with a brand through psychological, emotional, and economic connection is brand commitment.

Belaid and Behi's (2011)mentioned that brand commitment is the desire to continue a valued and durable relationship with the brand. Customers will maintain valued relationship with a brand, based their interaction and satisfaction of a brand (e.g.Hsiao, Shen, and Chao's (2015)) and by re-buying, re-using and re-patronizing Shuv-Ami's (2018) will enhance overall attachment and bondage with a brand. Understanding the various types of consumers are inevitable to establish and develop stronger brand commitment and that will lead to consumer's commitment level either in positive or negative way. Value Commitment and affective commitment are the two kinds of brand commitment (Tanford, Raab, & Kim, 2011). Enhanced brand commitment will result in retaining consumers preferences on a long-term basis for a brand and found that purchase intention is strongly predicted by brand commitment.

Along with brand commitment, brand trustworthiness has an inevitable role in the process of customer retention and enhanced emotional bondings with the customer for the respective brands. Evidently, Brand trustworthiness has become a cornerstone of success and Consumers increasingly favor the brands which they trust, which leads to influencing their purchase decisions, brand loyalty, and overall market performance. This literature review delves into the concept of brand trustworthiness, its significance, and current research avenues. Brand trustworthiness refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as reliable, credible, and ethical (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Barclay, 2001). Building brand trustworthiness unlocks numerous benefits for businesses, including: Enhanced customer loyalty and retention, Improved brand reputation and image, Increased customer satisfaction and purchase willingness and Competitive advantage and market share growth. As Morrison and Crane's (2007) suggested, an integrated approach which emphasizes innovation in emotional branding strategies and experiences which brings stimulation on trustworthiness and emotions through Branding campaigns (Erickson, 1995; Harter, 2002).

Thus, Enterprises need to focus on innovation and quality in branding along with Emotional branding to achieve brand trustworthiness. However, accurately capturing and quantifying consumer emotions remains a challenge Larsen, McGraw, and Cacioppo's (2001) and Öhman's (1996) and Effective emotional branding requires tailoring strategies to diverse consumer segments and individual preferences (Dubé & Cayla, 2016). And also, measuring the relationship between emotional branding and brand trustworthiness is much required for increased revenue generation. Thus, this article attempts to study various emotional branding factors and its relationship with brand trustworthiness through the mediating variable of brand commitment.

2 Review of Literature & Framework of Hypothesis

Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel's (2006) found that emotional branding positively influences trust, emphasizing the role of emotional appeal in fostering trust among consumers. Emotional branding that triggers positive feelings like joy, excitement, or security can lead to enhanced perceptions of trustworthiness (Sander-Klaver, Van Beest, & Daamen, 2009). Loyal customers are more likely to trust the brand, believing it consistently delivers on its promises and meets their expectations (Whan Park et al., 2010). Bhattacharya and Mukherjee's (2014) found that emotional branding, manifested through storytelling and customer engagement, positively influenced brand trust and loyalty. Bigné, Iacobucci, and Griffin's (2005) research demonstrated a positive correlation between brand emotions and trust, suggesting that brands that evoke positive emotions are perceived as more reliable and credible.

Malär et al.'s (2011) found that brands with strong emotional connections with consumers, often achieved through evoking positive emotions, perceived as more trustworthy and credible. Trustworthy brands provide consistent and positive experiences, further reinforcing the emotional connection and strengthening the positive emotional loop. While the existing literature highlights the positive correlation between emotional branding and trust, there is a need for more

nuanced investigations into contextual factors, negative emotional branding, temporal dynamics, mediating mechanisms, and cross-cultural variations. So far, very few contributions were available to measure the relationship between emotional branding and brand trustworthiness. Hence, researchers have formulated the following hypothesis. Hypothesis 1: Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness are significantly correlated

In today's competitive landscape, brands compete not just on features and benefits, but also on their ability to connect with consumers on an emotional level. This is where emotional branding shines, aiming to evoke positive feelings and forge lasting connections with consumers. One key outcome of this emotional association is brand commitment, where consumers develop a deep attachment and loyalty to a brand beyond mere satisfaction. Hsu, Hsu, and Cheng's (2017) found that positive emotions influence commitment by fostering favorable attitudes and can lead to stronger brand commitment. Positive emotional experiences with brands create lasting memories and emotional bonds (Whan Park et al., 2010). These emotional attachments increase perceived brand value and willingness to invest in the brand, leading to a deeper commitment. Bhattacharya and Mukherjee's (2014) found that emotional branding, manifested through storytelling and customer engagement, positively influenced brand commitment alongside trust and loyalty. Kim and Sullivan's (2019) demonstrated a positive correlation between brand personality and brand commitment, highlighting the role of emotional resonance in fostering deeper connections. Choi and Kim's (2015) found that brand experiences that evoke positive emotions lead to increased brand attachment and commitment, emphasizing the importance of emotionally engaging experiences. Hsu, Hsu, and Cheng's (2017) argued that brands that successfully integrated emotional appeals into their marketing communications experienced higher levels of brand commitment and customer advocacy.

The current literature predominantly emphasizes the positive impact of emotional branding on brand commitment. However, there is a research gap concerning the potential effects of negative emotional branding experiences. Understanding how negative emotions may influence brand commitment, or conversely, lead to brand disengagement, is crucial for a more balanced and comprehensive perspective. Hence, the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional Branding and Brand Commitment are significantly correlated
The quest for brand success increasingly necessitates building trust and commitment with consumers. This review explores the intricate interplay between emotional branding, brand trust, and brand commitment, focusing on the potential mediating role of commitment. emotional bond fuels a sense of commitment, which strengthens trust in the brand's intentions and promises. Bhattacharya and Mukherjee's (2014), revealed that brand commitment, which in turn mediated the relationship between emotional branding and brand trust. Brand commitment is predicted by brand trust and proven by (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2002) have mentioned that brand effect and role of brand trust is determining brand commitment. Similarly, Sanchez-Franco's (2009) has revealed that there exists an impact on brand commitment by brand trust and findings of Erkmen and Hancer's (2015) also confirms the same effect. Moreover, significant correlations are observed between brand commitment and brand trustworthiness by Albert and Merunka's (2013), Sahagun and Vasquez-Parraga's (2014), and Story and Hess's (2010) and in their research papers. Beyond mere satisfaction, commitment involves a genuine emotional bond and willingness to advocate for the brand. This stronger connection further cements trust in the brand and its offerings. Commitment prompts active engagement with the brand, providing opportunities for positive experiences and reinforcing trust through consistent delivery of promises. Committing to a brand involves an implicit endorsement of its values and principles. This creates a sense of shared identity and vulnerability, making indi-

viduals more reliant on the brand's trustworthiness. The existing literature provides compelling evidence for a positive relationship between emotional branding, brand commitment, and brand trust. Notably, brand commitment emerges as a potential mediator, suggesting that fostering emotional connections and commitment can act as a powerful catalyst for building and solidifying brand trust. Further research can refine our understanding of this complex interplay and develop effective strategies for harnessing the power of emotional branding to cultivate deep-rooted trust and commitment among consumers. Hence, the following hypothesis has been framed.

Hypothesis 3: Brand Commitment significantly mediates the relationship between Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness

3 Objectives of the study

i To study the emotional branding, brand trustworthiness and brand commitment among the health drink brand consumers in the vicinity of Bengaluru city.

ii To understand the perception on emotional branding, brand trustworthiness and brand commitment across the demographic profiles of health drink consumers.

iii To investigate the relationship between emotional branding, brand trustworthiness and brand commitment

iv To analyze the mediation role Brand Commitment in the relationship between emotional branding and brand trustworthiness.

4 Methodology

This Quantitative research developed to explore and analyze the mediating role of Brand Commitment in Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness. 308 responses were collected from Health Drink Consumers through convenience sampling technique in and around Bengaluru city using the questionnaire in the online forms. Based on the objectives of the study self-designed questionnaire was constructed to assess Brand Trustworthiness (BT) Scale by Singla V, Gupta G (2019), Emotional Branding (EB) (Brand Loyalty-4, Perceived Quality-3, Brand Association-3, Brand Personality-3), Brand Commitment (6) by Xiao Tong, Jin Su & Yingjiao Xu (2018) and respondents were requested to respond the questionnaire through self-rating on 5 point likert scale ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree to each statements and including demographic questions such as gender, age group, location, Family Income Level, No of family members and employment status.

The Statements for each variable have been confirmed through the factor analysis and sampling adequacy is confirmed by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.897 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p = 0.000 <0.05). Cronbach's Alpha test conducted to the reliability of the scales and it confirmed that measurement scales are highly reliable, i.e. BT (6 items; = 0.860), EB (13 items; = 0.897), and BC (6 items; = 0.916). Data were analyzed through Correlation, Stepwise regression, Mediating Effects in SPSS, and Jamovi.

5 Data Analysis and Results

5.1 Profile of the Respondents

Respondents profile is distributed across Gender (Female – 55.8%, Male – 44.2%); Age Group (Less than 20 years – 1.8%, 25-25 years – 24.8%, 26-30 years – 15%, 31-35 years – 15.9%, 36 - 40 years – 19.5%, Above 40 years – 23%); Location (Urban – 54.9%, Semi Urban – 25.7%, Rural –

Table 1. Cross Tabulation: Preferred Brand in Kids Health Drinks Vs Use of Brands for last (in Years)

	< 2	2 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	Above 8	Total
Horlicks	31	13	26	10	7	87
Boost	11	41	23	11	6	92
Complan	6	6	6	12	0	30
Pediasure	9	7	3	6	5	30
Bornvita	9	4	7	4	3	27
Protinex	3	3	0	0	0	6
Other Brands	17	5	5	5	4	36
Total	86	79	70	48	25	308

Authors' calculations based on survey data

19.5%); Family Income Level (Per Year in INR) (less than 5 Lakhs - 36.3%, 5 - 10 Lakhs - 38.%, 11 - 15 Lakhs - 16.8%, 16 - 20 Lakhs - 1.8%, Above 20 Lakhs - 7.%); No of family members (Less than 3 - 8.0%, 3-5 - 80.5%, Above 5 - 11.5%); Employment Status (Public Service - 8.0%, Private Service - 62.8%, Business - 8.0%, Others - 21.2%)

Among the brands in Kids Health Drinks, it has been observed that the highest users are found in Boost, Horlicks, other brands followed by Complan and Pediasure. It has also been observed that the shortest (Less than 2 years) duration users are found in Highest numbers. Followed by 2 -4 years, 5 - 6 years, 7- 8 years and Longest (more than 8 years). It can be concluded the longest duration users are satisfied, committed consumers, and emotionally attached with their preferred brands (see table 1).

5.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 provides the results of descriptive analysis. Considering the Brand Trustworthiness scale's descriptive analysis results, it reveals that the vast majority of consumers accepted the notion of quality (95.5%, Mean = 4.39, SD = 0.604), excellent value (84.1%, Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.678), strong image (75.6%, Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.738), understanding of customer needs (85%, Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.689), and quality (77%, Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.744). In addition, a significant percentage (89.4%) of consumers accepted that quality (Mean = 4.39, SD = 0.604) is a prime factor of BT Scale.

Second, customer-agreed scale statements for brand loyalty, i.e. 80.6% of respondents agreed that if this brand is offered at the store, they won't buy any other brands (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.916), 73.4% agreed that even though the brand costs more, they would still buy it (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.914), 82.3% agreed that they prioritize and favor this brand as their top choice over all others (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.785), and 77% agreed that they would buy it (Mean = 4, SD = 0.824.

Customers' agreement on the third variable's perceived quality scale statements, or scale 80.6% of respondents agreed that this brand consistently provides good quality (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.916), 73.4% agreed that this brand delivers the quality as promised (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.914), and 82.3% agreed that this brand offers exceptional features when compared to other brands (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.785).

Scale statements represent the fourth variable in Brand Association that the customers agreed to. 74.3% of respondents agreed that I know enough about this brand to make an informed decision (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.771), 89.4% agreed that I can easily tell this brand apart from its competitors (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.649), and 76.1% agreed that the brand's symbol, logo, or

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Items	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
Trustworthiness	BT1	0	0.9	3.5	51.3	44.2	4.39	0.604
	BT2	0	1.8	14.2	59.3	24.8	4.07	0.678
	BT3	0	2.7	11.5	51.3	34.5	4.18	0.735
	BT4	0	0.9	14.2	53.1	31.9	4.16	0.689
	BT5	0	2.7	20.4	53.1	23.9	3.98	0.744
	BT6	0	0.9	9.7	63.7	25.7	4.14	0.610
Loyalty	BL1	0	8.8	10.6	42.5	38.1	4.10	0.916
	BL2	3.5	4.4	18.6	51.3	22.1	3.84	0.941
	BL3	0	3.5	14.2	47.8	34.5	4.13	0.785
	BL4	0	5.3	17.7	48.7	28.3	4.00	0.824
P Quality	PQ1	0	1.8	6.2	57.5	34.5	4.25	0.648
	PQ2	0	4.4	13.3	51.3	31.0	4.09	0.786
	PQ3	0	4.4	24.8	47.8	23.0	3.89	0.806
Association	BA1	0	3.5	22.1	51.3	23.0	3.94	0.771
	BA2	0	1.8	8.8	61.1	28.3	4.16	0.649
	BA3	2.7	3.5	17.7	44.2	31.9	3.99	0.940
Personality	BP1	12.4	14.2	25.7	31.0	16.8	3.26	1.252
	BP2	0.9	2.7	14.2	59.3	23.0	4.01	0.750
	BP3	2.7	6.2	19.5	43.4	28.3	3.88	0.980
Commitment	BC1	0	12.4	38.1	30.1	19.5	3.57	0.944
	BC2	0.9	9.7	34.5	38.9	15.9	3.59	0.903
	BC3	1.8	7.1	25.7	48.7	16.8	3.72	0.891
	BC4	2.7	12.4	25.7	41.6	17.7	3.59	1.006
	BC5	6.2	13.3	35.4	24.8	20.4	3.40	1.138
	BC6	5.3	10.6	27.4	35.4	21.2	3.57	1.101

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data.

jingles are immediately identifiable to me (Mean = 3.99, SD = 0.940).

Fifth variable Brand Personality scale statements agreed upon by customers, i.e. scale 47.8% of respondents agreed and 31% chose neutral that this brand celebrity's personality is the same as mine (Mean = 3.26, SD = 1.252), 82.3% of respondents agreed that I have a positive connection to this brand (Mean = 4.01, SD = 0.750), and 71.7% of respondents agreed that this brand has a unique brand image compared to rival brands (Mean = 3).

Customers agreed to the following statements on the variable Brand Commitment scale: I feel emotionally attached to my brand (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.949), My brand is closely tied to my personal emotions (Mean = 3.59, SD = 0.903), and I have a strong sense of identification with my brand (Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.891). Of those respondents, 49.6% accepted these statements and 30.1% chose neutral. It would be very difficult for me to switch from my brand, according to 59.3% of respondents (Mean = 3.59, SD = 1.006), my routine would be disrupted if I switched from my brand, according to 45.2% of respondents (Mean = 3.4, SD = 1.138), and it would be too inconvenient for me to switch from my brand right now, according to 56.6% of respondents (Mean = 3.57, SD = 1.101).

Table 3. Correlation

		BT	BL	BA	PQ	BP	BC
Brand Trustworthiness	r	1					
Brand Loyalty	r	.567**	1				
	p	.000					
Brand Association	r	.509**	.655**	1			
	p	.000	.000				
Perceived Quality	r	.698**	.790**	.600**	1		
	p	.000	.000	.000			
Brand Personality	r	.520**	.515**	.635**	.556**	1	
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000		
Brand Commitment	r	.538**	.622**	.552**	.649**	.606**	1
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

r - Pearson correlation; p - significant value (2-tailed)

Authors' calculations based on survey data

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness are significantly correlated
Hypothesis 2: Emotional Branding and Brand Commitment are significantly correlated

5.3 Correlation

Table 3 show the results of correlation analysis. It has been found that Brand Trustworthiness is moderately and positively correlated with Brand Loyalty (r = 0.567**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Association (r = 0.509**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Perceived Quality (r = 0.698**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Personality (r = 0.520**; p = 0.000 < 0.01) and Brand Commitment (r = 0.538**; p = 0.000 < 0.01) at 0.01 significance level. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, i.e. Hypothesis: 1 Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness are significantly correlated.

Further the Brand Commitment is significantly and positively correlated with Brand Loyalty (r = 0.662**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Association (r = 0.552**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Perceived Quality (r = 0.649**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Personality (r = 0.606**; p = 0.000 < 0.01) at 0.01 significance level. Additionally, correlation matrix revealed that Brand Loyalty is having moderately and positively correlated with Brand Association (r = 0.655**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Personality (r = 0.515**; p = 0.000 < 0.01) and Perceived Quality (r = 0.790**; p = 0.000 < 0.01); Brand Association is having moderate and positive correlation with Perceived Quality (r = 0.600**; p = 0.000 < 0.01), Brand Personality (r = 0.635**; p = 0.000 < 0.01). Hence, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, i.e. Emotional Branding and Brand Commitment are significantly correlated.

5.4 Stepwise Linear Regression

Further, to understand the degree of impact of emotional branding factors on brand commitment and brand trustworthiness, the authors used stepwise linear regression analysis with 3 models. Researchers used the Linear regression Stepwise Method to analyze the relationship between

variables through 3 models. Model 1 analyzed the impact on Brand Trustworthiness (BT) by Emotional Branding Factors i.e. Brand Loyalty (BL), Brand Association (BA), Perceived Quality(PQ) and Brand Personality(BP); Model 2 analyzed the impact on Brand Commitment by Brand Trustworthiness, Emotional Branding Factors i.e. Brand Loyalty(BL), Brand Association(BA), Perceived Quality(PQ) and Brand Personality(BP); and Model 3 analyzed impact on Brand Commitment by Brand Trustworthiness and Emotional Branding. The results of stepwise linear regression found that 51.64% of variance on Brand Trustworthiness has been predicted by BL, BA, PQ and BP (F = 28.62 >2.56, p=0.0000<0.05) at 0.05 significant level however only Perceived Quality (p value is 0.0000 < 0.05, t static value is equal to 5.129) is significantly predicting band trustworthiness (see table 4).

Table 4. Stepwise Linear Regression

Model	DV	IV	Coeff	Sig	t stat	R Square	F Value	sig.
1	Brand Trustworthiness	Brand Loyalty	-0.021	0.82	-0.227	51.46%	28.62	0.00
		Brand Association	0.058	0.46	0.731			
		Perceived Quality	0.474	0.00	5.129			
		Brand Personality	0.108	0.07	1.783			
2	Brand Commitment	Brand Loyalty	0.199	0.00	3.755	53.36%	193.57	0.00
		Brand Association	0.104	0.02	2.321			
		Perceived Quality	0.378	0.00	6.405			
		Brand Personality	0.302	0.00	8.737			
3	Commitment	Brand Trustworthiness	0.198	0.00	3.794	52.50%	469.06	0.00
		Emotional Branding	0.954	0.00	20.945			

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data.

53.36% of variance on Brand Commitment has been predicted (F = 193.57 >2.56, p=0.0000<0.05) by Brand Loyalty (p value = 0.000 < 0.05, t stat = 3.755), Brand Association(p value = 0.021 < 0.05, t stat = 2.321), Perceived Quality (p value = 0.000 < 0.05, t stat = 6.405), and Brand Personality (p value = 0.000 < 0.05, t stat = 8.737) at 0.05 significant level; Brand Personality is the highly predicting variable among other predictor variables since t static value is higher than other variables used in the model. 52.5% of variance on Brand Commitment has been predicted (F = 469.06 >2.56, p=0.0000<0.05) by Brand Trustworthiness (p value = 0.000 < 0.05, t stat = 3.794), Emotional Branding (p value = 0.000 < 0.05, t stat = 20.945) at 0.05 significant level; Emotional Branding is the highly predicting variable than Brand Trustworthiness since t static

value is higher than other variables used in the model. Based on the results, researchers confirm that the variables included for the study are optimal to analyze the mediation effect i.e, mediating role of Brand Commitment in the relationship between Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness has been analyzed using mediation analysis (Jamovi).

5.5 Mediation effect

Hypothesis 3: Brand Commitment significantly mediates the relationship between Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness

Table 5. Mediation Estimates

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	0.0725	0.0645	1.12	0.261	11.9
Direct	c	0.5354	0.0894	5.99	< .001	88.1
Total	c + a × b	0.6079	0.0626	9.71	< .001	100

Authors' calculations based on survey data

Emotional Branding appears to have a strong, positive influence on BT, both directly and indirectly (see table 5). The direct effect is likely the primary driver of this relationship, as the indirect effect through BC is not statistically significant. Further the mediation analysis revealed that direct mediation effect is 88.1% and it is highly significant (p value = 0.001< 0.05, estimation value = 0.5354(53.54%); overall mediation effect also significant (p value = 0.001<0.05, estimation value = 0.6079(60.79%). However, it's important to note that the indirect effect is still relatively large (11.9%), suggesting that BC may play a partial mediating role. The fact that EBF has a significant direct effect on BT aligns with existing research demonstrating the influence of emotions on brand trustworthiness. Consumers who Emotionally connect with a brand are more likely to perceive the brand as trustworthy. Results confirm that Brand Commitment is having a mediating role between Emotional Branding and Brand Trustworthiness. Hence Hypothesis 3 is accepted, i.e. Brand commitment has a significant mediating role among emotional branding and brand trustworthiness (see table 6).

Table 6. Path Estimates

Label	Path	Estimate	SE	Z	P
EBF	→ BC	1.0432	0.0952	10.95	< .001
BC	→ BT	0.0695	0.0615	1.13	0.258
EBF	→ BT	0.5354	0.0894	5.99	< .001

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data.

6 Conclusion and Policy Implications

The primary objective of this study has been measured using mediation analysis through the framed hypotheses and the results have validated that brand commitment has a significant mediating impact on emotional branding and brand trustworthiness. In addition to that, correlation and regression analysis confirms that there is a significant association between emotional branding factors, brand trustworthiness and brand commitment, i.e., emotional branding factors BL - Brand Loyalty, BA - Brand Association, PQ - Perceived Quality and BP - Brand Personality has

significant impact on Brand Trustworthiness (BT), Brand Commitment (BC); Brand Commitment has significant impact on Brand Trustworthiness, and Brand Trustworthiness is predicted by emotional branding (overall). The marketers can focus on enhancing the emotional branding by adding credibility to its customers through a brand's emotional branding can be enhanced by Brand Loyalty, Brand Association, Perceived Quality and Brand Personality which leads to increased level of attraction and retention of customers towards their brands. Subsequently, the marketers can achieve maximum level of brand trustworthiness and brand commitment when they enhance the emotional branding strategies through their customers.

This study concludes that emotional branding strategies are a significant predictor of brand trustworthiness and brand commitment is playing a significant mediating effect on emotional branding and brand trustworthiness. This study also has limitations, i.e., study focused strictly on the framework develop and not focused on other variables like, brand satisfaction, brand love, brand attachment and etc., and this study conducted only among in and around Bengaluru through online survey forms, hence the results may not be applicable for other geographical areas. However, the future research can be conducted in any other geographical areas and other variables like, brand satisfaction, brand love, brand attachment can be included in the model and the same can be analyzed using ANOVA, structural equation model and other relevant statistical tools.

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