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Exploring the cognitive and affective relationship influencing brand love in online food delivery services

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Abstract

Our study ascertains the cognitive & emotional factors, aids in establishing brand love in platform-to-consumer delivery services. Perception of consumers are captured using a survey questionnaire, which is later tested using the Smart PLS v 3.0 software. Our research is first of its kind to apprehend the formation of emotional connect (brand love), prevailing among the consumers in case of platform-to-consumer delivery services.

Keywords: Brand love, brand image, platform-to-consumer delivery, app attributes, technology attributes, services attributes, social influences

1. **Introduction**

In the current market scenario, e-commerce has surpassed the traditional retailers in all sectors (Jones 2013), as purchasing through e-commerce will have discounted price, offer quicker and better customer service and increase sales (Turban et al., 2004; Schneider, 2004; Award, 2004). Consumers of the online retailing industry look for a virtually unlimited choice of products and services such that the consumer benefits from product customization, real time interactive communication and fast delivery. Under the umbrella of the various products and service industry, food delivery occupies a distinctive space as the restaurants trying to provide it as an additional service to remain competitive (Yeo et al,2017). It is referred as restaurant-to- consumer delivery, while our study focuses on platform-to-consumer delivery services provided by Swiggy, Zomato etc.

From the consumer end, the food delivery services provide convenience to consumers in getting the food they want without compromising their various requirements (Romi, 2018). There is a growing interest among the researchers to capture the consumer perception towards platform-to-consumer food delivery services, as the preliminary study conducted by the researchers indicates that there is an increase in volume and frequency of order in the recent past. Our research question is to comprehend the cognitive & emotional factors leading to brand love in platform-to-consumer delivery services.

1. **Literature Review**

Given the significance of the online context of all industries, food industry has made a significant progress on creating competitive advantage by creating favourable customer experience (Anil et al). To support the research question and to establish a model leading to brand image cognitively and brand love emotionally towards online food delivery services, the researchers identified the constructs and its corresponding indictors from the literature.

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Scholars and practitioners incline to approve and adopt that identifying appropriate quality attributes of mobile apps will help in promoting the brand and thus mobile app quality in all perspectives (Cho et al, 2018, Richard, 2017). Extending to the argument of mobile app it is inferred from the literature that

H1: App attribute will positively impact the brand image

Tsai (2014) pointed out that service quality is the key to establish significant relationships with consumers in online food industry. Romi (2018) validates that service quality plays a major role in the online food delivery industry to establish a brand relationship. This gives rise to the hypothesis that

H2: Service attributes will positively impact the brand image

Lee et al, 2017 argues that consumers' experiences in purchasing delivery food through mobile apps is enhanced by the user friendly technology. Studies related to mobile interfaces have shown that technology attribute can positively influence the brand image of the online food delivery services. Hence we hypothesize that

H3: Technology attributes will positively impact the brand image

In the context of product and brand management industry in online services, a number of studies have shown various effects of personality attributes like risk aversion, hedonic and utilitarian motivation on consumers' decision making (Kurt, 2008). Cho et al, 2014 have empirically proved that individual attributes have contributed to the repeat purchase and brand image in the B2C ecommerce applications. Hence the following hypothesis

H4: Personality attributes will positively impact the brand image

Social influences like online reviews and peer reviews fosters a renewed spread of word-of- mouth in the any industry (Raffaele and Fraser, 2013). Social attributes like online product reviews are important determinants of consumers' purchase decisions of a particular brand (Le et al, 2013). Thus, we posit the hypothesis below

H5: Social influences will positively impact the brand image

Mohammad and Qazi (2019) have established that in the restaurant landscape the impact of brand image on establishing brand love and the mediating effect of brand image is significant. Brand love effectively stimulates consumers' willingness to purchase products in the long run while also reducing the likelihood of switching to other brands (Tseng, 2019). Hence we hypothesize

H6: Brand image has a positive relationship with brand love

Brand image mediates the relation among the constructs identified and brand love in online food delivery services.

2. Research Methodology

Based on the above theoretical underpinnings, a questionnaire is devised and circulated through online surveys, among the users of online food delivery services such as Swiggy, Zomato & Uber eats. Convenience sampling technique is adopted for the study and the data is collected in two stages. A total of 227 responses were collected and checked for its reliability & validity measures through Cronbach's alpha and discriminant validity is established through Fornell Larcker criterion.

2.1 Sample profile:

Of the 227 responses 163 are male and 64 are female respondents, of which 66.2% of respondents are in the age group of 24-26 years, 22.4% are 27-30 years of age and the remaining 10% are 21-23 years age group.

As for online food delivery partner is concerned 49.6% were Swiggy alone users followed by 26.8% of Zomato alone users, 3.9% were users of Uber eats and the remaining 20% were associated mutually with Swiggy & Zomato.

2.2 Measurement:

The nomological model is evaluated through Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method, as the sample size of this study is small. The model is operationalized as a reflective-reflective model, as both the relationship of latent variable with its indicator (latent variable sources the indicator) & one latent variable to other latent variable is treated as reflective.

Independent variables such as app attributes, service attributes, individual attributes, technology attributes & social influences were treated as second order constructs and the dependent variables such as brand image & brand love is considered as first order constructs.

Structural equation modelling is executed with the help of Smart PLS v3.0 software. Aligning with the procedure, the measurement model (inner model) confirms the internal consistency (composite reliability value), indicator reliability, convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted) & discriminant validity (Fornell Larcker criterion). The structural model endorses for the collinearity statistics(VIF) & structural model relationships (Path coefficients). Adding to it, the mediation effect of brand image on brand love is also tested using Preacher & Hayes (2008) bootstrapping procedure. Further we explored the study variables in different combination, to have a better understanding about the relationship prevalent between the variables.

3. Discussion & Implications:

In the base model, the app attributes and service attributes emerges as a significant predictor for brand image, articulates that the online food delivery service providers can be successful in creating brand image only when they give utmost importance to various restaurant choices, timely delivery and the app characteristics.

On the other hand, in the alternate model considering the relationship between need for cognition & brand image, it demonstrates that at the earlier stage of creating connect with the brand, the cognitive attachment plays a significant role, whereas in the advanced stage emotional connect with the brand is established leading to brand love.

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