S. Sreejesh · Sanjay Mohapatra

Mixed Method Research Design

An Application in Consumer–Brand Relationships (CBR)

✎ Springer

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Dedicated to

My Father, Surendran Pillai (Late),
My Mother, Radhamani Amma,
My Wife, Anusree. M. R,
My Brother and Sister, Suresh S and Sreeja Sudharman.
Sreejesh

Dr. Sushila Moshra (Late)
Bharati, Sanjana and Shrestha
Sanjay

Preface

"Mixed Method Research Design: An Application In Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBR)" is a comprehensive guide to design and conduct the research in management-related field, such as marketing management and human resources management. This book provides an overview of the real research conducted by the authors in their career as researchers and thereby explains one of the important and growing research designs used in management research—mixed method research design. It starts with the introduction which shows the background of the study. This is followed by a detailed literature review in the areas of consumer-brand relationships, which helps the authors to show how research questions and research objectives can be formulated for the mixed method study. This is further followed by a detailed explanation of the methodology, which establishes the ground rule for the study. Finally, it ends with the analysis and results of mixed method research study. In addition, the book also examines the procedures of mixing of qualitative and quantitative paradigms in research both in terms of hypothesis development and testing. It also helps the reader to understand how to design their research studies using mixed method design. The book concludes with managerial implications, which helps the reader to understand how mixed research design could be used to infer contribution to the theory and practice.

S. Sreejesh
Sanjay Mohopatra

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Practitioners acknowledged thamt effective advertising, which helps build powerful, lasting brand relationships, is a balance of 'head and heart.' Little investment in research and theory development, however, has been dedicated to measuring the heart response.

Plummer (2006) Journal of Advertising Research

Building close relationship with brand users is key to the future, ad agencies for the package-goods giants had better be ready.

Charles Strauss, President and CEO, Unilever

Introduction

Creation of brand-based differentiation is the most influential approach for the development and maintenance of competitive advantage, particularly customer-focused competitive advantage. For customers, these differentiating aspects would act as a signal of achieving expectation, which will provide more confidence and believability that the brand will meet their expectations (Kim et al. 2008). The extant literature on consumer–brand management examined these differentiating aspects based on which consumers perceive and evaluate brands, for example, brand equity (Aaker 1991; Biel 1993; Keller 1997), brand personality (Plaummer 1985; Batra et al. 1993; Aaker 1997), and brand extensions (Nakamoto et al. 1993; Aaker and Keller 1993). Recently, a new stream of literature stated that consumers often do not differentiate brands based on how they perceive, rather they distinguish based on their relationship with it (e.g., Fournier 1998). This mainly arises because of the change in ideology from transactional relationships to fostering long-term relationships (Tsai 2011). This change in ideology from transactional relationships to long-term relationships induced the marketers' efforts to promote consumers to think their brand as a living entity through employing personification, reciprocal exchanges, anthropomorphization, as well as relating brand with human characters

(Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Moon 2000; Fournier 1998), thereby making the relationship-building approach as a comprehensively investigated topic in international brand management studies (Breivik and Thorbjørnsen 2008).

The consideration of brand as a living entity led to the contemplation of brand as an active and an interdependent partner in the relationship dyad, because relationships exist between active and interdependent partners (Fournier 1998). The brand as a living entity would also attach personalities, which would grow and develop over time, therefore, it would be possible to have relationships with the brands (Patterson and O' Malley 2006). Another important condition, which is necessary for consumer–brand relationships to exist, is the occurrence of reciprocal exchange between consumer and brand (Hinde 1995). This reciprocal relationship between brands and consumers would be developed for a purpose; it is a multiplex and process phenomena and the relationship form changes over time to time (Hinde 1995; Fournier 1998). The concept of anthropomorphization in branding involves the attribution of humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, and emotions to brand. It assumes that the brands share feelings, goals, will, and power to act according to the prompting of these feelings and determination of will (Fournier 2012). All these ideologies, particularly personification, anthropomorphization, interdependency, and reciprocity are developed and integrated into a new area of thinking on branding, called as consumer–brand relationships (e.g., McAlexander et al. 2002; Parvatiyar and Sheth 2001; Fournier 1998; Webster 1992). The proponents of consumer–brand relationships argued that consumers form relationships with brands in the similar way in which they form relationships with other people in other social/interpersonal contexts. The increased richness and understanding of consumer–brand relationships from interpersonal literature provides researchers with increased opportunities to investigate and conceptualize the relationship between consumers and brands (Breivik and Thorbjornsen 2008).

Fournier (1998) in her seminal work backed by metaphoric transfer and several interpersonal theories introduced the conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships and conceptualized the consumer–brand relationships as *"the brand person relationship is voluntary or imposed interdependence between a person and a brand characterized by a unique history of transactions and an anticipation of future occurrences, that is intended to facilitate social, emotional or instrumental goals of the participants, and that involves some type of consolidating bond"* (Fournier 1998). Fournier's (1998) seminal anthropomorphic view of consumer–brand relationships followed a plethora of research (e.g., Ahuvia 2005; Thomson et al. 2005; Park et al. 2010, 2013; Batra et al. 2012), which were all aimed to advance Fournier's (1998) conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships. All these studies on brand relationships used the metaphoric transfer as a fertile tool, which helps to compare the two domains (interpersonal and branding) and to develop prototypical elements such as relationship commitment, attachment, interdependency, passion, and love. All these prototypes were developed based on the assumption that there will be reciprocity between brand and consumer in the relationship dyad, which is the case with interpersonal relationship to exist.

However, all these studies having something common in terms of dependence of metaphoric transfer and the assumption of reciprocity principle, the operationalization showed obvious diversities (Tsai 2011). This apparently led to the emergence of four theoretical paradigms in consumer–brand relationships, such as brand relationship quality (e.g., Fournier 1998), brand commitment (Morgan and Hunt 1994), brand attachment (Thomson et al. 2005; Park et al. 2012, 2013), and brand love (Batra et al. 2012). This diversity in conceptualization and operationalization of the consumer–brand relationship paradigm reflect vigorousness of theoretical construction, which needs to be identified (Tsai 2011).

Research Motivations

The detailed knowledge about the consumer–brand relationship enhances the understanding of brand loyalty and facilitates in-depth knowledge about consumer demands, thus in turn assisting firms in developing better products and helps to augment marketing activities (Monga 2002). A comprehensive and integrated understanding of the brand relationship paradigm also helps the academic and marketing community to identify the roles of brands in consumers' lives by serving as an important medium to communicate and share with others through self-presentation (Breivik and Thorbjornsen 2008). The comprehensiveness in consumer–brand relationship literature also helps the academic community to conceptualize the link between consumer and brands.

The significance of studying customer–brand relationship has been widely acknowledged by researches in marketing. Day and Wensley (1988) and Webster (1992) in their respective studies found that the establishment of consumer–brand relationships would provide a major competitive advantage for the firm, particularly customer-focused. Building strong brand relationships is also a tool that prompts the managers to seek mutually beneficial relationships with consumers (Mitchell and Orwig 2002). The magnitude of customer retention has been a major source and highly correlated with the relative productivity of the firm (Reichheld 1996). For companies, retaining the existing customer is considered to be one of the economically profitable and viable options than constantly seeking new customers (Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995). For the firm, the benefits are mainly derived through less customer acquisition and its related costs, and also the retained customers would act as brand ambassadors for the company. For the consumers, the relationship building would act as a risk reduction strategy through assuming that the brand with which they have relationships would act as a trustworthy partner and also generate consistent performance. The highly loyal customers are the major motivation or source behind new product ideas, product rejuvenation, and modification of existing products. Therefore, it has become essential to understand the process by which consumers form long-term deep-rooted relationship with certain brands and not the same with other brands.

The importance of consumer–brand relationship has also been acknowledged by practitioners, such as brand managers and advertisers (Marketing News 1992; Langer 1997; Marketing 2000; Sweeney and Chew 2002). Brand relationship plays a significant role in maintaining the relevance of the brand, a good customer base, and augmenting competitive and fast-moving marketplace (Marketing 2000; Sweeney and Chew 2002). It has also been recognized that the consumers' strong and deep-rooted relationship with the brand would generate strong market share and profits providing a competitive edge, facilitating better marketing decisions in terms of product positioning, advertising, reinforcement of attitudes, and finally higher volume of purchase and repeated behavior (Marketing News 1992; Blackston 1992; deChernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley 1998; Sweeney and Chew 2002). Therefore, it is essential to study the role of brands in consumers' life and vice-versa.

It had been acknowledged that during the economic downturn, companies started looking at the viability of keeping existing customers and attracting new customers that would become the secondary focus. Development of postpurchase customer engagement would play an important role in company's strategic imperatives (Bartlett 2009). However, the existing models of consumer–brand relationship, which probably would solve this problem of building strong customer relationships have shown lots of diversity and cause managerial uncertainty about how to take appropriate strategic actions (Tsai 2011). Thus, a comprehensive study is required that is in line with the aim to solve this theoretical incongruity and uncertainty through identifying and integrating the consumer–brand relationship paradigms.

The existing model building efforts in consumer–brand relationship paradigm are typically limited to attitudinal aspects or on the behavioral side. There are sparse studies that examined the impact of attitudinal component on behavioral constructs in brand–consumer relationships (Touzani and Azza 2009). It stated that the consumer–brand relationship composed of attitudinal aspects, which consist of cognitive as well as affective elements, therefore the fundamental aspect of relationship building from the customers' point of view is the formation of attitudes (Moliner et al. 2007). Therefore, it is motivating to examine the role of attitudinal aspects of relationships on behavior in consumer–brand relationship model building.

Business Insight (2009) conducted a study among top 45 business executives around the world to understand the role of consumer–brand relationships with food and beverage industry. The results of the study emphasized on some new insights about the issues and the future of brand loyalty in food and beverage industry. The survey reports stated that the current level of brand loyalty is set to fall in the near future and the economic downturn decreased the level of brand loyalty, and the premium brands were less affected by this downturn. This unsusceptibility emerged out of their consciousness of the role of consumer–brand relationships in brand building efforts. In this context, it is quintessential to understand how and why these premium brands were successful in creating strong and deep-rooted relationships while others are not.

Organization of the Research

This chapter presents the introduction of the research, which includes motivation of the research. Chapter 2 is primarily devoted to the review of literature in the consumer–brand relationships and its related arena followed by the identification of research gaps from extant literature, and concludes with the research questions and objectives of the research. Chapter 3 provides theoretical support for the identified constructs and the hypotheses that are to be tested. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology, divided into two parts: Part I details the qualitative methodology used to explore the consumer–brand relationship dimensions; and Part II describes the quantitative research methodology that was followed to test the hypotheses, which includes research design, questionnaire design, operationalization of the constructs, sampling, data collection, and techniques for data analysis. In Chap. 5, the study presents the data analysis result in two sections: Sect. 5.1 presents the results of qualitative data analysis, in which the study builds the conceptual foundations through conducting an exploratory study and following a grounded theory approach, which helps to identify the theoretical constructs, development of provisional hypotheses, and to build the pathway to theory building; Sect. 5.2 details the results of statistical analysis of theoretical model testing. The final chapter of this study, Chap. 6, presents the discussion of the results presented in the previous chapter, the limitations associated with this study, and potential research avenues for future research.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed review of the relevant literature and to introduce the literature gaps and research questions. Primarily, the literature is structured around four sections. In the first section, a thorough review of the conceptual understanding of the consumer–brand relationships is presented. Specifically, a cross-disciplinary framework of the conceptualization of the relationship construct is presented. In the second section, the examination of some recent development in the area of consumer–brand relationships, including the models of consumer–brand relationships are reviewed. In the third major section, the conceptualization and operationalization issues of the construct are discussed. It serves as the basis for conceptualizing consumer relationship's exclusively branding, the central construct of this study, and provides the major rationale for conceptualizing consumer–brand relationships in branding paradigm. The final section of this chapter briefly reviews the research gaps and possible research questions, which guide research objectives of the study.

Conceptualization of Consumer–Brand Relationships

Over the past two and a half decades, there have been a number of studies in branding literature for the conceptualization of the construct of consumer–brand relationships. This interest in this stream of literature initiated because of the fact that the term *relationship* as such is interesting and infiltrating (Patterson and O' Malley 2006). Patternson and O' Malley (2006) in their critical review of the brand relationship literature stated five major reasons that contribute to the consideration of the concept of consumer–brand relationships. First, for human beings, the concept of relationship is more intuitive and appealing. Second, the concept of brand relationships emerged out of the supposed failure of brand image research to predict consumer behavior. Third, excessive importance given by the researchers to branding loyalty construct since the last 40 years and the subsequent attempt to capture the exact nature of brand loyalty. Fourth, brand managers' overwhelming consciousness to protect their assets during the turbulent and competitive environment. Finally, the

crucial factor that contributes the emergences of consumer–brand relationships is the introduction of the brand personality concept and its subsequent anthropomorphization of brands.

In brand management literature, considerable studies have been conducted to concepulize consumer–brand relationships through establishing the anthropomorphous characteristics of brands, such as personality (Aaker 1997; Batra et al. 1993; Durgee 1988) and Charisma (Smothers 1993). This attempt of personification of brands has now reached its new height with the introduction of strong and deep-rooted interpersonal characteristics, such as love (Batra et al. 2012), attachment (Thomson et al. 2005; Park et al. 2012), and the integration of negative and positive aspects of emotional and nonemotional interpersonal characteristics (Park et al. 2013). In short, the majority of these extant literatures in consumer branding conceptualized the concept of consumer–brand relationship as analogous as interpersonal relationships by assuming anthropomorphous characteristics, which adds brands a character and allows to see the brand as a person who can engage in a mutual and reciprocal exchange relationship.

Blackston (1992) has the credit for the original development of consumer–brand relationship concept (Aaker 1994). In his conceptual paper, the author argued that brand relationships are the logical extension of brand personality, which is more or less similar to the relationship between people (Blackston 1992). In an observational note, Blackston (1992) conceptualized brand relationships as:

> The concept of a relationship with a brand is neither novel nor outrageous. It is readily understandable as an analogue between brand and consumer-of that complex of cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes which constitute a relationship between two people (p. 80).

The majority of the conceptualizations of consumer–brand relationships in branding presented with the use of relationship metaphors.[1] The use of these relationship metaphors from interpersonal domain (particularly from high-involving human relationship, e.g., marriage) to branding domain facilitated to the enhancement and reinforcement of the relationship between consumer and brands. The human relationship metaphor of marriage functioned as a source category and established the ground rule and content for understanding relationship metaphor in a brand-consumer context. The use of these relationship metaphors helped the researchers to map three common characteristics across two disciplines, these are: interdependency, temporality and perceived commitment (De Wulf et al. 2001; Hendrick and Hendrick 2000; Hinde 1997; Oliver 1999). Interdependency explains that relationship involves a reciprocal exchange between active and interdependent relationship partners. In branding, context interdependency is between two active partners such as brand and consumer. Temporality means that relationship would not happen in an isolated manner, it is generated through a series of repeated actions. In branding

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[1] Metaphors refer to "a literally false, declarative assertion of existential equivalence that compares two concepts or things, where one concept called the primary concept is claimed to be another, the secondary concept" (Hunt and Menon 1995).

context, temporality explains that relationships between brand and consumer happens only through a series of repeated interactions. Perceived commitment explains that relationship ranges across several dimensions and takes many forms, but they all provide possible benefits for their participants and therefore willing to continue a relationship. In branding context, perceived commitment explains that the relationship between brand and consumer may take several forms and types and this will ultimately lead to intention to stay with the brand. This mapping of common characteristics across disciplines using metaphors helped the researchers in branding to develop specific relationship constructs such as, brand commitment (BC), brand love, passion interdependency, and brand attachment (BA). To an extent, the use of metaphoric transfer also helped the marketing community to implement the brand relationship elements in brand building. Monga (2002) stated that the use of relationship metaphors in consumer–brand context facilitated the understanding of brand loyalty, in-depth information about consumer needs and wants, and thereby assisted companies to improve better products and marketing activities.

Followed by the above-mentioned qualities of interdependency, temporality, and perceived commitment, there were a series of conceptual and empirical works on the topic of consumer–brand relationships published in different contexts. Fournier (1998) in her conceptual paper used human relationship metaphors to explain consumer–brand relationships and stated that there exist relationship qualities between consumer and brands. Fournier (1998) extended these three qualities further into four conditions to exist to satisfy consumer–brand relationships. First, consumer–brand relationships exist when there exist reciprocal exchanges between brand and consumer. Second, the interactions between brand and consumers are purposive. Third, the relationships between brand and consumers take different forms and types. Finally, the relationships between brand and consumers are a process phenomenon; these relationships change according to contexts.

Backed by the above-mentioned four conditions, Fournier (1998) defines brand relationships as:

> The brand person relationship is voluntary or imposed interdependence between a person and a brand, characterized by a unique history of interactions and an anticipation of future occurrences, that is intended to facilitate socio-emotional and instrumental goals of the participants, and that involves some types consolidating bond.

While extending the conceptualization, Nebel and Blattberg (2000) defined consumer-brand relationships as:

> An integrated approach to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships between a brand and its customers, and to continually strengthen these relationships through interactive, individualized and value added contacts, and a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises over a long period of time(p. 3).

Aggarwal (2004) stated that:

> People sometimes form a very intimate bond with brands and, in some extreme cases, a passion that is often associated only with a close circle of friends and family(p. 87).

This advancement in understanding of the consumer–brand relationship, which is mainly from interpersonal literature, provides the researchers to conceptualize and investigate the ties between consumers and brands (Breivik and Thorbjornsen 2008).

Operationalization of Consumer-Brand Relationships

The studies in consumer–brand relationship literature used different approaches for the operationalization of the construct. Aaker et al. (2004), Kaltcheva and Weitz (1999), Monga (2002), and Park and Kim (2001) followed a completely quantitative approach. At the same time, Fournier (1998), Ji (2002), Kates (2000), and Olson (1999) used in-depth interviews and text analysis as their data collection and analysis method. The focus of these studies varies from operationlizing the previous conceptualization through further exploration, scale development, identifying specific relationship constructs, examination of the identified relationship constructs in different contexts, and assessment of gender differences in consumer–brand relationship formation.

The first attempt to extend the work of Fournier (1998)[2] was from Goh (2002). In a follow-up study, Goh (2002) made an attempt to verify Fournier's (1998) brand relationship typology through following the mix of both qualitative and quantitative techniques and proposed an extended typology of consumer–brand relationships (named as "referents"). According to the author, the typology referents imply the relationship that is precipitated because of the reference groups influence or it emerged out of an actual or imaginary individual, conceived of having significant importance upon an individual's or behavior.

Studies were carried out to operationlize the construct through the development of scales to measure the construct. Kim et al. (2005) conducted a study, which aimed to develop a scale to measure brand relationship quality (BRQ), followed by Churchill's (1979) procedure. Followed by Fournier's (1998) conceptual framework, the authors used a series of in-depth interviews to confirm the dimensions of BRQ model. Items for measuring these dimensions were generated through past studies and later refined through a pilot study. A convenient sample of 361 respondents was used for final measurements. Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the study confirmed the reliability and validity of the measures. The results of the study confirmed five dimensions of BRQ. The identified dimensions are: self-connective attachment, satisfaction, commitment, trust, and emotional intimacy.

In consumer–brand relationship, literature studies were conducted to identify and examine the alternative constructs to describe the strength of consumer–brand relationships. Kaltcheva and Weitz (1999) examined the role played by the dimensions

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[2] Although Fournier's (1998) work is considered to be the base study for operationalization of consumer–brand relationship, the details of the study are not mentioned in this section of operationalization; instead it has been presented in models of consumer–brand relationships.

of consumer–brand relationships, such as mediation and reciprocity on the attributions for intention and selfishness that the consumers make during pleasant and unpleasant experiences with the brand. The authors defined mediation as the extent to which the relationship partner derives the benefit from the relationship itself rather than the product/brand. Reciprocity means the norm of reciprocity, which explains the extent to which relationship partner feel that the norm of reciprocity (equity or equality) is being present in their relationship. The authors followed a simulation study using 225 undergraduate students. The result of the study demonstrated that these two dimensions of relationship have an impact on the attributions for intention and selfishness.

Thomson and Johnson (2002) studied the role of a relationship orientation variable called attachment and examined the predictive and explanatory power BA on the satisfaction in consumers' brand relationships. The authors used two dimensions of attachment such as avoidance and anxiety from psychological literature and modeled it as predictors of satisfaction. The results of regression analysis supported that anxiety and avoidance were good and significant predictors of satisfaction.

Hess and Story (2005) came up with another relationship variable, called relationship commitment and proposed a model called trust-based relationship commitment model, in which relationship commitment was the major construct defined by personal and functional connections, which are in turn caused by trust and satisfaction. In their study, the authors modeled satisfaction as an antecedent to trust. The data were collected through an online survey using 4,000 customers. A structural equation modeling was used to validate the model. In this study, the authors found that satisfaction was a major antecedent to trust, but primarily contributes to functional connections. The results also supported that consumers' personal connection with the brand stems from brand trust.

Continuing with the same line of thinking, Swaminathan et al. (2007) synthesized two brand-related concepts such as self-concept connection and country-of-origin connection and stated that the consumer–brand relationship can be formed on the basis of individual (self-concept connection) or group-level connections (country-of-origin connection); it influences brand equity. When the consumer is high with self-concept connection, he/she will counterargue negative information, but this situation is greater when there is a presence of independent self-construal conditions. The country-of-origin will promote tolerance in the face of negative information under conditions of interdependent self-construal conditions.

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) examined the role of brand reputation and tribalism on the strength of consumer–brand relationships. Data were collected through a self-administered survey using 912 consumers. A regression analysis was applied to test the proposed model. The results supported that the brand tribalism is the most influencing predictor compared to brand reputation for building strong and deep-rooted consumer–brand relationships.

While studying the alternative constructs of relationships, there were attempts to see how the negative aspects of brand-related factors would influence the relationships with consumers. Huber et al. (2010) studied the role of brand misconduct on consumer–brand relationships. The authors defined brand misconduct as the behavior

of the brand that disappoints the consumers' expectations. Backed by congruence theory, the authors developed a model of consumer–brand relationships, in which the factors such as, functional congruence, actual and ideal self-congruence, partner quality, and BRQ were modeled as the antecedents to consumers' purchase intention. Data were collected through self-administered surveys using 219 respondents in Germany. The authors used a partial least square (PLS) technique to analyze the data. The results of the study support the fact that the brand misconduct is not an influencing factor in BRQ and purchase intention.

Since brand is considered to be an identification factor, Papista and Dimitriadis (2012) made an attempt to examine the concept of relationship quality and examined the link between relationship quality and consumer-brand identification through following a qualitative study. The results of the study showed support for the concepts such as satisfaction, trust, commitment, intimacy, and love in describing consumer BRQ. Consumer–brand relationship identification emerges as a distinct construct of cognitive nature.

There were studies in consumer–brand relationships, which examined the connection between the brand personality and brand relationships. The underlying postulation behind these studies were based on the assumption that if brand possesses the personality characteristics, which is more or less similar to human personality characteristics, then there exist consumer–brand relationships, which are more or less similar to interpersonal relationships. Smit et al. (2006) studied the role of brand personality in consumer–brand relationships and stated that there exist relationships between brands and its consumers. The study used a computer-assisted self-interviewing technique as the suitable method for data collection. The results of the study supported that in relationship building partner quality plays a crucial role and in some bands it is the relationship quality that keeps the relationship in the long run. Brands with exciting and unique personality qualify more likely for the relationship partner (Smit et al. 2006).

Hayes et al. (2006) added a new conceptualization in between brand personality and brand relationships. According to Hayes et al. (2006), "the brand personality-partner quality connection depends to a degree on the brand's perceived attractiveness. Furthermore, the specific role attractiveness plays in the relationship appear to vary across individual personality dimensions." The authors modeled attractiveness as a moderator between the brand personality dimension and evaluations of the brand as a relationship partner. The study collected responses from the survey of 142 graduate and undergraduate students. The regression analysis revealed that brand personality dimension has a positive and significant impact on partner quality perceptions. It also found that the attractiveness of the brand varies across different personality dimensions. The relationship between personality and partner quality perceptions is influenced by brand attractiveness.

There were studies in consumer-brand relationship literature, which showed the importance of other interpersonal relationship constructs, such as BA and relationship norms for consumer–brand relationship formation. Zhou et al. (2012) in their study examined the intermediate mechanism that translates brand communities into the formation of consumer–brand relationships in the Chinese context. The study

collected responses through an online survey from 437 respondents. Using PLS, the results were analyzed. The results of the study support the fact that BA works as a full mediating variable between brand community commitment and BC and partial mediation between brand identification and BC.

Valta (2013) examined the role of relationship norms or "principles of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behavior" (Macneil 1980) on BRQ. The author considered only limited relationship norms with relevant consumer branding literature such as solidarity, reciprocity, flexibility, and information exchange. The authors used 510 university students as the study sample and applied a structural equation modeling technique to test the model. The results supported that the relationship norms do affect consumer-brand relationships.

The application consumer–brand relationship construct not only limited to consumer/product branding, but it extended to other areas, such as services branding. Sweeney and Chew (2002) studied the role of relationship metaphors in consumer services. Through following a detailed literature review and text-based analysis of case study data, the study supported the applicability of Fournier's (1998) brand relationship model in service branding context. The study also found support for two additional dimensions in the consumer–brand relationships, such as dominance versus subordination and friendly versus hostile. The authors also proposed the typology of consumer–brand relationships based on the identified dimensions.

Carlson et al. (2009) studied the role of consumer-brand relationships in sports branding context. The study examined the role of personality dimensions such as, wholesome, charming, successful, imaginative, and tough, on a relationship variable called cognitive identification. The study also examined the mediating roles of prestige and distinctiveness. They conducted a survey using 162 university students. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling technique. The results of the study supported that the personality dimensions would influence cognitive identification, but mediated through prestige and distinctiveness.

Nyadzayo et al. (2011) examined how the brand relationship can be used to leverage brand citizenship behavior and to improve brand equity in franchising. Apparently, the authors developed a new concept called franchise-based brand equity. The authors followed a qualitative research design, followed by a series of semistructured interviews. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively, which generated theoretical categories. The analysis helped the authors to show the significance of brand relationship management in franchising context and also show the relationship between brand relationship management to build franchise-based brand equity.

Recently, Xie and Heug (2012) examined the role of Fournier's (1998) BRQ framework and its impact on hotel consumer's behavioral intentions. The results showed that BRQ is applicable in the hotel industry and is also an influencing factor for consumer's behavioral intention. These are all studies in branding, which supported the fact that the concept of consumer–brand relationship is also applicable in services branding.

There were context-specific studies in consumer–brand relationship literature aimed at the applicability of consumer-brand relationships, in which particular

country or different culture is the study context. J and Lu (2009), using interpersonal literature and relationship metaphors, developed a theoretical model of consumer–brand relationships in the Chinese context. The authors proposed a framework for consumer–brand relationships that consist of four basic types of relationships, namely "family member," "good friend," "cooperation partner," and "acquaintance." The study supported the role of relationship metaphors in consumer–brand relationship model building and using the same confirmed the validity of the consumer–brand relationship types.

Yet another attempt has been from Chang and Chang (2006), who made an attempt to build a framework of consumer–brand relationships by integrating an experiential view through conducting a cross-cultural comparative study in both China and Taiwan. Different from other studies, the study integrated not only emotional experience constructs but also the sense, think, act, and relate experiences. The study contributes to the consumer–brand relationship literature in three ways. First, the study contributes to the literature by specifying brand-associative network variables through the consideration of individual and shared experiences. Second, the study modeled four relevant variables, such as brand association, brand personality, brand attitude, and brand image, as mediating variables between brand experience and consumer–brand relationships. Third, different from previous studies, which focuses more on the effect, this study gave more emphasis to the establishment of consumer–brand relationships. The results supported the fact that all the moderating variables modeled in the study help to shape the establishment of consumer–brand relationships.

Saunders and Rod (2012) made an attempt to augment traditional investigations of consumer–brand relationships and suggested an alternative way to consider the same. The authors considered associative networks for uncovering consumer–brand relationship dimensions in New Zealand and supported the use of associative networks in brand relationships.

In consumer–brand relationship literature, there were attempts to identify the perspectives of how some particular individuals or groups develop relationships with brands. For example, Olson (1999) using a qualitative exploration identified the brand relationships of five women in the American context. The results supported by Fournier's (1998) work identified the distinction in terms of consumer–brand relationships among married and unmarried women. Keats (2000) using a series of in-depth interviews examined the dynamics related to the brand relationships of 44 self-identified gay men within the North American social context. Ji (2002) using relationship metaphors in a qualitative data analysis setting, examined relationship forms and how relationships developed between the children and brands in the family setting. The detailed probing and analysis of stories about children's relationships with brand showed that their (children) relationships with brands embedded in the social environments where children live and grow. Jevons et al. (2005) came up with a new way to understand relationship dimensions. The authors studied consumer-brand relationships in managers' perspective and suggested different management strategies for different types of brand relationships. Zayer and Neier (2011) using a series of in-depth interviews examined the applicability of

consumer–brand relationship typology proposed by Fournier (1998) to a segment of heterosexual male shoppers of fashion and grooming products. The results of the study confirmed the majority of the consumer–brand relationship typology and supported the role of contexts in defining consumer–brand relationships. Hwang and Kandampully (2012) in their study examined the role of three relationship building factors, such as self-concept connection, BA, and brand love in context of younger consumer-luxury brand relationships, and supported the role of these three constructs in building younger consumer-luxury brand relationships. Recently, Sahay et al. (2012) examined the gender difference in consumer-brand relationships with respect to affect and cognition. The authors used a field experiment approach; the results supported the fact that both men and women form relationship with brands and men's relationships with brands are more oriented toward the cognitive approach and at the same time women are more affected-based.

There were studies in consumer–brand relationship literature to integrate the relevant consumer–brand relationship paradigms. Tsai (2011) integrated three relationship paradigms, such as BRQ, BA, and BC. Consequently, he developed a new model called Relationship Building for Strategic-Brand Management Model (RB-SBM). As part of validating the model, the authors administered a survey of 519 consumers of three international product brands. A structural equation modeling was carried out to validate the model. The results supported that the data fit well to the model and also the model having good predictive validity.

Models in Consumer–Brand Relationships

BRQ Model

Fournier (1998), based on a qualitative research using several interpersonal theories, introduced a model in consumer–brand relationship setting, called BRQ model. This BRQ model aimed to measure the strength and depth of consumer relationship with brands. Figure 2.1 shows the structure of the BRQ model.

For identifying the underlying dimensions of consumer–brand relationships, the author used a series of in-depth interviews with three women participants. The data analysis was carried out through detailed textual analysis of the transcripts and its coding. The results of detailed text analysis helped the authors to come up with the six dimensions of consumer–brand relationships. These six dimensions or facets are: partner quality, intimacy, behavioral interdependence, personal commitment, self-concept connection, and love/passion. These dimensions identified by the author explain the forms of relationships that exist between consumers and brands. During the analysis, the theoretical origin of behavioral interdependence traced back to Kelley and Thibaut's (1978) interdependence theory, and the self-concept construct originated from self-expansion model. Love/passion and personal commitments originated from the theories of attraction and RI Model (Rusbult 1980). It is considered
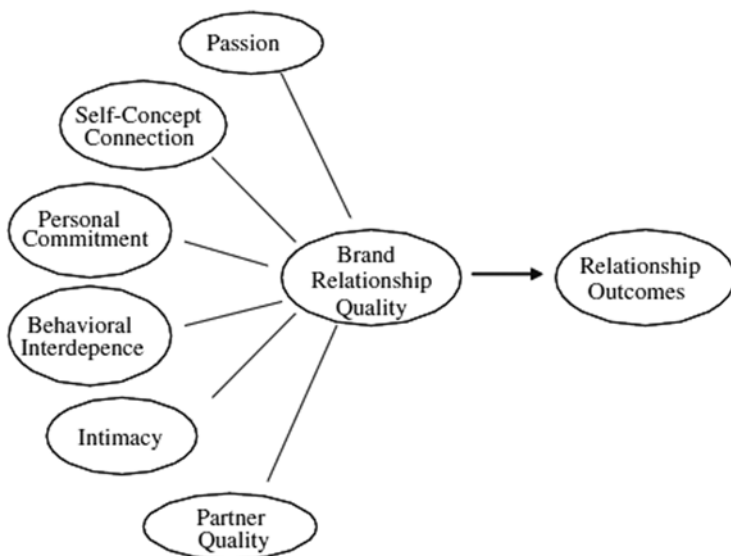
Fig. 2.1 BRQ Model. (Source: Fournier 1998)

that BRQ is theoretically richer and more informative, because it integrated several interpersonal theories (e.g., Breivik and Thorbjornsen 2008). The brand relationship dimensions introduced by Fournier (1998) are given below in detail:

Love and passion This dimension is considered to be the core of all relationships; it is based on affective grounding supported brand relationship endurance. The presence of this dimensionality was evident from respondent statements that "something was missing," when they (consumers) were not interacted with the brand for a while.

Self-Connection This dimension explains the extent to which brand delivers on important identity concerns, tasks, or themes, thereby expressing an important aspect of self.

Interdependence This dimension emerged out of three ways: (a) frequent brand interactions, (b) increased scope and diversity of brand-related activities, and (c) heightened intensity of individual interaction events.

Commitment Commitment has been defined as the intention of the consumer to behave in a manner that supports relationship longevity.

Intimacy When consumers bonded toward a brand, he/she develops strong elaborative knowledge structures around it supported by richer layers meaning that reflects intimacy.

Brand partner quality There were five central components of brand partner quality: (a) positive orientation of the brand toward the consumer; (b) judgments of the brand's overall dependability, reliability, and predictability in executing its partnership role; (c) judgments of the brand's adherence to the various ''rules'' composing the implicit relationship contract; (d) trust or faith that the brand will deliver what is desired versus what is feared; and (e) comfort in the brand's accountability for its actions.

Fournier (1998) further extended the study and proposed 15 different typologies of consumer–brand relationships, which pertain to the bond between brand and consumers. Each typology proposed is based on the dimensions identified in the study. The typologies of consumer–brand relationships are: (1) arranged marriages; (2) casual friends/buddies; (3) marriages of convenience; (4) committed partnerships; (5) best friendships; (6) compartmentalized friendships; (7) kinships; (8) rebounds/avoidance-driven relationships; (9) childhood friendships; (10) courtships; (11) dependencies; (12) flings; (13) enmities; (14) secret affairs; and (15) enslavements.

Fournier's (1998) research was conducted with the spirit and intent of exploring one of the underconceptualized phenomenon, named as consumer–brand relationships. This work added an integrative framework of consumer–brand relationships and considered to be one of the preliminary models in branding provided opportunities for further extension and exploration.

Relationship Investment Model (RI Model)

Rusbult (1980) proposed a model in interpersonal romantic associations, called as Investment Model (RI Model). This model is an extension of interdependency model introduced by Kelley and Thaibaut (1978). According to this model, commitment to the relationship is a function of three factors: satisfaction with the relationship, quality of available alternatives, and the extent of individual investment in the relationship. Satisfaction with a relationship partner refers to the sum of positive and negative affect toward that relationship partner. Quality of available alternative explains evaluation of the quality of the partner versus the quality of the best alternative partner. Relationship investment explains the magnitude and importance of resources the consumer attached to the relationship. In this study, the authors hypothesized that satisfaction with the relationship directly influences the level of commitment. An increase in the quality of available alternatives will reduce the likelihood of commitment to the existing relationships. Increase in intrinsic and extrinsic investment increases the cost involved in the relationship, therefore, it increases the magnitude of commitment. Following two experiments, the study collected relevant information. The experiment 1 was mainly carried out to test the causal relationship between the study variables and commitment. It was conducted through a role play using a sample of 82 males and 89 females. The ANOVA results showed that commitment increased with relationship investment, deceased with the quality of available alternatives, and increased with the increase in satisfaction. In
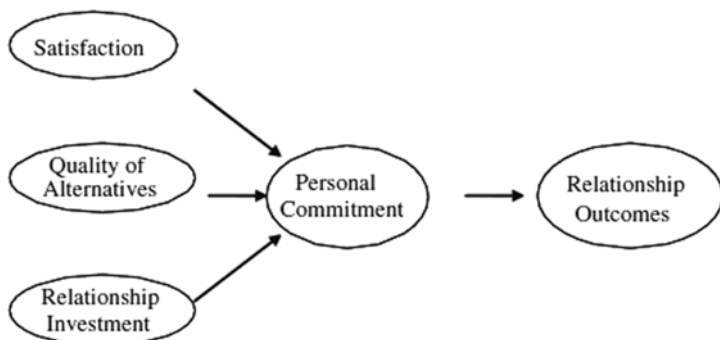
Fig. 2.2 RI Model. (Source: Rusbult 1980)

experiment 2, the study conducted a survey research to support the study 1 in real
and ongoing associations. The data were collected using using a survey question-
naire. A total of 58 males and 53 females participated in this survey. The results of
multiple regression analysis showed that all the three dimensions significantly in-
fluenced relationship commitment. Figure 2.2 shows the structure of the RI model.

After the introduction of the RI Model, there were studies to replicate the model
in different contexts. The studies aimed to analyze the commitment of college stu-
dents (e.g., Hatcher et al. 1992), in buyer-seller relationship context (e.g., Moon
and Bonney 2007) and recently in consumer-brand relationships (e.g., Geyer et al.
1991; Nysveen et al. 2005; Sung and Campbell 2007; Breivik and Thorbjornsen
2008). The first major attempt to study the role of RI model in the consumer–brand
relationship context was by Sung and Campbell (2007). Sung and Campbell (2007)
extended the RI Model to predict the level of relationship commitment in branding.
Using the RI Model as theoretical paradigm, the study hypothesized four hypothe-
ses, which are more or less analogous to Rusbult (1980). Hypothesis 1 proposes that
BC would positively associate with the level of satisfaction. Hypothesis 2 states that
BC would negatively associate with the availability of high-quality alternatives.
Hypothesis 3 proposes that the commitment level would positively associate with
the size of investment. The hypothesis 4 proposes that satisfaction with the brand,
the extent of brand alternatives, and the extent of relationship investment will inde-
pendently predict the variability in BC. The authors used three different brands as
study stimuli: a self-generated brand, Coca-Cola, and Bell South. The studies were
carried out to test the proposed set of hypotheses. The study 1 was carried out using
a self-administered questionnaire with 131 student samples. The study adapted the
RI Model scale from Rusbult (1980) to develop the survey questions. To test the
hypotheses (hypotheses 1–3), the authors used bivariate correlation. The significant
results of bivariate correlation supported the hypotheses across three brands (Own
Brand, Coca-Cola, and Bell South). Hypothesis 4 was examined using multiple
regression analysis, using commitment as the dependent variable and satisfaction,
alternatives, and investment as independent variables. The result supported that

these three variables significantly and independently predict the dependent variable as specified by the hypotheses. The study 2 was aimed to test the causal relationship between the RI Model variables. The ANOVA results supported that there is a significant interaction between satisfaction and investment. The study also analyzed the effect of these three brands separately using three different ANOVA. In short, the study 2 provides further support for the study 1 through confirming the causal nature of these variables on commitment.

Attachment–Aversion (AA) Model

Park et al. (2013) proposed and empirically tested a new model of consumer–brand relationships, called AA model of consumer–brand relationships while building on the previous work of BRQ (Fournier 1998), BA (Park et al. (2010), and brand love (Batra et al. 2012). According to this model, the consumer will be attached and feel close to a brand when the brand is perceived as a means for self-expansion, called BA. At the same time, when the consumer perceived the brand as a threat of self-contraction, he/she will try to averse the brand, feel distant from it, called aversion. These two terms (attachment and aversion) represent opposite ends of the relationship spectrum. The study initially reviewed self-based brand relationship literature in which the authors conceptualized the concept of self as the major determinant of AA relationship components such as brand self-distance and brand prominence; these two play a crucial role in the creation of consumer–brand relationships. Brand self-distance is the perceived distance between a brand and the self and brand prominence is the perceived memory accessibility of a brand to an individual (Park et al. 2013). The study also hypothesized that the motivational strength constructs as the mediator between AA relationships and behavioral intention/actual behavior hierarchy. The study also proposed that the entire nomological model is moderated by the age differences among consumers. The study tested the model using structural equation modeling. Figure 2.3 shows the AA relationships model.

Fournier et al. (2013) provided an extensive commentary on the negative aspects of consumer–brand relationships developed by AA model. The authors demanded for the extensive importance of differentiating the positive and negative dimensions of consumer–brand relationships and extending opportunities for identifying what makes brand relationships "bad." The study offered two important theoretical extensions over the AA model. First proposed some additional dimensions of consumer–brand relationships, such as pathology, power, and self- versus brand-focused emotionality. Second made distinctions between neutrality and variations of emotional ambivalence "in the middle" of the AA spectrum.
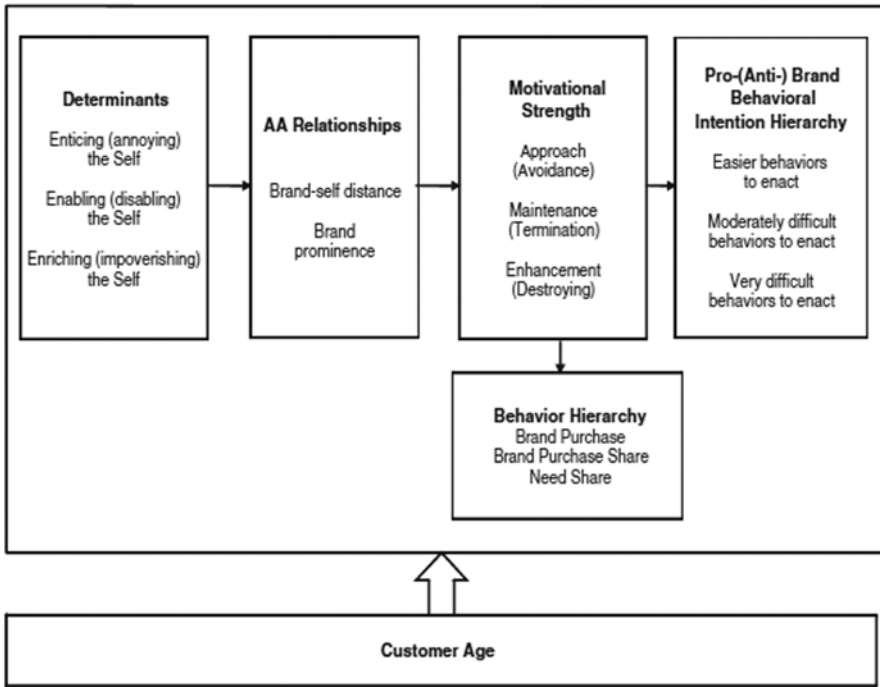
Fig. 2.3 AA Relationships Model. (Source: Park et al. 2013)

Critique of Consumer–Brand Relationships

Even though the concept of consumer–brand relationship has gained unprecedented growth and momentum, the concept as such is not free from criticisms. There were a number of calls from researchers that the uncritical acceptance and the exceptional growth of relationship construct within marketing thought is dangerous and needs an urgent remedy (Hibbard and Iacobucci 1999; O'Malley and Tynan 1999). The following are some of the criticisms raised by extant literature with regard to the suitability and use of consumer–brand relationship construct.

Papista and Dimitriadis (2012) in their study stated that although the conceptual model proposed by Fournier (1998) could be considered as seminal and most inclusive, it lacks further empirical support and therefore questions the consistency in defining the consumer–brand relationship construct. The conceptualization of Fournier (1998) has also been criticized on the ground that it failed to include or conceptualize the role most of the important constructs in consumer–branding context, such as brand satisfaction and BA, gained support in subsequent research in branding context (e.g., Aaker et al. 2004; Wang 2002, Thomson et al. 2005; Park et al. 2010).

The studies in consumer–brand relationships have also been critiqued that, even though researchers in marketing relationships seem to have reached an agreement regarding the dimensions of relationship quality, this practice is not to be the case in branding context. Fournier (1998) initiated the process of identifying a comprehensive model, which captures the strength of consumer–brand relationships, followed by other researches focusing on sole dimensions of relationships such as brand trust, commitment (e.g., Delgado-Ballester 2004; Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001), and BA (Thomson et al. 2004; Park et al. 2010). The subsequent researches following Fournier (1998) failed to give a consensus on the exact dimensions of consumer–brand relationships as these studies tend to partly apply or failed to fully integrate Fournier's (1998) conceptualization (Aaker et al. 2004; Chang and Chieng 2006; Kressmann et al. 2006; Smit et al. 2007).

Bengtsson (2003) examined the problems associated with relationship metaphor and interpersonal relationship theory in the context of consumer and brands. The author raised some serious issues with regard to the concept of consumer–brand relationships using relationship metaphors and interpersonal theories. While contenting the anthropomorphous characteristics of the brand, Bengtsson (2003) stated that "although consumers attribute anthropomorphous characteristics to brands, this does not necessarily imply that social-psychological theories of interpersonal relationships are adequate to represent the consumers' relationship to their brands." The author questioned the model proposed by Fournier (1998) and stated that in most of the cases, the dimensions proposed by Fournier (1998) is directly analogous to the interpersonal literature, however, in actual scenario, the vocabulary used to represent the relationship quality should not be compatible with the vocabulary used to represent human relationship quality. Therefore, there is a need to supplement the vocabulary, so that the constructs would account for consumers' relationship with brands.

Patterson and O' Malley (2006) raised some serious questions with regard to the adequacy and acceptance of interpersonal relationship metaphors from person-to-person relationships to brand relationships. When the brand attaches some meaning to the consumers' life, it is questionable to compare brand relationships with interpersonal relationship: "when brands come to possess such meaning for consumers it is easy to see how we might describe the connection between consumers and brands as relationships. And relationships are what they are. But, are they the same as interpersonal relationships?"

Breivik and Thorbjørnsen (2008), while studying the suitability of the two alternative models of consumer–brand relationships, BRQ and BI, showed three important problems associated with the existing models of consumer–brand relationships. First, the existing models in consumer–brand relationship failed to provide clear guidelines for empirical testing in terms of model specification. Second, all the models proposed in extant literature are based on social and psychological theories, therefore, it is very difficult for all the models to capture less involving relationships, particularly between consumer and brand. Third, following Bengtsson (2003), the authors questioned the adoption of relationship metaphors from interpersonal relationships. According to Breivik and Thorbjørnsen (2008), "the transfer

of interpersonal relationship concepts of marketing might be problematic if the content and meaning of these concepts in the source domain deviate too much from the target context."

The development of AA model followed a wide range of criticisms and commentaries by leading researchers in the area of consumer–brand relationships like Schmitt (2013), Founier and Alvarex (2013), and Alba and Lutz (2013). Schmitt (2013) criticized the AA model of Park et al. (2013) and raised three major issues related to the model conceptualization and operationalization. First, following the extant literature, the model assumed anthropomorphization of brands, while developing a theory in branding, the authors failed to conceptualize how the model is different from interpersonal relationships. According to Schmitt (2013), "to be sure, brand perceptions share similarities with person perceptions, and, no doubt, the self is involved in both. However, I feel we also need to pay close attention to the very nature of brands-how they differ from people-to develop an appropriate and relevant consumer psychology theory of customer-brand relationships." Second, the model failed to specify marketing determinants of the specified relationships. Third, while developing a model of consumer–brand relationships, it should address the broad space of brand psychology and brand management, which the AA model failed to do.

Fournier and Alvarez (2013) raised some serious criticisms against the conceptualization of AA model. First, distant brand-self-relationships (which explain perceived brand distance being far) should not necessarily be always corresponding to a negative consumer–brand relationship. Second, even though the AA model differentiated from other models in terms of its conceptualization of negative aspects of brand relationships, it is more suitable to explain positive aspects of brand relationships rather than negative aspects. Third, the AA model fully failed to capture the negative aspect's impact on customer behavior. Fourth, in order to fully capture the negative aspect of consumer-brand relationship, there is a need to capture other relevant dimensions. Fifth, further exploration of the negative aspects of brand relationship requires the clarification of the middle ground relationship with a brand.

Alba and Lutz (2013), in their commentary to the AA model of consumer–brand relationships, raise the question that how the conceptualization put forward by the model (AA Model) provides insight above and beyond those theories of brand that did not include the notion of relationship. The authors also commented on the dimensionality of AA model that it should be desirable to explain how to extend the model to capture the multidimensional nature of AA relationships.

Research Gaps

In spite of the numerous researches using different approaches to understand the phenomenon of consumer-brand relationships over the past two and a half decades, the current understanding in this paradigm is unique in its inability to produce external validity to the results. This basically emerges owing to the inability of previous

research to contribute a clear conceptual understanding of the consumer–brand relationship phenomenon. The current understanding of the consumer–brand relationship paradigm also lacks a clear agreement over the operationalization of the construct of consumer–brand relationships (Tsai 2011).

Generally, there are two schools of thoughts when it comes to conceptualization and operationalization of consumer–brand relationships, such as relationship quality and investment relationship. Majority of researchers (e.g., Fournier 1998; Nebel and Blattberg 2000; Aggarwal 2004) defined consumer-brand relationship strictly in behavioral perspective. There are sparse studies giving importance to attitudinal aspects of consumer–brand relationships during their conceptualization (e.g., Blackston 1992). A common theme across both these streams of school of thought has been the identification, development, and integration of surrogate attitudinal and behavioral measures, which is required to conceptualize and operationlize consumer–brand relationships (Tsai 2011; Park et al. 2012). Blackston (1992) was precise in his concpeutlization in suggesting both attitudinal aspects and behaviors to define consumer–brand relationships. By viewing consumer–brand relationships as an attitude-behavior-related in their framework, the authors were able to investigate the concept from a causal perspective, which permits the identification of the antecedents of consumer–brand relationships. Their research, however, offers only the conceptual framework of theory and does not provide any empirical validation.

Conceptually, the brand relationship literature is much richer with studies of motivational or intentional component of attitudes, particularly the role of BC as the surrogate variable for explaining the consumer relationships with the brand. The studies in brand relationship literature also explained the role of emotional and motivational ties to explain consumers' deep-rooted relationship with brand, including several affective and sociomotivational components (e.g., love/passion, self-connection, and nostalgia), behavioral ties (e.g., interdependence and commitment), and supportive cognitive ties (e.g., and brand partner quality; e.g., Fletcher, Simpson, and Thomas 2000; Fournier 1994, 1998). However, no studies till date made an attempt to integrate all these three attitudinal elements, such as cognitive, affective, and conative components in consumer–brand relationship paradigm. It has been stated that combing these three components in consumer–brand relationships would yield strong and deep-rooted relationship with brands (Kim et al. 2013).

The metaphoric transfer of relationship for the understanding of consumer–brand relationships in branding literature is typically derived from interpersonal theories, particularly from the relationship metaphor of marriage (e.g., Fournier 1998). All these studies generated constructs from either interpersonal or organizational literature and then created scale items to measure these constructs and later they simply applied this theory to marketing literature, particularly in branding (e.g., Monga 2002; Park and Kim 2001). This adaptation of constructs from the high-involving (reciprocal) interpersonal relationship could be very difficult to apply in those less involving (nonreciprocal) consumer–brand relationship contexts (Tynan 1997). Therefore, an empirical study on consumer branding should be designed in such a way that it should address less involving nonreciprocal relationships (Brevik and Thorbjornsen 2006; Bengtsson 2003). This process of adaptation would create problems if the concepts of

brand relationships are not directly analogous to the theory of interpersonal relationships. According to Hunt and Menon (1995), the success of adoption of metaphoric transfer from one literature (here, from interpersonal to branding context) requires necessary translation from one literature to the adapting discipline. Furthermore, the majority of the concepts adapted from interpersonal literature does not appear to be relevant in the consumer–brand context (Bengtsson 2003).

Even though the establishment of the models in consumer–brand relationships would trace back into strong interpersonal theories, they failed to provide an apparent plan for model specification and subsequent empirical testing. The extant literature has not yet addressed the process of building customer-brand relationship in a comprehensive manner (Park and Kim 2001) and failed to provide a clear plan for empirical testing and model specification (Brevik and Thorbjornsen 2006). For example, Fournier (1998) proposed a conceptual model called the BRQ model using several in-depth interviews and included several relationships among constructs. Moreover, this model did not specify the direction among the paths. Even though Fournier (1998) enriched the concept of consumer–brand relationships in marketing literature, there is a need for further research that can qualify the relational discourse in the context of consumer decision making (Bengtsson 2003). Therefore, the studies in this area failed fully to operationalize the process of consumer relationships in branding context.

Conceptual Definition: Consumer-Brand Relationships

Based upon the literature review and considering the operational point of view, this research provided a strict definition for consumer–brand relationships as:

> An integrated approach to establish, augment and maintain relationships between the brand and its customers and to continually strengthen these relationships through the attitudinal and behavioral components aimed to generate relationship outcomes which extended over a long period of time.

The above-mentioned definition is composed of three parts:

1. Consumer–brand relationships is an integrated approach: The consumer–brand relationship is an integrated approach, wherein the parties involved in the relationship building process aim to establish, augment, and finally maintain it forever.
2. It is getting strengthened through the attitudinal and behavioral components: The establishment, augmentation, and maintenance of consumer–brand relationship are achieved through the integration of attitudinal and behavioral components, which basically results in relationship outcomes.
3. Extended over a long period of time: Consumer–brand relationship creation is a long-term process, wherein the parties involved in the relationship creation process achieve this objective of brand relationship building through their continuous and long-term relationship building efforts.

Research Questions

In light of the earlier discussion, the following research questions have been generated:

1. Is the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral components for the conceptualization of the consumer–brand relationships being really meaningful?
2. What are the underlying attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships? Is behavioral relationship really influenced by attitudinal relationship?
3. By operationalizing consumer–brand relationships through integrating the attitudinal and behavioral aspects, does the empirical testing of new consumer–brand relationship model truly advance the understanding of consumers' deep-rooted bond with brands?

Research Objectives

The research is based on two key premises, which are derived from the literature gaps reviewed and research questions presented in the previous sections of this chapter. First, the research aimed to identify different attitudinal and behavioral relationship dimensions in branding, followed by the development of a conceptual model. Second, the research aims to achieve the triangulation though empirically tests and validates the conceptual model proposed during the first stage. The overall aims and objectives of the research are:

1. To propose a conceptually clear and operationally meaningful model of consumer–brand relationships through the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral aspects of consumer–brand relationships.
2. To test the proposed conceptual model empirically and to understand how attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships work as an integrative mechanism to build consumer–brand relationships.
3. To examine the predictive validity and generalizability of the developed consumer–brand relationship model for measuring consumer–brand relationships.

Chapter Summary

This chapter begins with the review of existing literature in the consumer–brand relationships, particularly the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept of consumer–brand relationships. The chapter also examined the models of consumer–brand relationships. Finally, identified the key theoretical issues and challenges with the existing theoretical paradigms of consumer–brand relationships.

The review helped the research to identify the potential research gaps, which led to generate research questions and subsequent framing of research objectives of this study.

Chapter 3 will provide a broader discussion, wherein the study further discusses the theoretical constructs of consumer–brand relationships in detail and the development of hypotheses based on extant literature in branding paradigm.

Chapter 3
Theoretical Development and Hypotheses

Based upon the conceptualization outlined in Chap. 2 and qualitative results, this chapter integrates the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships (CBR) and develops a theoretical framework of CBR. To this end, it first comprehensively conceptualizes the CBR framework. Next, the underlying attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of CBR are presented in detail. Following this, a set of empirically testable hypotheses was developed and an integrative model of CBR generated that is presented in Fig. 3.1.

Conceptual Framework

The study used a modified conceptualization of CBR that is based on the works of Blackston (1992), Fournier (1998), and Nebel and Blattberg (2000). This conceptualization is also supported during the qualitative phase of this study and subsequent generation of a conceptual model of CBR (Fig. 3.1). In line with previous literature and the conceptual model, CBR includes both attitudinal and behavioral/action phases. The attitudinal phase of CBR has three key stages, such as cognitive, affective, and conative (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich 2006; Oliver 1997, 1999). The CBR level increases through these attitudinal and behavioral stages sequentially.

Cognitive relationship is the first relationship phase. Relationship at this stage derives from or represented by strong positive brand attitudes, i.e., strength of brand attitude. Consumers at this stage develop attitude strength through comparing the brand and its alternatives based on past and/or vicarious knowledge related to the offering, brand attributes, performance of the brand, or current experience-based information about the brand (Back and Parks 2003; Evanschitzky and Wunderlich 2006; Oliver 1997, 1999). Such attitudes may become strong when they are based on thoughtful processing. Strong attitude development is the starting point of brand relationships (Fullerton 1995). When the performance of the brand meets customers' expectation, the strong positive cognitive evaluations will result in brand satisfaction. Brand satisfaction is the outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the brand) meets or exceeds the

expectations (Engel et al. 1990). Busacca and Castaldo (2003) in their conceptual framework stated that the beginning of a CBR is also determined in terms of brand satisfaction.

The second phase of CBR is referred to as affective relationship, which is providing a deeper sense of relationships. At this stage, the CBR derives from the strong favorable attitude toward the brand and their overall evaluation of it (Oliver 1997). It helps the customer to augment the brand relationships that are not easily abandoned as compared with the cognitive phase of CBR. This phase will occur when the brand offers resources in the service of self-expansion, which developed through brand trust or consistency in the performance of the brand. Customers may subsequently develop strong connections between the brand and the self as well as mental models of the brand and the self (Park et al. 2010). In this stage, the brand-related thoughts and feelings are easily and frequently accessed. At this second stage, strong brand attitudes develop into brand attachments. This affective relationship phase is very essential in the attitudinal CBR formation (Bandyopadhyay and Martell 2007; Han 2009; Han et al. 2009; Oliver 1997, 1999).

Nonetheless, CBR is not maintained at the affective stage. During the relationship, augmentation stage CBR is subjected to various deteriorations, particularly owing to the attractiveness of competitive brands (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich 2006). Therefore, it is essential to push the customers into the conative phase of CBR. In this stage, the brand's prominence and its linkage to the self may incline consumers to invest resources of their own in the service of maintaining a brand relationship; such resources are revealed by brand commitment or intention to maintain a relationship. In this stage, customers possess a deeper level of CBR than in the affective stage.

However, it is essential to move beyond these three CBR stages, namely cognitive, affective, and conative. The real CBR would be accomplished at the behavioral/action phase. In other words, customers first form cognitive CBR through attitude strength and brand satisfaction, then form affective CBR through trusted and attached relationships, third, they form conative CBR with deeply held brand commitment, and finally behavioral/action relationship.

Attitudinal and Behavioral Constructs of CBR Brand Attitude Strength (BAT)

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined attitude as "the psychological tendency to evaluate a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor." Strong attitude toward an entity or object/brand might lead to purchasing behavior (Copeland 1923). The extent by which attitude predicts behavior toward the brand or any other entity depends on the strength of the attitude toward that brand or that entity (Tenbult et al. 2008). They also commented that attitudes toward some entities or brands are more influential and consequential (strong) and others are less influential and

consequential (weak; Krosnick 1993). The strength of the attitude is the major force that differentiates weak attitudes from strong ones, which is more influential or consequential. Strength of existing attitude emerges from strong resistance to attitude change (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Krosnick and Petty (1995) defined attitude strength as the extent to which the attitude possesses duel qualities of durability and impact, which explains the magnitude at which attitudes are persistent, resistant to change, impacts on information processing, and guides a particular behavior. In short, the strength-related aspect of an attitude has been viewed as falling into four categories, such as the aspects of attitude itself, aspects of cognitive structure associated with the attitude, the attitude object in memory, subjective beliefs about the attitude and attitude object, and cognitive processes by which an attitude is formed (Krosnick and Petty 1995).

Some of the generally identified dimensions of attitude strength are attitude accessibility, knowledge, commitment, ambivalence, personal relevance, involvement, importance, and certainty (Abelson 1995; Fazio 1995; Gross et al. 1995; Krosnsick and Petty 1995). Krosnick and Abelson (1992) conceptualized that attitude strength is composed of five dimensions, such as extremity, intensity, certainty, importance, and knowledge. Extremity explains the favorability and unfavorability with which a consumer evaluates an object/brand. Intensity dimension explains the strength of an individual's feelings about an attitude object. Certainty explains the degree at which an individual is certain or confident about the attitude object. Importance explains the extent, which an individual considers the attitude object is important to him. Finally, knowledge dimension explains the breadth of an individual's belief about an attitude object.

This unidimensional or multidimensional nature of the attitude strength construct has also been extensively analyzed by some extant literature (e.g., Bizer and Krosnick 2001; Erber et al. 1995; Kronsick et al. 1993; Krosnick and Petty 1995). Studies found support for a common underlying construct for measuring attitude strength (Abelson 1988). There are studies that disagreed with the common underlying construct. Kronsick et al. (1993) analyzed the latent structure of attitude strength and found no support for a single underlying latent construct of attitude strength.

Studies in marketing also centered on understanding the consequences and outcomes of attitude strength. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) stated that strong attitudes are resistant to change and have bias information processing, are persistent over time, and guide the behavior of an individual. The authors also argued that resistance to change is the major outcome of attitude strength. Strong attitude would generate greater counterargumentation of counterattitudinal information in order to assist in the attitude change (Chaiken et al. 1989; Gross et al. 1995).

It is obvious from extant literature that strong attitude has the characteristics and outcomes of persistence and resistance to change, biased information processing, and greater counterargumentation. Finally, strong attitudes possess the characteristics of intentions to stay with the attitude object.

Brand Satisfaction

Oliver (1997) in marketing context defined customer satisfaction as "a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over fulfillment." Engel et al. (1990) defined brand satisfaction "as the outcome of subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the brand) meets or exceeds the expectations."

In branding context, it has been stated that, if the brand provides the consumer with hedonic or utilitarian values, the likelihood of psychological attachment would be stronger (Beatty et al. 1988). In CBR context, it is necessary for the consumer to perceive or expect the relationship as satisfactory; this satisfactory relationship paves the pathway to continue with the existing relationship. If a consumer has strong relationships with a brand, he/she will always search for satisfied partnership. This satisfied partnership will generate through when the brand offers strong and superior customer benefits consistently or that brand satisfies the consumer in that relationship. The satisfied relationship ultimately keeps the consumer in that relationship for a long term. In short, a consumer satisfied with a brand will commit himself or herself with that brand.

Brand Trust

The extant literature established the role of trust in CBR building (e.g., Moorman et al. 1993; Morgan and Hunt 1994). McDonald (1981) in social exchange paradigm stated that the absence of trust or presence of mistrust reduces commitment and leaves the exchange or transaction in short-term nature, and trust plays a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of long-term relationship with the entity.

Moorman et al. (1993) while building on previous literature, integrated traditional definition (psychological) of trust with sociological theories and suggested that trust is a crucial factor for the facilitation of exchange relationships. The authors defined trust as "the willingness of a person (sociological) to rely on another person whom one has confidence (psychological)." Moorman et al. (1993) focused on building a comprehensive theory of trust in marketing relationships and studied the factors that influence user's trust in their research. The important factors identified in this study are: individual, interpersonal, organizational, interorganizational/interdepartmental, and project factors. In the interpersonal factor domain, perceived researcher integrity, willingness to reduce research uncertainly, confidentiality, expertise, tactfulness, sincerity, congeniality, and timeliness are the most strongly associated components with trust. The study also found that, the other factors such as, the formalization of the user's organization, the culture of the researcher's department or organization, the research organization's or department's power, and the extent to which the research is customized also have an impact on trust.

Morgan and Hunt (1994) studied the role of trust and confidence for the restoration of commitment or intention to stay with the brand or person. The major objective of this study was to conceptualize the relationship marketing and its forms, and prove a theory that the successful relationship marketing demands relationship commitment and trust. The study also aimed to establish the mediating role of trust and commitment in relationship building and to compare the competing models, one with the role of commitment and trust and other without commitment and trust, and establish the superiority of the former one. The authors conducted a study with the sample of 204 tire retailers in the USA and using structural equation modeling (SEM), the study found that trust and commitment have different antecedents. The statistical results showed that these two (trust and commitment) are distinct constructs and also showed the significant relationship between trust and commitment. The study also tested the mediating role of trust and commitment in relationship marketing.

Delgado et al. (2000) investigated the conceptual connection of trust with satisfaction and loyalty in a brand–consumer relationship. The authors developed six hypotheses to explain the role of trust with other two concepts like satisfaction and commitment. In hypotheses 1 and 2, it is postulated that higher satisfaction would lead to higher trust and this relationship would be moderated by customer involvement. In hypotheses 3 and 4, it is hypothesized that higher trust would lead to higher commitment and this relationship would be moderated by customer involvement. In hypothesis 5, it is postulated that in high-involvement conditions, the effect of trust on commitment would be higher compared with the influence of overall satisfaction. Hypothesis 6 stated that high commitment would lead to high price tolerance. The study selected a product category related to childcare such as disposable nappies. The selected sample of 200 consisting completely of women who have children ages from 0 to 4. The data collection was based on two brands in the selected product category. First brand is about regular choice and the second one is bought in any other situation. The study tested the hypotheses through comparing two different multiple regressions. The results suggest that trust plays a major role in establishing consumer commitment and commitment is the major factor that affects consumer's price tolerance.

Delgado et al. (2005) examined the role trust for the development of brand equity. The authors considered brand equity as a relationship construct, because the equity of the brand arises from the relationships, that brand, and the consumer. The study postulated three hypotheses, which explain the relationship between trust and brand equity. Hypothesis 1 proposes that consumer's overall satisfaction with the brand has a positive impact on brand trust. Hypothesis 2 proposes that brand trust has a positive impact on brand loyalty. The study considered dispositional commitment and loyalty as synonyms. Hypothesis 3 stated that dispositional commitment or loyalty has a positive impact on brand equity. The data were collected using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) using 271 samples from Spain. The study selected two brands (134 for shampoo and 137 for beer). Using SEM, the study tested the hypotheses. The results showed that brand trust

would lead to brand loyalty or dispositional commitment, which in turn influences brand equity.

Brand Attachment

The concept of attachment originated from the interpersonal attachment theory of Bowlby (1979) and was later extended by many other researchers in different interpersonal contexts (e.g., romantic mates, infants, mothers—see Simpson et al. 2007; Gillath et al. 2008). The extant literature also shows evidence of attachment that stretches beyond person-to-person relationship environment. Mick and Demoss (1990) studied consumers' attachment toward gifts; Slater (2001) studied people's attachment toward collectables; and Hill and Stamey (1990) found evidence of people's attachment toward residence. Research in marketing stated the need for attachment development toward market place entities including products, brands, celebrities, and possessions (Park et al. 2010; Fournier 1998; Keller 2003; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thomson 2006; Ball and Tasaki 1992).

There were different researchers in marketing who have conducted studies, particularly in brand attachment domain. The seminal work in this area is by Whang et al. (2004) who found that passionate love is the major factor that determines brand attachment. Roberts (2004) introduced a new term for brand attachment called "love-marks." Love-marks brands are those brands that generate high impact on both the dimensions of respect (which is a combination of reputation, performance, trust, and commitment) and love (which is a combination of sensuality, intimacy, passion, and mystery). Thomson et al. (2005) stated that attachment is a multidimensional construct composed of three dimensions: *affection* (affectionate, loved, peaceful, and friendly), *connection* (attached, bonded, and connected), and *passion* (passionate, delighted, and captivated).

Park et al. (2010) define the concept of brand attachment as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self, this bond is exemplified by a rich and accessible memory network (or mental representation) that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand's relationship to the self." The study found that there are two dimensions of brand attachment: (a) *brand self-connection*—explains the cognitive and emotional connection between the brand and the self and (b) *brand prominence*—positive memories and feelings about the brand that customers perceive in their top of mind (Park et al. 2010).

In summary, many attempts have been made to measure the construct as such, but none of the literature has made an attempt to understand how (the process) this paradigm (brand attachment) leads to relationship building and its conceptual properties of brand attachment still remain mysterious (Park et al. 2010; Park et al. 2006, 2009). This construct has yet to mature in different areas, particularly the operational aspect of this paradigm is still vague and therefore more efforts will require to fill this vagueness (Tsai 2011).

Brand Commitment

The concept of commitment has its origin in organizational literature and has received significant attention among scholars since the introduction of Allen and Meyer's (1990) organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) defined commitment as a multidimensional construct consisting of three dimensions in an organizational context. These three dimensions of organizational commitment are the affective (affective attachment to the organization), continuance (perceived costs associated with leaving the organization), and normative (feelings of obligation to the organization) dimensions. In organizational literature, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) stated that maintaining the relationship with a target or organization is the focal outcome associated with commitment and supported that affective, continuance, and normative commitments are the three dimensions of commitment. Majority of the definitions in organizational context defined commitment as the existence of a psychological bond between the individual and the organization. Such bond includes relationship concepts such as the readiness to expend energy, loyalty, and work toward the organization's goals, the unwillingness to leave, a sense of oneness to the organization, a positive valuation of the organization, or acceptance of and identification with the organization's values and goals (Chusmir 1988).

The concept of customer commitment has generated interest in marketing literature since the introduction of the customer commitment theory of relationship marketed by Morgan and Hunt in 1994 (Jones et al. 2007). After the introduction of this theory, several researches showed interest in studying customer commitment for the prediction of various matrices related to customer retention, repurchase intentions, and switching/staying intentions (e.g., Bansal et al. 2004; Fullerton 2003; Venetis and Ghauri 2004). The construct of customer commitment is considered to be very important for the maintenance and development of marketing relationships as it works as a key psychological force that links the customer to the selling organization (Bansal et al. 2004; Morgan and Hunt 1994).

The concept of commitment has been defined as an attitude that exposes the desire to maintain a relationship with an entity or an object (Moorman et al. 1992). The most widely accepted definition of commitment in marketing literature comes from the works of Moorman et al. (1992) and Morgan and Hunt (1994). According to Moorman et al. (1992, p. 316), commitment is defined "as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship." Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 23) stated that "commitment is an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another partner is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it."

In the marketing literature, Bansal et al. (2004) extended Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of organizational commitment. The authors defined commitment as a force that binds an individual to continue to purchase services (i.e., Not to switch; Bansal et al. 2004). Customers with a strong affective bond stay with the service provider because they want to. Those with strong continuance commitment intended to remain with the service provider because they feel they have to. Normatively committed customers stay because they feel they ought

to. Affective commitment develops when the customers become involved with the brand or entity recognizes the value relevance of it, and/or derives his/her identity from it, or an association concerned with the entity or brand. Normative commitment develops when customers internalize the brand's or entity's norms through socialization and receive benefits that induce them to feel the need to reciprocate and/or to accept the terms of a psychological contract (Rousseau 1995). Continuance committee develops when the customers perceive that there is no alternative other than to remain with the current service provider or brand. As a construct, it describes an attitude that reflects the desire to maintain a valued relationship (Moorman et al. 1992; Bansal et al. 2004). Levinger (1979) stated that "commitment as a decision or pledge to maintain a long-term relationship with a brand into the future."

The majority of the marketing researchers in marketing conceptualized and operationalized the construct of customer commitment in terms of intention to remain loyal to the brand in the near future (e.g., Moorman et al. 1992; Ahluwalia et al. 2000). Miller (1997) stated that brand commitment is an outcome of attachment toward the brand and is revealed by a set of commitment-related behaviors that help to promote some of the relationship maintenance acts.

Ahluwalia et al. (2000) examined the role of brand commitment on information processing behaviors of customers toward the brand. The study conducted three experimental surveys using student sample and identified the role of brand commitment on information processing about the brand. The findings of the study showed that customers' commitment is an important moderator toward consumer response toward negative information. In short, highly committed customers counterargue negative information about the brand and that ultimately reduces the likelihood of attitude degradation. The results also showed that highly committed customers may help the effectiveness of information that is likely to reduce switching behavior.

In a study, Fullerton (2005) examined the extent that the two dimensions of commitment such as affective component and continuance component serve as a mediator of attitude toward the brand relationships, such as *brand satisfaction* and *loyalty intention* for retail brands. An affective component of commitment is important because it is rooted in attachment, shared values, and identity. Affectively committed consumers trust the partner (here, retail brand) and enjoy doing partnership with the relationship partner. The continuance component of commitment makes the consumers bound to have a relationship, because it is hard to get out of the relationship with the partner. In this study, the authors modeled and hypothesized that the two dimensions of commitment such as affective and continuance are the mediator of brand satisfaction and repurchase intention and advocacy intentions. The model proposed by Fullerton (2005) was examined using two retail brands and responses were collected from 418 samples of undergraduate students. The hypotheses were examined using regression suggested by Baron and Kenney (1986). The results showed that the affective component of commitment is a stronger driver of advocacy intentions and repurchase intentions. The results also proved the fact that brand commitment is the complete mediator of brand attitude and loyalty-related outcomes.

Jones et al. (2010) in their paper assesses the role of three-component model of commitment (such as norms, affective, and continuance) on different loyalty-related behaviors. The normative component of commitment explains the psychological bond with a customer to the organization because of the sense of obligation. An affective component of commitment arises from the extent, which the consumer feels favorable about the organization. Continuance commitment emerges because of the perceived costs associated with the termination of the relationship with the partner. The study collected sample of 213 employees of a large national insurance company. The survey questionnaire contained multiple-item questions. The analyses of the study were conducted with Partial Least Square SEM. The results of the study found that these three components of commitment are distinct constructs and all these three have the predictive power with respect to different customer loyalty behaviors.

From all the earlier commitment literature, the common link that connects the construct across subjects is that commitment is a psychological state of mind that is independent of behaviors and can influence behaviors including loyalty. Therefore, the proposed study considered the construct multidimensional in nature and defined brand commitment as *"an attitudinal state of mind of the consumer towards the brand, in which the consumer intended to maintain a relationship with the brand or relationship longevity which influence behaviors, including brand loyalty."*

Brand Equity

There is literature in marketing, which considers brand equity as relationship constructs (e.g., Hunt 1997; Srivastava et al. 1998, 2001). Brand equity is considered to be a relational construct, because a brand derives much of its value from its relationship with others, particularly from its customers or its relationship partners. This relational nature of brand value contributes as an asset to the concerned brand. In other words, a brand derives its value from the set of brand associations and images that the brand generated in the mind of its customers during the relationship. Keller (1993) defined brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of a brand." When the construct of brand equity comes as a relationship construct, this is the effect a brand has beyond its other value propositions (Johnson et al. 2006). That value proposition is mainly generated from its relationship with its customers.

Brand Loyalty

The majority of extant literature in brand loyalty was primarily defined and operationalized the construct of brand loyalty as behavioral aspect (e.g., repeated purchase). For example, Cunningham (1956, 1967) stated that brand loyalty as the purchase proportion of the same brand on a same sequence of purchase. The author

made an arbitrary cut off of 50 % as the limit of brand loyalty: the customer is loyal if he/she buys 50 % above his/her purchase of the same brand. Followed by Tucker (1964) and McConnel (1968) introduced "3 in the sequence criterion": a customer is a brand-loyal customer if his/her purchase sequence comprises three identical brands. However, starting from Day (1969), brand loyalty has been studied in a different stream altogether and the efforts being witnessed to provide a significant conceptual contribution that differentiates true brand loyalty from spurious loyalty (e.g., Bloemer and Kasper (1995) included commitment (Odin et al. 2001 and Kim et al. 2008); included brand sensitivity (Morgan and Hunt 1994); and included commitment and trust. Day (1969) studied loyalty in terms of both attitudinal and behavioral aspects. Day (1969) in his paper studied the two-dimensional nature of brand loyalty: the attitudinal and behavioral component. According to Day (1969), the loyalty measures, which are solely based on repeated purchase, called as spurious loyalty is different from true loyalty or intentional loyalty. According to him, "The key point is that these spuriously loyal buyers lack any attachment to brand attributes, and they can be immediately captured by another brand that offers a better deal, a coupon, or enhanced point-of-purchase visibility through displays and other devices." Therefore, the author suggested that loyalty should be studied in both attitudinal and behavioral ways, because once the attitudinal aspect is included in loyalty measure, it becomes a brand-specific phenomenon and not a generic phenomenon. Day (1969) proposed a composite index of loyalty, which has been widely used by researchers in marketing. The authors defined loyalty (L) as

$$L = \frac{P(B)}{A}$$

where L is loyalty, P(B) is proportion of brand purchase, and A is loyal attitude.

The empirical test of the model was conducted using 955 household panels. The stimuli used in this study were two major brands in the convenience food category. The study defined true brand-loyal customers are those people who had a high favorable attitude toward the brand and buying the brand in majority of the occasions. The study found a relatively high model fit for true loyal customers. The findings of the study showed that: (1) true brand loyalty is the outcome of rational decision, which is derived from comprehensive evaluation of competing brands in the product category, this evaluation determines the commitment toward the brand; (2) such an evaluative decision is not necessary for each and every purchase; and (3) strong affective orientation toward the brand reduces the perceptual judgment, this in turn reduces the customer's attention toward competitor's promotional activity and switching decision.

Bloemer and Kasper (1995) investigated the relationship between customer satisfaction and true brand loyalty. The authors made a distinction between repeated purchase behavior and brand loyalty and true loyalty with spurious loyalty. The authors differentiated true loyalty from spurious loyalty using the definition given by Jacoby and Chestnut (1976). A true brand loyalty means; "(i) the biased (i.e., nonrandom), (ii) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (iii) expressed over time, (iv)

by some decision making unit, (v) with respect to one or more alternative brand out of a set of such brands, which (vi) is a function of psychological (decision making, evaluative) processes resulting in brand commitment." The spurious loyalty means "(i) the biased (i.e., nonrandom), (ii) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (iii) expressed over time, (iv) by any decision making unit, (v) with respect to one or more alternative brand out of a set of such brands, (vi) which is a function of inertia." According to the authors, the most differentiating factor behind this true versus spurious loyalty component is commitment. When the brand is positively evaluated in consumer's mind, he/she will carry out an extensive evaluation process, which ultimately helps to create a pledge or commitment toward the brand. In this study, the authors collected responses using a self-administered survey of 830 respondents (Dutch sample). The products used in this study are blank audio cassettes and shampoo. The study operationalized the constructs of true brand loyalty via a multiplication of commitment construct with loyalty. The study found that there is a good correlation between brand commitment and true brand loyalty, true brand loyalty and satisfaction, and true brand loyalty and purchase behavior for both the products.

Odin et al. (2001) proposed a new conceptualization in brand loyalty literature. The objective of this paper was to stress the absence of reliable and valid scale in brand loyalty and solve the problem via the operationalization of a new true brand loyalty construct. According to the authors, repeated purchase behavior under conditions of strong brand sensitivity is the differentiating factor, which discriminates between true brand loyalty and loyalty based on inertia or spurious loyalty. In short, a customer who repurchases the brand and attaches strong importance (sensitivity) will be considered as a truly loyal and a customer who repurchases the brand with weak sensitivity will be considered as spurious loyal or purchase of inertia. The study developed two hypotheses in line with the argument of Roselius (1971) that brand loyalty is one of the most important risk reduction strategies. The proposed hypotheses are: (1) perceived risk dimension positively influence brand loyalty and (2) perceived risk dimension will not influence purchase inertia. The study followed the procedure suggested by Churchill (1979) and collected responses from 108 undergraduate students. The results supported that there exists a significant relationship between risk dimensions and loyalty or true loyalty and no support was found for the significant relationship between risk dimensions and inertia.

Kim et al. (2008) presented a conceptual model for building strong CBR. The study integrated six latent constructs and explained that true brand loyalty is the antecedent of brand credibility, affective brand conviction, cognitive brand conviction, attitude strength, and brand commitment. Based on the extant literature, Kim et al. (2008) developed 10 major hypotheses and 4 subhypotheses to analyze the moderating role of involvement and product category. The authors argued that brand sensitivity is the major factor that moderates true loyalty from inertia (i.e., spurious loyalty). The authors conducted a Web-based survey, which consists of a sample of 952 undergraduate college students. The authors used SEM to examine the relationship between constructs. The results of the study showed that brand credibility is the major factor behind the cognitive and affective conviction and cognitive conviction influences affective conviction. Both these convictions influence

attitude strength and this attitude strength helps to develop brand commitment. This brand commitment finally leads to true brand loyalty or behavioral loyalty.

Hypotheses Development

Brand Attitude Strength and Brand Satisfaction

This study followed a conceptual definition of satisfaction by Engel et al. (1990) that "brand satisfaction is the outcome of subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the brand) meets or exceeds the expectations." This definition is in line with many other definitions of satisfaction, which followed Oliver's (1980) expectation–disconfirmation paradigm (E–D; Bloemer and Kasper 1995). The E–D paradigm stated that the degree of satisfaction for a product is derived from confirmation or disconfirmation of previous expectations, which is the outcome of difference in expected and perceived performance of a product. When the consumer accepts the performance of a brand, the cognitive evaluations of the brand's utility result in satisfaction. Bloemer and Kasper (1995) used Elaboration Likelihood Model of Petty et al. (1993) and integrated with Oliver's (1980) E–D paradigm to explain the development of brand satisfaction. According to Bloemer and Kasper (1995), brand satisfaction is the result of strong subjective evaluation. A consumer is expected to elaborate upon the evaluation of the brand. This elaboration happens when the consumer is having the motivation and capacity to evaluate the brand in terms of its reference point or alternatives. The central route of elaboration will lead to permanent attitude change and peripheral route of elaboration will lead to temporary attitude change. The extent of elaboration (direct or indirect) would help the consumer to have an explicit or implicit comparison between expectation and performance. The result would be the confirmation or disconfirmation of previous expectations. Mona and Oliver (1993) argued that the favorable utilitarian evaluation will result in the experience of pleasure that leads to develop product satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction with the brand is derived from his/ her strong positive evaluations. This strong evaluation would act as a driving force behind the purchase of the brand and subsequent satisfaction with the brand. Therefore, the study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1 (H_1) Brand attitude strength will have a positive and significant effect on brand satisfaction.

Mediating Role of Trust Between Brand Attitude Strength and Brand Attachment

The extent to which customer develops attachment to a brand depends not only on the brand's ability to provide the resources but also the ability of the brand to do so

consistently, and hence develop a sense that the brand can be trusted to act in the consumer's best interests (Park et al. 2006). Analogously, the consumers' strong brand attitude would develop into an attachment when they believe that the brand can be relied upon, it would consistently deliver its resources for the self-expansion of brand holder. The major motivation for such attachment may include the need for comfort, support, security, and consistency (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011), called as brand trust.

Wieselquist et al. (1999) defined the term trust in branding as "the expectation that the brand can be relied upon to behave in benevolent manner and to be responsive to one's needs." Rempel et al. (1985) stated that the expectations of benevolence and responsiveness would impart a sense of confidence to the customer with the brand. This created confidence helps the customers to believe that the brand will satisfy their desired goals and motives even in the face of future relationship uncertainties. When the customers are convinced that the brand puts their interest and welfare ahead of all other interests, the customers will become more self-connected and emotionally attached to it.

Park et al. (2006) stated a number of reasons behind the role of trust in attachment development: (a) Trust is a relationship variable, and evolves and develops over time from consumer interactions with the entity. Attachment could not be created without trust, because the lack of trust leaves the individual at risk about the uncertain outcome; (b) Trust creates a type of intimacy goal in which the individual develops an individual secure base and helps to create greater intimacy by considering future risks associated with the entity will be less; and (c) Trust helps to create an in-depth understanding of the entity as part of the self, in which considering the entity as "us" or "we" as opposed "me" or "I." Therefore, the study hypotheses that:

Hypothesis 2 (H$_2$) Consumer—brand trust mediates the relationship between brand attitude strength and brand attachment.

Mediating Role of Brand Trust Between Brand Satisfaction and Brand Commitment

Busacca and Castaldo (2003) stated that brand satisfaction is the starting point of CBR. This satisfaction is the result of customers' strong subjective evaluation of the brand (Engel et al. 1990). The resultant satisfaction having the ability to affect brand commitment and repurchase intentions (Fullerton 2005). Subsequently, when the CBR is prolonged, the brand satisfaction is replaced by brand trust (Garbarino and Johnson 1999). The core value that a strong brand is able to provide to its customers is brand trust, this will enable the customers to know the offering and perceived risk associated with purchasing and consuming the product (Berry 2000). A customer who has a strong trustworthiness toward the brand is intended to be with the brand, willing to pay premium price for it, intended to buy any new product under it in

the existing and new category and finally, ready to share information about testes, preferences and behavior (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001; Busacca and Castaldo 2003). Highly committed consumers trust and emotionally connect with the brand compared with noncommitted customers (Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Brigita et al. (2010) stated the role of satisfaction for the development and maintenance of strong brand relationships. According to him, "If customers believe that the brand satisfies their needs, then a bond between the brand and the customer will be formed based on trust and satisfaction." Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3 (H$_3$) Consumer—brand trust mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand commitment.

Mediating Role of Brand Attachment Between Brand Attitude Strength and Brand Commitment

Literature in attitude supports that brand attitude is an important starting point in building a conceptual model of CBR (Fullerton 2005). Park et al. (2010) argued that relationship establishment starts with brand purchase and at this stage the customer develops positive brand attitudes and this developed attitudes might become strong when they are based on thoughtful processing. When a brand starts offering resources in the service of self-expansion, the consumer will attach to the brand, which is shown through two ways; *self-connection*—strong connections between the brand and the self and *brand prominence*—the development of mental models of the brand and the self, which is shown through brand-related thoughts and feelings, which easily appear in consumers' mind (Park et al. 2010). Lacoeuilhe (2000) argued that the relationship between brand attachment and commitment is crucial to the extent that brand attachment helps in understanding how a consumer can be loyal to the brand whereas the consideration only functional characteristics of the brand will create problems for differentiating it from its competitors. The relationship between brand attachment and commitment is also supported by Lacoeuilhe and Belaid (2007), who stressed that brand attachment feeds the attitudinal intention, i.e., commitment. These links between brand attachment and commitment were empirically shown by researchers, such as Lacoeuilhe (2000), Lacoeuilhe and Belaid (2007), and Gouteron (2008).

　　This study argues that the relationship establishment starts with the development of strong positive brand attitudes. This strong positive attitude helps to create brand self-connection and prominence, which ultimately leads to intention to behave in a manner that supports relationship longevity. Brand commitment is derived from strong attachment toward that brand (Park et al. 2006). As a result, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 (H$_4$) Brand attachment will mediate the relationship between brand attitude strength and brand commitment.

Mediating Role of Brand Attachment Between Brand Satisfaction and Brand Commitment

The investment model (Rusbult 1983) of interpersonal relationship identified the role of satisfaction in building relationships. The investment model states that commitment is a core relationship-specific motive. Strong commitment makes the individual most likely to remain with the brand, and also promote a variety of relationship maintenance behaviors. Satisfaction is considered to be one of the core components of commitment development. According to Berry et al. (1988), consumers' psychological attachment would be higher if a brand provides them the values (symbolic or hedonic), they explain that a brand provides ultimate superior benefit to the consumer, which in turn helps to develop satisfactorily. The developed satisfaction would lead to commitment or intention to stay with the brand. The commitment or intention with the brand is not the direct outcome, instead it develops though the feelings and thoughts, which are derived from satisfaction. Tsai (2009b) studied the role of satisfaction in CBR with service branding context, and operationalized the construct in two dimensions such as satisfaction of utilitarian attributes and satisfaction of affective attributes. In that study, the author found that these two satisfaction dimensions will have a positive impact on service brand commitment. In Oliver's (1981) confirmation and disconfirmation model, it stated that satisfaction is derived from confirmation or disconfirmation of previous expectations. If any brand consistently performs previous expectations or satisfies the consumer, this would lead to developing a kind of commitment or intention to stay with the brand. But this intention would happen only through the creation of positive feelings and thoughts about the brand. Intent to persist and feeling of psychological attachment will have a positive impact on relationship building and maintenance (Rusbult 1983). Therefore, the study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 5 (H$_5$) Brand attachment will mediate the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand commitment.

Mediating Role of Brand Trust Between Brand Attitude Strength and Brand Equity

Garbarino and Johnson (1999) stated that consumer–brand trust evolved and developed from past experience and prior interaction with the brand. Most often, the development of brand trust of an individual has been portrayed through the experiential process of learning over time and reflects the consumers' knowledge and experiences with the brand. Brand trust as an experiential attribute is influenced by the consumer's strong evaluation of any direct (e.g., trial, usage) and indirect contact (e.g., advertising and word of mouth) with the brand in hand or use (Keller 1993; Krishnan 1996). Among all these experiences and contacts, the most impor-

tant attribute, which directs trust, is the consumption experience with the brand. Dwyer et al. (1987) and Krishnan (1996) argued that consumption experience is the major driving force behind associations, thoughts, and inferences that are more self-relevant and held with more certainty. Moorman et al. (1993) defined brand trust as "willingness of a person relay on another (person/brand) in which one has confidence." This definition shows the importance of confidence in building trust toward the object or person. This certainty and confidence are the two major dimensions of attitude strength (Krosnick and Petty 1995). In this context, it can be postulated that the attitude strength or strong positive evaluation of the brand developed from consumption or nonconsumption experience with the brand, generates brand trust (Ganesan 1994; Selnes 1998).

There are literatures in marketing who have considered the construct brand equity as the relational market-based construct (e.g., Falkenberg 1996; Hooley et al. 2005; Srivastava et al. 1998, 2001). The primary reason for this consideration is that, for a brand most of its value for its equity development is derived from the brand's relationship with external members of the value chain (e.g., the distribution system and the final users; Delgado et al. 2005). Ambler (1997) stated that the relational market-based nature of brand equity may be best expressed as a function of brand—consumer relationship. In such a relationship context, brand trust is the major determinant of building brand equity (Delgado et al. 2005). Trustworthiness toward the brand is the major determinant to building brand equity because people will place high value in the brands they trust. Lassar et al. (1995) supported this argument with an example; consumer's trust toward Nordstrom had created high equity for Nordstrom. Distrust will negatively affect the brand equity of the brand (Lassar et al. 1995). The extant literature in marketing considered a very similar concept, brand credibility in relationship context and considered as the antecedent of brand equity. Erdem and Swait (1998) stated trustworthiness as the dimension of brand credibility and this credibility is the major driving force behind brand equity. Therefore, the study made a hypothesis that:

Hypothesis 6 (H$_6$) Consumer—brand trust mediates the relationship between brand attitude strength and brand equity.

Mediating Role of Attachment Between Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

While explaining the role of trust in relationship building, Morgan and Hunt (1994) stated that trust is a major determinant of relationship. If a person possesses trust toward another party, it is more likely that he/she would develop some kind of behavioral intention toward that trusted party (Lau and Lee 1999). Literatures in branding have shown exhaustive evidence that brand loyalty is a consequence of brand trust. But all these literatures conceptualized the concept of brand loyalty either in terms of behavioral intention or repeated purchase behavior. Based on commitment–trust

theory of relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt 1994) and brand commitment (Grundlach et al. 1995), Chaudhuri and Halbrook stated that brand trust and brand affect impacts repurchase loyalty. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), consumer's trust toward brand will lead to higher levels of loyalty because the trust component creates the relationship as a highly valued one. This trust component creates affection toward the trusted object/ brand or positive mood and affect, because the trusted object/brand consistently performs according to expectations. Brand loyalty should be higher when the positive mood and affect of a consumer is higher (Dick and Basu 1994). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) stated that those brands that make consumers happier, joyful, or affectionate will elicit more purchase. Hence, based on these arguments, it has been hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 7 (H$_7$) Consumer—brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty.

Brand Commitment and Brand Equity

Lassar et al. (1995) studied the perceptual nature of brand equity and analyzed the impact of feeling component of commitment on it. The author distinguished commitment into two dimensions; feeling component and action component. The feeling component is just similar to attitudinal loyalty combined with attachment and action component is just similar to behavior loyalty as proposed by Oliver (1997). The commitment directed by feeling judged behavior to be the force behind brand equity rather than brand equity itself (Lassar et al. 1995). The feeling part of relationship intention comes from the development of attachment with that relationship object. For supporting this argument, Lassar et al. (1995) gave an example: The severe protests against Coco-Cola for the brief removal of "old" Coco-Cola brought forth by its loyal fans exemplified by the consumers' attachment toward that brand and that feeling's power in augmenting brand equity. The consumer feels an attachment toward some brands and form relationship with them (Fournier 1998), which result in equity of that brand (Keller 1993). Ahluwalia et al. (2000) studied the role commitment with attachment influences consumer information processing. Emotional attachment plays a vital role in determining resistance to counterattitudinal information. Commitment combined with attachment is considered to be the crucial determinant behind the prevention of negative information. High-committed consumers with attachment counterargue negative information about that brand (Ahluwalia et al. 2000). This counterargument against negative information creates a differential effect for that brand and that will lead to brand equity and also this defensive mechanism of commitment with attachment will reduce the likelihood of negative brand equity toward that brand. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 8 (H$_8$) Consumer–brand commitment has a positive effect on brand equity.

Brand Commitment and Brand Loyalty

Oliver (1997) defined the concept of brand loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior." Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) stated behavioral intention as one of the most predictable behaviors and it works as a direct antecedent to behavioral loyalty. There were studies in marketing, which considered brand commitment as the necessary and sufficient antecedent to the formation of behavioral loyalty (Cunningham 1967; Knox and Walker 2001; Back and Parks 2003; Bandyopadhyay and Martell 2007; Evanschitzky and Wunderlich 2006). Kim et al. (2008) differentiated true loyalty from spurious loyalty through integrating the attitudinal and behavioral aspects loyalty. The authors empirically demonstrated that the attitudinal loyalty, such as brand commitment, is the direct antecedent of behavioral loyalty. Therefore, it has been hypotheses that:

Hypothesis 9 (H$_9$) Consumer—brand commitment has a positive effect on behavioral loyalty.

Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty

In brand management literature, the concept of brand equity has been defined "as the added value endowed to a product as a result of past investments in the marketing of the brand" (Keller 1998). This added value in the consumer's mind is created because of the perceived performance of the brand that generated through the experience of interaction with the brand in the past. This differential value is a major determinant of repeated purchase. Brand equity can be considered as the major determinant of brand loyalty (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993, 1998) and loyalty has been considered to be the important outcome of brand equity (Van Riel et al. 2005). Erdem and Swait (1998) used Spence's (1974) signaling and information economics framework, stated that brand loyalty is the consequence of brand equity. According to Erdem and Swait (1998), the clarity and credibility of brands act as signals of product positions that in turn increase perceived quality, reduction in consumer perceived risk, and information costs, and hence increase consumer expected utility, this expected utility motivates the consumers to repeatedly buy the same brands. Recently, the same argument has also been supported by Menictas et al. (2012) in an attempt to validate Erdem and Swait's (1998) brand equity framework. The major characteristics that differentiate a brand with a high level of equity and high brand equity consumers are always loyal to that brand (Delgado-Ballester et al. 2005). Keller (2003) argued that brand equity is a multifaceted construct composed of brand image and brand awareness. Strong behavioral loyalty is the consequence of strong customer-based brand equity and change in brand equity will lead to change in brand loyalty (Kaynak et al. 2008; Leone et al. 2006).
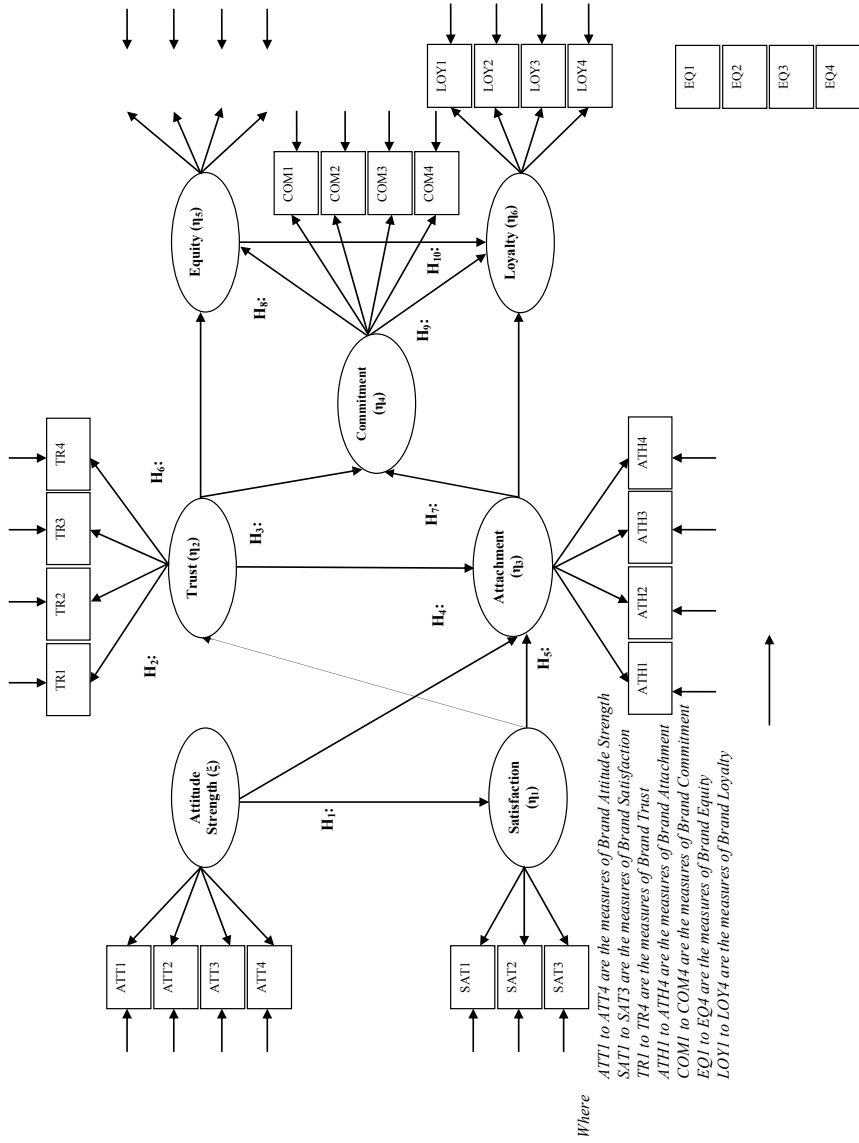
Fig. 3.1 Consumer–brand relationship model (CBRM)

Where

ATT1 to ATT4 are the measures of Brand Attitude Strength
SAT1 to SAT3 are the measures of Brand Satisfaction
TR1 to TR4 are the measures of Brand Trust
ATH1 to ATH4 are the measures of Brand Attachment
COM1 to COM4 are the measures of Brand Commitment
EQ1 to EQ4 are the measures of Brand Equity
LOY1 to LOY4 are the measures of Brand Loyalty

Therefore, the study made a hypothesis for analyzing the relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty:

Hypothesis (H$_{10}$) The consumer–brand equity has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

Figure 3.1 displays the conceptual model used in this study. It shows the integration of all attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of CBR.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and empirical works in seven areas of the CBR dimensions, which were identified and conceptualized in Chap. 5. Later on, the study made and attempt to integrate and hypothesize the same. Therefore, the chapter made an attempt to show more detailed evidence for the finding of qualitative exploration carried out during the first phase of this study (see Chap. 5, Sect. 1). These seven relationship building paradigms represent different stages of CBR, include cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral aspects of brand relationships. Through proposing ten hypotheses, the study integrated all these four stages of CBR.

Chapter 4
Research Methodology

The central premise of this study was that the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships play a crucial role in creating, augmenting, and maintaining the brand relationships with customers, an idea that has support in the literature but requires further empirical validation. Therefore, the study was organized into two phases. Phase I was a qualitative study that looked at the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships and subsequent conceptual model development. Following this, phase II looked at empirical model validation, using quantitative structural equation modeling (SEM) to better understand how the attitudinal and behavioral components work as an integrative mechanism to build consumer–brand relationships.

Research Methodology: Mixed Methodology

This research positioned its study paradigm in the middle of the possible spectrum of methodological choices. This positioning of the study's operating paradigm suggests a research methodology that combined both the perspectives such as quantitative and qualitative, known as Mixed Methodology. There are three primary reasons for choosing a mixed methodical design over traditional research designs:

1. The research purpose and research questions mentioned in Chap. 2 require a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.
2. Research questions formulated in this study require the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions (qualitative) and their empirical validation (quantitative). It is clear that the individual understanding does not address the primary purpose of the study.
3. There is insufficient information available in the literature regarding the role of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions in consumer–brand relationship building. The detailed understanding of this requires the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods.

This mixed method research design helps the researcher to go for inductive and deductive reasoning techniques in order to more accurately answer the study's research questions that cannot be completely answered through qualitative or quantitative research alone (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that mixed research design exphasis on the explanation and application factors in which process of the research is benefited, which ultimately lead to the interpretation of the subject matter, its applications and implications for the field of the study. Rocco et al. (2003) suggested the advantages of mixed methodology in which the authors justified that the legitimacy of qualitative methods is enhanced through the incorporation of quantitative methods, known as triangulation.

As the study follows the mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, and these two approaches were applied in sequence (qualitative first and quantitative later), in which quantitative research design dominates over the qualitative approach. Following Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2009) typology of fully mixed method research design, the design proposed in this study could be classified as fully mixed sequential dominant status design. This typology of mixed method design involves combining or mixing both qualitative and quantitative research approaches within one or more of or across the stages of the research process. In this study, the qualitative and quantitative research approaches were mixed within all the four areas like research objective, data collection, type of analysis, and type of inference, and these phases occurred sequentially and more weight would be given to quantitative approach.

In this study, the quantitative findings were presented as either helping to elaborate on or extend the qualitative findings (Creswell 2003). This approach of mixing is more valid and robust, because rather than inferring and conceptualizing the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships from the qualitative data alone (in-depth interviews), rich empirical data provided a context for quantitative interpretation and support. It is also supported that mixed method design research allows the researcher for the objective examination of two separate data sources as a means of ensuring accurate interpretation through triangulation[1] (Creswell 2003). Figure 4.1 shows the outline of sequential dominant status mixed research design.

Research Framework

Figure 4.1 displayed the research framework of this study. During the first phase of qualitative or exploratory investigation, the study conducted a series of in-depth interviews to explore the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships. In which the study adopted a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1994) for data collection, analysis, and inferences, aimed to develop a con-

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[1] Brayman and Bell (2011) defined "*triangulation as the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings*"
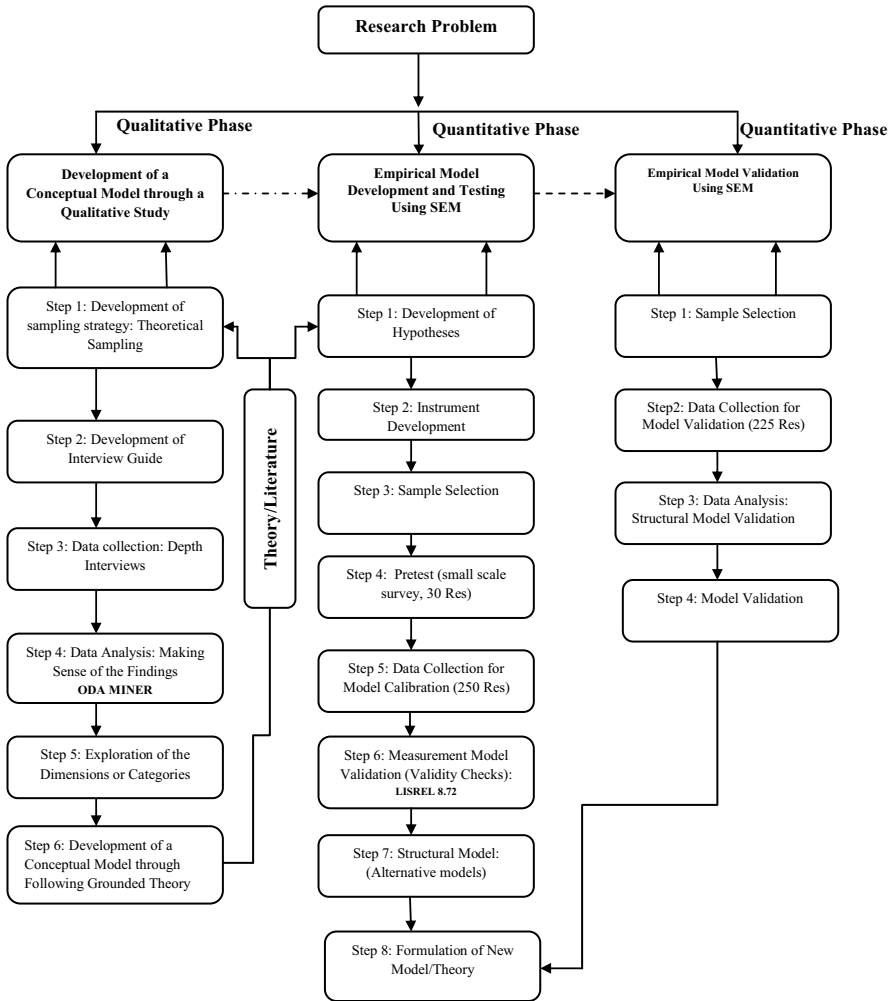
Fig. 4.1 Fully mixed sequential dominant status design

ceptual model of consumer–brand relationships. During the second phase, the study followed a quantitative design, which mainly dealt with the identified attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships during the previous stage. During this stage, the study developed the hypotheses to link the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions backed by previous literature. Followed by the measurement process, the items for these constructs are assumed to be measured in a self-reporting manner. For measuring self-reported beliefs and behaviors, a self-administered questionnaire survey is considered to be an appropriate and widely used approach in a relationship context (Rundle-Thiele 2005). A pretest was carried out to test the suitability of the measurement instrument. After the confirmation of

the suitability of the measurement instrument, validity and reliability of the constructs were tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, a series of structural equation modeling (SEM) was carried out to empirically test the model of consumer–brand relationships. During the third phase, followed by quantitative method using SEM, the model validation was carried out to examine the predictive ability of the empirical model.

The research design presented in this chapter is divided into two parts. Part I explains the methodology used for exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships using a qualitative study. Part II explains quantitative methodology used for empirical model development, testing, and its validation. Each section of the study presents the population and sample, instrumentation measurement, methods of data collection, and analytical tools used to analyze the study data.

Part I: Exploration and Integration of Attitudinal and Behavioral Dimensions: Qualitative Research

The purpose of this section is to describe the methodology used for the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral aspects of consumer–brand relationships. It has been stated that qualitative research[2] is most appropriate in those situations, which demand the understanding of the meaning and perspectives attached by the participants regarding the object/case (Hoshmand 1989). In addition, it has been accepted that naturalistic research paradigm offers the researcher to understand consumers' deep structural processes.

It is considered that the selection of a particular qualitative methodology is often misleading and conflicting (Caelli et al. 2003). Therefore, the research made careful consideration before selecting a particular method. Caelli et al. (2003) argued that rigor is the basic factor that determines the central component of evaluating a methodology. For confirming the rigor, the researcher should examine the two aspects before selecting a particular qualitative method: (1) the researcher should articulate in his/her study that how the tradition chosen will contribute to enhance the methodological rigor and (2) the researcher should identify and show how the chosen method is philosophically and methodologically congruent with his/her inquiry (Caelli et al. 2003).

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[2] Creswell (2009) stated "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation" (p. 22).

Choosing Among the Five Research Traditions

This study considered five research traditions proposed by Creswell (1998) before selecting a particular qualitative research tradition as the appropriate one. These are:

- *Ethnography*: Research problem associated with ethnographic studies involves study of a specific cultural group over an extended period of time (Creswell 1998). Identification and examination of consumer–brand relationship dimensions are not associated with the cultural aspects over an extended period. As a result, ethnography was rejected as a research approach to this study.
- *Narrative Research*: The tradition of narrative research involves understanding of individual life experiences in story form (Creswell 1998). As this research was focused on identifying consumers' experiences specific to brand, the narrative research did not meet the needs of the study.
- *Case Study*: The case study tradition involves the consideration of a single historical situation, which is constrained by time and context. In this study, the consideration of these kind of traditions will give little value to the research. Therefore, the case study approach could not be considered as the research approach.
- *Phenomenology*: This research tradition generally uses to explore the exact nature-specific human experience. Creswell (2005) stated that phenomenological research provides insight into a person's subjective interpretations, beliefs, perceptions, and frames of reference of the specific human experience under study. In short, this research tradition is best suited in those situations in which problem in hand involves understanding human relations. As this study does not involve exclusive understanding of human relations, rather it aims to understand consumer–brand relations, it is considered that phenomenology is not a best suited approach.
- *Grounded Theory*: Loke (2001) argued that grounded theory is best suited in those situations, such as: (1) Capturing complexity; (2) Linking with practice; (3) Facilitating theoretical work in substantive areas that have not been well researched by others; (4) Putting life into established fields or to provide alternative conceptualization for the existing work. By considering the last situation, grounded theory can provide the basis for an alternative view of well-established fields, through its open-ended approach to data collection followed by a systematic approach to theoretical development. As this study's requirement matches with the objective of the grounded theory approach, it has been decided to use grounded theory as the qualitative approach to this study.

Grounded Theory Research Methodology

Qualitative research techniques are suitable when the research objective is to uncover the meaning of some phenomenon that involves respondents' experiences (Hoshmand 1989). Chosen to clarify consumer understanding of bond with brands,

the method used here (grounded theory) involves: (1) development of codes, categories, and themes through using an inductive process of data reduction, rather than applying predetermined classification of the data (Glaser 1979) (2) development of working hypothesis and assertions, and (3) analyzing the consumer's experiences with the brand, particularly, relationship establishment, augmentation, maintenance, and outcome.

To conduct grounded theory phase of this study, the multistage process was followed from the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990). The detailed procedure followed for the grounded theory approach is shown in Fig. 4.2.

Data Collection Procedure

The study participants were recruited from five different shopping malls, which are located in a metropolitan city (Hyderabad, India) by the researcher themselves. Of the 25 approached research participants, 20 become actual research participants, who informed their willingness to participate in this study. In total, the study involved 26 interviews across 20 consumers/respondents. Five of them declined to participate in this study owing to personal reasons. All the selected participants were the consumers of major brands, with an age ranging from 22 to 45, who had been buying this brand since the last 1 year. Among the 20 participants, 11 of them were males and the rest of them were females. The selected participants belong to different regions of the country, which mainly aimed to avoid culture bias in consumer's brand purchase and their relationships. The participant's educational level ranged from completion of the graduation equivalent degree to having a Ph.D. The selected respondent's purchase frequency with the brand varied from regular purchaser (more than four times in a month) to once in a month. All the consumers who were involved in this study were having an experience with the brand ranging from 1 to more than 10 years. When the prospective research participants called up and informed about their willingness to participate in this study, the researcher explained the purpose and scope of the study and also made an appointment for the initial interview. In addition, the participants were contacted before the interview and asked to select their interview place and time. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary. This was mainly carried out to avoid discomfort from the side of the respondents. During the interview, the interviewer assured that none of these participants faced any kind of distress or discomfort, before, during, or after the process. Respondent profiles are given in Table 4.1.

Sampling Procedure: Theoretical Sampling

As the primary objective of this study is to direct all data gathering efforts toward gathering information about the attitudes and behavioral dimensions of consumer–
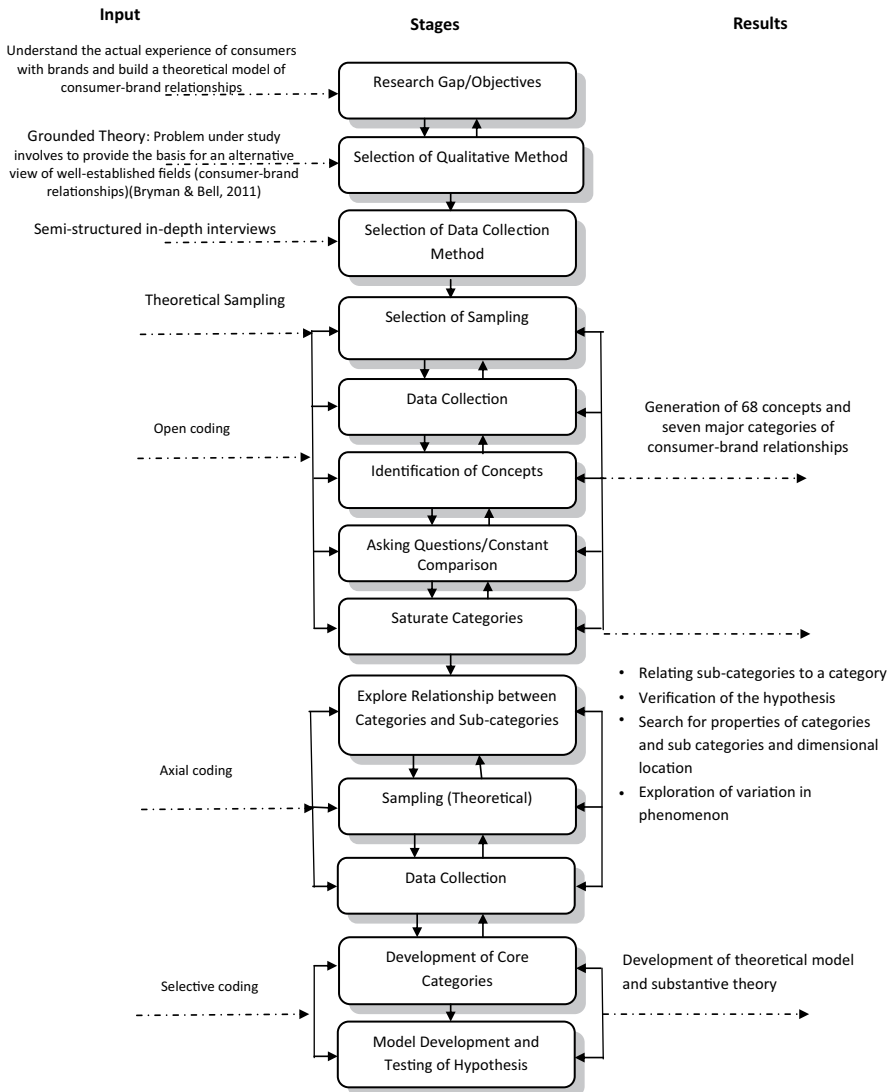
Input	Stages	Results

Understand the actual experience of consumers with brands and build a theoretical model of consumer-brand relationships ······▶ **Research Gap/Objectives**

Grounded Theory: Problem under study involves to provide the basis for an alternative view of well-established fields (consumer-brand relationships)(Bryman & Bell, 2011) ······▶ **Selection of Qualitative Method**

Semi-structured in-depth interviews ······▶ **Selection of Data Collection Method**

Theoretical Sampling ······▶ **Selection of Sampling**

Data Collection

Open coding ······▶ **Identification of Concepts** ······▶ Generation of 68 concepts and seven major categories of consumer-brand relationships

Asking Questions/Constant Comparison

Saturate Categories

Explore Relationship between Categories and Sub-categories

Axial coding ······▶ **Sampling (Theoretical)**

- Relating sub-categories to a category
- Verification of the hypothesis
- Search for properties of categories and sub categories and dimensional location
- Exploration of variation in phenomenon

Data Collection

Selective coding ······▶ **Development of Core Categories** ······▶ Development of theoretical model and substantive theory

Model Development and Testing of Hypothesis

Fig. 4.2 Grounded theory procedure

brand relationship that will best support development of the theoretical framework, therefore, the study followed a theoretical sampling procedure. In this research, the researcher during the qualitative data collection enters with the supposition that it will be an open-ended and flexible process that will likely be modified over the course of the study as the study progresses, and works to clarify, develop, and re-fine the underlying conceptual categories and conceptual scheme. In this type of

Table 4.1 Profile of respondents

Name	Age	Gender	Experience with brand (years)	Brand	Study stages
Rajeesh	28	Male	1	Samsung	1
Divya	25	Female	1.2	Tommy	1 and 2
Mittal Parik	32	Male	2	Tupperware	3
Swati Sharma	23	Female	1.2	BagIt	2
Sourabh Bhattercherjee	28	Male	7	Goldflake	1 and 2
Kartikeya Vats	23	Male	10	Nike	3
Shubhangi Bose	31	Male	4	Revlon	1 and 2
Gurveen Kaur	24	Female	1.8	Allen Solly	1
Shipra	32	Male	9	Bausch and Lomb	3
Charu Atiri	26	Female	5	Subway	1
Jayraj	36	Male	1.1	US Polo	1 and 2
Deep	33	Male	3	Budweiser	3
Naveen	31	Male	3.2	Arrow	1
Sidharth Negi	39	Male	6	Casio	3
Noel D'Souza	31	Male	1.1	Apple	1
Akshay Babbar	45	Male	2.5	Kennth Cole	1 and 3
Eureka Singh	25	Female	1.2	Zara	1
Shoaib Ahmed Khan	33	Male	1.5	HP	1
Kiran	41	Male	1.8	Puma	1
Meghna	29	Female	2.5	Esprit	1 and 2

Study stages show the stages at which the respondents were interviewed

sampling, the need for data collection is decided by the emerging theory, whereby the researcher jointly collects information and code, analyzes the information, and then progressively determines which sample and information to collect next in order to develop a theory as it emerges and the process stops at a stage where it is clear that additional interviews would yield theoretical saturation. In this research, the data collection began by interviewing a respondent from a shopping mall who had made the relationship with a mobile brand during the last 1.1 years. This initial interview helped the researcher to understand the starting point of relationship building. The researcher then interviewed another respondent to understand his attitudinal characteristics during the relationship establishment. In this fashion, the researcher gradually interviewed 20 different individuals from five different shopping centers, some of them repeatedly, to understand the real process of brand relationships. The sampling process stopped when the researcher was convinced by the fact that there was no additional information from the next respondent (called as theoretical saturation). This sampling process helped the researcher to explore and integrate the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships and to establish the theoretical framework.

Role of Researcher in Grounded Theory Study

Different from other qualitative research approaches, the role of researcher in grounded theory studies are different. The grounded theory studies require him or her (researcher) to be deeply engaged in the process and extract meaning from the research (Creswell 1998). In this study, in all phases of the research process, the researcher was actively involved, such as in-depth interview questionnaire protocol preparation and its modification, interviewing, and analysis of interview information. The researcher also played an active role in all the other related activities, such as confirmation of interviewee participation, audio taping, transcribing, and preparation of the field notes and the report.

   The initial questionnaire protocol developed by the researcher was a mere starting point of generating information. Through engaging the participant during the interview process, the researcher developed more questions and modified the initial version. This process of gradual modification helped the researcher to understand diversified approaches to consumer–brand relationships. As a result, this study was designed in such a way that the participants work as coresearchers to explore the central research questions. This made the research process as a circular process that is interactive and conversational. It is also essential for the grounded theorists to work as an active by a neutral listener to the given information during the interview process. Graham (2006) believed that it is essential for the researcher to play the role of an "An active by neutral listener, who listens deeply and carefully to the perspectives offered by the participants… and look for themes as they emerge" (p. 74). The researcher in this study played the role of an active by neutral listener through writing down the field notes, participant's emotional and nonemotional changes during their interview, and probed during it only if required desperately. This helped the researcher to be free from researcher bias and get free and true interview participation.

Data Collection Procedures in the Grounded Theory Study

In total, the study conducted 26 open-ended semistructured in-depth interviews using 20 research participants. The durations of these interviews were ranging from 60 to 90 min. These semistructured in-depth interviews aimed at the exploration and understanding about the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships, as well as the integration of these dimensions and thereby form a theoretical model of consumer–brand relationships. The tentative initial in-depth interview protocol was composed of several sections. These are questions based on relationship establishment, augmentation, and maintenance. Specifically, the questionnaire protocol composed of the questions related to the starting point of relationship building, evaluative aspect before and after relationship identification, affective aspect, intentional aspect, and outcome of consumer–brand relationships. In addition, the researcher collected the information about the type of respondent's

relationship with brands, the reason behind this relationship, and the specialty of the relationship partner (brand).

The in-depth interviews start with some informal questions (warm-up questions). As the study followed theoretical sampling, data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously. This simultaneous data collection and analysis helped the researcher to generate the questions instantaneously and the modification of the protocol. This process of protocol modification helped the researcher to get more insights about the problem. The analysis process involves utilizing particular coding procedures, such as open, axial, and selective coding, it normally begins with open coding.

During data collection, the respondents were asked to talk about their experience with the brand. These questions were intended to uncover attitude formation, attempting to explore how and what was the starting point of relationship establishment. The respondents were also probed about the kind of evaluation they had about the brand during their starting point of relationship formation. Participants were also probed to talk about their affective and emotional feeling with the particular brand and also the respective thoughts and feelings about the specified brand. During the interview, once the interviewer found support for some of the dimensions of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, then the questions were directed toward these dimensions to understand more about these dimensions. The questions were also asked aiming to identify their intentional aspect of the relationship. During the interview, attempts were also made to provide the respondents with a distinct voice, which mainly enable him/her to explain feelings and affections in detail about the brand. All the interviews were conducted in a naturalistic setting and this approach helped the researcher to understand the process of relationship building in a context-specific (brand) setting. To illustrate the views in good clarity, the respondents were motivated to draw on their personal experiences and those of their friends. In all the interviews, the information was recorded and later transcribed for further analysis. The data collection processes for in-depth interviews lasted around 5 months. The detailed questionnaire protocol for semistructured in-depth interviews are provided in Appendix 1.

Data Coding and Analysis in Grounded Theory

After the completion of each interview, the collected information was transcribed and analyzed to facilitate theoretical sampling, which is in line with grounded theory procedure proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Two independent coders analyzed the transcripts on a sentence-by-sentence basis and coded the transcripts using three different types of coding procedure proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), open, axial, and selective coding.

During the first phase of coding process, the study applied an open coding technique, which simultaneously happened to data collection. In this stage, these two

coders independently broke down all the information in the transcripts into different categories of related incidents, ideas, events, and acts and then assigned a label/name/code into it. This process associated with early stage of concept development. In addition to this initial coding process, the study also incorporated the memos, which help to reorientate the researcher at a later date. After the completion of this open coding, the coders met to compare the codes. To analyze the intercoder agreement, the study used qualitative data analysis software named QDA Miner 4.1. Using this software program, the study analyzed the intercoder reliability or intercoder agreement of coding process. The areas in which discrepancies occurred were modified or reassigned after reading the theoretical memos. This helped the coding process not only to assure consistency, but also confirmed the coding as unbiased and emerged from logical thought process. In the second stage of coding process, the study conducted an axial coding procedure. At this stage, a detailed content analysis was carried out around the categories (one at a time) of open coding. The sole objective of axial coding is to get the resembling information that was fractured during the first phase of coding. During the axial coding stage, the contents that related to each other were combined in order to form dense, more abstract, and well-developed categories. In the third stage of coding, the study applied a selective coding procedure. In this stage, the categories were refined, modified, and integrated to from new or core-level categories. This stage was carried out to generate the core categories of interest and theoretical model of consumer–brand relationships, which is very essential for further research.

Reliability and Validity

The study followed the criteria proposed by Flint et al. (2002) for the assessment of trustworthiness of qualitative phase. Table 4.2 gives a detailed picture about the assessment of reliability and validity confirmation.

Section Summary

This section of the chapter presented a detailed overview of the research methodology that was used to refine, verify, and develop the conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships. This included the choice of using the qualitative research paradigm as the appropriate research approach for conceptualization of theoretical constructs. Moreover, this chapter emphasized the use of grounded theory approach as the most suitable and appropriate qualitative approach for the concept exploration, integration, and the theoretical model building. It also provided context to the choice and process of grounded theory approach. Each of the sections presented in this chapter justifies the details of the participants, procedure, sampling, data

Table 4.2 Reliability and validity confirmation of qualitative research

Reliability and validity criteria dimensions	Mode of reliability and validity confirmation
Credibility: The rate at which the results generated seems to be a better representation of data	Five months for conducting in-depth interviews. Detailed summary of initial interpretation was given to participants for feedback
Transferability: Extent to which findings would be applied in other contexts	Use of theoretical sampling
Dependability: The extent to which findings are stable and consistent	Found stability in participants opinion about the phenomenon regardless of changes occurred
Confirmability: The extent to which the interpretations generated from the phenomenon are from participants and free from researcher biases	Two persons were actively involved as auditors
Fit: Extent to which finding matches with the study under investigation	Satisfied through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and concepts were more deeply described
Understanding: The rate at which the respondents believe the results generated are their real-world representations	Results generated were submitted to the participants and confirmed that it would reflect their opinions
Generality: Extent to which findings capture multiple aspect of a phenomenon	Interviews were lengthy to capture multiple aspects of the phenomenon
Integrity: Extent to which interpretations are influenced by participants' unwillingness and misinformation	All the interviews were conducted in professional and nonthreatening way

collection, data coding and analysis, and confirmation of reliability and validity. The next section (Sect. 2) presents a detailed overview of the quantitative methodology, which is mainly used for empirical model testing and model validation.

Part II: Model Validation and Testing through Quantitative Study

This section is a continuation of research methodology discussed in the previous section (Part I), wherein the study discussed about the qualitative methodology for model conceptualization using grounded theory approach. This section (Part II) continues with rigor and sequence through following a quantitative approach, which aimed to validate and test the proposed conceptual model statistics. As the study follows the mix of qualitative and quantitative methodology paradigm and these two approaches are applied in sequence (qualitative first and quantitative later) in which quantitative research design dominates over the qualitative approach, and then the design used is named as fully mixed sequential dominant status research design.

Constructs

During the study, the qualitative stage identified seven different attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships. After the exploration of these dimensions, the study developed propositions through linking the dimensions. For operationlizing these dimensions, the study adopted the measures from past literature. In the brand attitude strength paradigm, the proposed study considers the works of Abelson (1995), Fazio (1995), Gross et al. (1995), and Krosnsick and Petty (1995) and models as an exogenous variable to four different constructs like brand satisfaction, trust, attachment, and commitment. In the brand satisfaction paradigm, the study considered the works of Sung and Sejung (2010) and models it as an endogenous variable to brand attitude strength and exogenous variable to brand trust and attachment. In the brand attachment paradigm, the proposed study considers the work of Park et al. (2010), models as mediating variable between brand attitude strength and brand commitment; brand satisfaction and brand loyalty; and brand attitude strength and brand loyalty. In the proposition development phase, the proposed study takes the construct brand trust from the works of Moorman et al. (1993) and Morgan and Hunt (1994), and models it as a mediating variable between brand attitude strength and brand attachment; brand satisfaction and attachment; brand attitude strength and brand equity; and brand attitude strength and brand commitment. The brand commitment paradigm, which is mainly from Bansal et al. (2004) and Morgan and Hunt (1994), models it as an endogenous variable to brand trust and brand attachment. Brand equity paradigm, which is mainly from Yoo and Donthu (2001), models the proposition as an exogenous variable to brand loyalty and endogenous variable to brand trust and brand commitment. Finally, brand loyalty, which is the higher-order endogenous variable, is from Tsai (2011) and considers as the major outcome of brand equity.

Instrument Development

The survey questions for the proposed study were developed based on the extant literature and extensive personal communications with leading researchers in the field of brand management. The study used the instrument, which includes items to measure all the constructs used in the theoretical model developed, during the qualitative phase. All the items used in this study were measured in 7-point Likert-type scales, as in line with previous literature, anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree and other bipolar adjectives.

The items for brand attitude strength adapted from Kim et al. (2008), range from 1=very positive to 7=very negative; 1=not very certain to 7=very certain; 1=not very important to very important; 1=not very knowledgeable to 7=very knowledgeable. The brand satisfaction scale taken from Anderson et al. (1994), ranges from 1=totally disagree to 7=totally agree. Building on brand attachment literature, brand attachment measurement has been taken from Park et al. (2010) with an-

chors of 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Four items scale for brand trust is adapted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), rating of 1=totally disagree to 7=totally agree. The brand commitment has been taken from Tsai (2011), anchored on a scale of 1=totally disagree and 7=totally agree. Four items on the brand equity scale are taken from Yoo and Donthu (2001), anchored from 1=totally disagree and 7=totally agree. Brand loyalty measurement is taken from Bloemer and Kaspers (1995), anchored from 1=totally disagree to 7=totally agree. See Appendix 2 for detailed understanding of measurement items.

Product Category

To select the appropriate product category, the proposed study carried out a pretest using 30 actual consumers from a shopping mall. Participants were instructed that there would be two major tasks that needed to be completed. First, they were instructed to list the top five product categories they preferred and were familiar with, which aimed to understand consumers' familiarity with the product category. This was done in order to select the specific product category to be employed during actual data collection, which was having high familiarity among respondents. Once the respondent selected five major product categories according to their preference, in the second stage, the selected product categories were then given a score and assigned a ranking (from highest to the lowest) based on their familiarity. According to the pretest results, the most familiar product categories were apparels, laptops, and automobiles. The quantitative phase of this study designed the final version of the questionnaire based on these three product categories as the study stimuli.

Data Collection

The ultimate goal of this phase of research is to understand how attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships work as an integrative mechanism to build consumer–brand relationships in Indian context. Therefore, the target population of this phase of the study consists of all consumers/customers who visit the shopping malls in one of the metropolitan cities (Hyderabad, India) during the 3-month survey period. The city has been well recognized for its financial, commercial, and industrial activities. The city has a population of 7,749,334 making it the fourth most populous city in India[3].

The empirical testing and validation of this study was conducted based on the data collected from five large shopping centers located in Hyderabad City through mall-intercept interviews. These shopping centers were chosen as survey sites because these are the places considered to be five best shopping centers in Hyderabad.[4]

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[3] Government of India 2011 census.

[4] http://www.hyderabad-ap.blogspot.in/2009/07/top-5-best-malls-of-hyderabad_15.html

The study applied a random selection procedure whereby interviewers walked from an exit door to exit door consecutively, aimed to approach the next shopper as and when he or she exited the mall (Sudman 1980). The survey was conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. over a 3-week period, including two weekends (covering both the busy days and the slower ones). In total, the study collected responses from 501 respondents. These respondents answered the questions once they chose their most favorite brand from any of the three selected product categories. The condition was that they were the regular users of that particular brand for at least last 1 year. During the data collection, it was found that only 475 responses were useful and others were omitted from the study owing to the incompleteness of information.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of the descriptive phase of the study is divided into two stages. First, the study carried out a pretesting of the measures followed by model calibration analysis using 250 randomly selected respondents. In the second stage, a model validation analysis was carried out using remaining 225 samples. These two stages of the study were conducted in sequential order. Such a framework helps to explore and verify the model feasibility and its generalizability.

After the finalization of the measures for measuring the proposed constructs, the study conducted an initial exploration, which was aimed at finalizing the questionnaire. The study conducted this questionnaire finalization procedure through a small-scale pretest. In this preliminary pretest, the study invited 30 management students who specialized in the field of marketing and asked to review and pretest the instrument. The respondents were presented with the questionnaire and asked to analyze the questionnaire, which included the measures of all the seven dimensions, and later the one-to-one interview with the respondents helped to understand the problems associated with the form, content, layout and wording of the questionnaire. After the pretest, based on the respondents' feedback regarding the items that seemed repetitive and words they did not understand, the measures were modified or edited for clarity, wording, and layout. The revised items were incorporated into the final instrument, which would include the measures designed to capture brand attitude strength, brand satisfaction, brand attachment, brand commitment, brand trust, brand equity, and brand loyalty.

Following the pretest, the study conducted the model testing and validation. In this stage, the total sample is divided into two parts; calibration sample and validation sample. The model calibration was aimed to establish the reliability and validity of the scale and to confirm the causal path pattern of the proposed model. The validation sample was used to test the validity of the derived model. During the model calibration, the study also conducted cross-validation through conceptualizing different alternative models based on theory. This process helped the researcher to undertake a cross-validation analysis. Such an analysis is necessary if the researcher wants to select the best model among a set of alternative models. Since

the model that fits best in a given sample is not necessarily the model with the best cross-validity, especially when the sample size is not large (McCallum et al. 1994).

In the model validation phase, the study examined the extent to which the proposed model replicates in samples other than the one on which it was derived using another set of samples (225 samples) called validation sample. The data collection procedure was same as calibration phase.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the measurement scale was examined using Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha using IBM SPSS 20.0. The study first confirmed the reliability of the scale as per the suggestion given by Nunnally (1967). Validity checks of the measured constructs were carried out through the confirmation of discriminant and convergent validity using LISREL 8.72. The discriminant validity of the measured constructs was performed using an approach suggested by Joreskog (1971). For each pair of constructs, the discriminant validity is achieved in two stages. In the first stage, the correlation between the two constructs is constrained (fixed as one). In the second stage, these two constructs are allowed to correlate freely (unconstrained). After the completion of these two stages, the X^2 difference of these two models (constrained and unconstrained) is obtained. The significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained model proved that the constructs are not perfectly correlated and that discriminant validity is achieved. Convergent validity of the constructs was confirmed through the suggestion given by Hair et al. (2010). For assessing convergent validity, the proposed study checked the values of standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and construct reliability (CR).
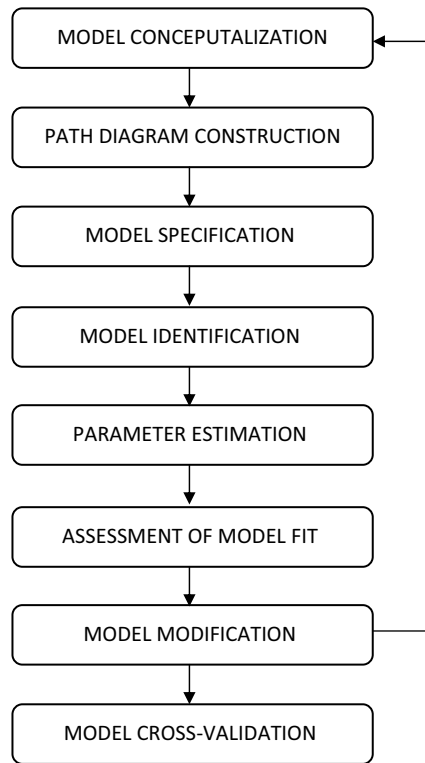
SEM: Steps in LISREL Modeling

The study followed the steps proposed by Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000) for the assessment of LISREL Modeling. The steps are given in Fig. 4.3.

Model Conceptualization

Stage 1 focuses on model conceptualization, which is concerned with the development of theory-based hypotheses to serve as the guide for linking the latent variables to each other and to their corresponding indicators. Hair et al. (1998) stated that the strength and conviction with which the researcher can assume the relationship, particularly the causation between two constructs depends, does not lie in the analytical methods chosen but with the theoretical justification to support the analysis. This stage of model conceptualization reflects the researchers' educated perception of the way in which the latent variables are related together based upon the theory and the literature. In this study, Chap. 3 presents in detail about the genera-

Fig. 4.3 Sequential steps in
LISREL modeling

MODEL CONCEPUTALIZATION

PATH DIAGRAM CONSTRUCTION

MODEL SPECIFICATION

MODEL IDENTIFICATION

PARAMETER ESTIMATION

ASSESSMENT OF MODEL FIT

MODEL MODIFICATION

MODEL CROSS-VALIDATION

tion of constructs and their interrelationships and testing through a qualitative study. In Chap. 3, the study further went beyond the exploration of the dimensions and looked at the existing literature in those areas wherein these constructs were widely used, identified the interrelationships, and formulated the hypotheses accordingly.

Path Diagram Construction

Step 2 allows the researcher to visually represent the substantive (theoretical) hypotheses and measurement scheme. In this stage, all the predictions and associative relationships among latent variables and observed variables are presented with arrows. In SEM, all the constructs belong to two general categories: exogenous and endogenous. Exogenous constructs are called KSI's (denoted by the Greek letter ξ), are independent variables, and not caused or predicted by any other variables in the model. Endogenous latent variables are known as ETA's (denoted by the Greek letter η), are dependent variables, are predicted by other constructs in the theoretical model. In this study, Fig. 4.4 presented the Full Path Diagram Portrayal with LISREL Notations, in which one variable (brand attitude strength) as exogenous and others as endogenous ones.
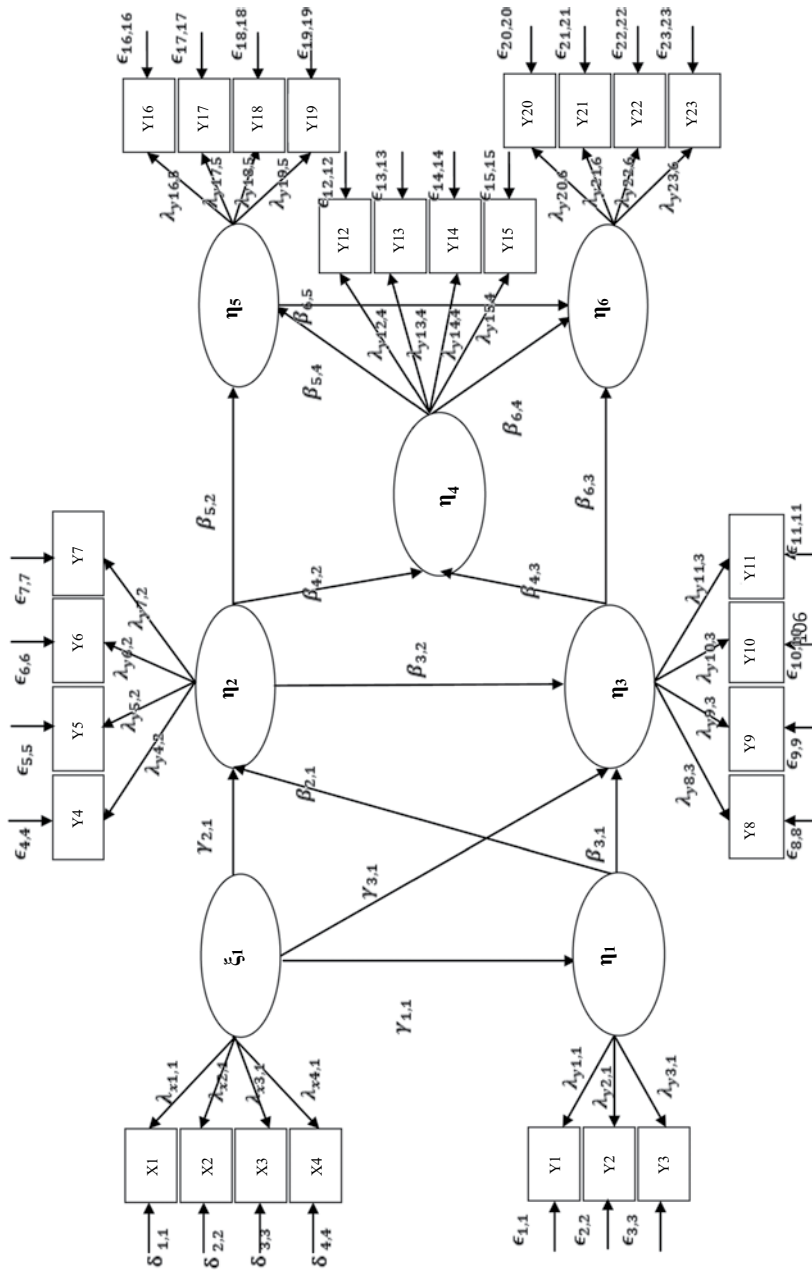
Fig. 4.4 Full path diagram portrayal with LISREL notations

The generally used representations in LISREL Modeling are listed below:

ξ: Exogenous latent variable (attitude strength) and X1…..X4: Observed measure associated with attitude strength.

$\lambda_{x1,1}$…..$\lambda_{x4,1}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous latent variable (ξ) and a corresponding observed variable (X), often referred to as a factor loading.

$\delta_{1,1}$…. $\delta_{4,4}$: Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (X) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the exogenous side.

η_1: Endogenous latent variable (brand satisfaction)

η_2: Endogenous latent variable (brand trust)

η_3: Endogenous latent variable (brand attachment)

η_4: Endogenous latent variable (brand commitment)

η_5: Endogenous latent variable (brand equity)

η_6: Endogenous latent variable (brand loyalty)

Y1…..Y23: Observed measure associated with endogenous latent variables

$\lambda_{y1,1}$…….. $\lambda_{y23,6}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an endogenous latent variable (η) and a corresponding observed variable (Y)—often referred to as a factor loading.

$\varepsilon_{1,1}$…….. $\varepsilon_{23,23}$: Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (Y) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the endogenous side.

γ: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous variable (ξ) and an endogenous variables (η). β: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between two endogenous variables (η).

Model Specification

In this stage, the relationship depicted in the path diagrams is now translated into a system of linear equations that link the constructs and define the measurement model. This step of specification of model is necessary for identification and estimation purposes that confirm the instructions are entered into the input file of the LISREL program. At a basic level, the formation representation of the model can be represented in two ways: structural equations and measurement equations. In the structural equation, each endogenous variable (η) could be predicted by exogenous variable(s) (ξ), or by other endogenous variable(s). For each hypothesized effect, a structural coefficient (γ or β) was estimated. Also, an error term (ζ) was included for each equation, representing the sum of the effects owing to specification error and random measurement error. Table 4.3 shows the details of structural equations.

Measurement model represents the operationalization of latent constructs through the observed or manifest variables. It is considered that the foundation of measurement modeling is quite analogous to factor analysis. In this modeling, the factors are named as latent variables and the individual items as observed variables or indicators. In this study, the exogenous construct, attitude strength was measured using four observed variables. The five other endogenous constructs altogether

Table 4.3 Structural model equations for path diagram

Endogenous	Exogenous	Endogenous					Error
	Attitude strength ξ	η_1	η_2	η_3	η_4	η_5	
η_1 Brand satisfaction =							ζ_1
η_2 Brand trust =	$\beta_{4,2}\eta_2 + \beta_{4,3}\eta_3$						ζ_2
η_3 Brand attachment =							ζ_3
η_4 Brand committment =	$\beta_{5,2}\eta_2 + \beta_{5,4}\eta_4$						ζ_4
η_1 Brand equity =							ζ_5
η_1 Brand loyalty =	$\beta_{6,3}\eta_3 + \beta_{6,4}\eta_4 + \beta_{6,5}\eta_5$						ζ_6

were measured by 23 indicators or observed variables. The LISREL representation for measurement modeling is shown in Table 4.3.

Model Identification

In the stage of model identification, the researcher examines whether the information provided by the data is sufficient enough to estimate parameter. If the model is not properly identified, then it is not possible to estimate the parameters. A precondition for identification is that the number of knowns should be greater than the number of unknowns (Maruyama 1998).

There are two basic rules or conditions that have been widely discussed in the SEM literature in association with a model identification problem: rank and order condition. The rank condition is considered to be necessary as well as a sufficient for model identification. In this condition, the researcher should algebraically examine whether the parameter is uniquely estimated or not. Two widely accepted heuristics are available to verify this condition. First, three indicator rule: each construct in the model should have at least three or more indicators, then that model will be an identified one. Second, the recursive model rule: recursive model with identified constructs (three or more manifest variables) will always be identified.

It is considered that order condition is necessary but not sufficient for identification. The order condition specifies that the model's degrees of freedom must be equal (just identified) or greater than zero (overidentified). A model is just identified when a single unique solution is obtained for the parameter estimates (in such cases, the model degree of freedom is equal to zero). A model is overidentified when more than one estimate of each parameter can be obtained (in such cases, the model degree of freedom is positive). A good SEM looks at an overidentified model. In the consecutive chapters, the study will analyze the identification of the model.

Parameter Estimation

Once the model is properly identified, then one can go ahead with parameter estimation. At this stage, one should decide about the type of input matrix used and the

Table 4.4 Measurement model equations for path diagram

Exogenous Indicators(X)	Exogenous Construct	Error
X1	$=\lambda_{X1,1}\xi_1$	$+\delta_{1,1}$
X2	$=\lambda_{X2,1}\xi_1$	$+\delta_{2,2}$
X3	$=\lambda_{X3,1}\xi_1$	$+\delta_{3,3}$
X4	$=\lambda_{X4,1}\xi_1$	$+\delta_{4,4}$
Endogenous Indicators(Y)	Endogenous Construct	Error
Y1	$=\lambda_{Y1,1}\eta_1$	$+\varepsilon_{1,1}$
Y2	$=\lambda_{Y2,1}\eta_1$	$+\varepsilon_{2,2}$
Y3	$=\lambda_{Y3,1}\eta_1$	$+\varepsilon_{3,3}$
Y4	$=\lambda_{Y4,2}\eta_2$	$+\varepsilon_{4,4}$
Y5	$=\lambda_{Y5,2}\eta_2$	$+\varepsilon_{5,5}$
Y6	$=\lambda_{Y6,2}\eta_2$	$+\varepsilon_{6,6}$
Y7	$=\lambda_{Y7,2}\eta_2$	$+\varepsilon_{7,7}$
Y8	$=\lambda_{Y8,3}\eta_3$	$+\varepsilon_{8,8}$
Y9	$=\lambda_{Y9,3}\eta_3$	$+\varepsilon_{9,9}$
Y10	$=\lambda_{Y10,3}\eta_3$	$+\varepsilon_{10,10}$
Y11	$=\lambda_{Y11,3}\eta_3$	$+\varepsilon_{11,11}$
Y12	$=\lambda_{Y12,4}\eta_4$	$+\varepsilon_{12,12}$
Y13	$=\lambda_{Y13,4}\eta_4$	$+\varepsilon_{13,13}$
Y14	$=\lambda_{Y14,4}\eta_4$	$+\varepsilon_{14,14}$
Y15	$=\lambda_{Y15,4}\eta_4$	$+\varepsilon_{15,15}$
Y16	$=\lambda_{Y16,5}\eta_5$	$+\varepsilon_{16,16}$
Y17	$=\lambda_{Y17,5}\eta_5$	$+\varepsilon_{17,17}$
Y18	$=\lambda_{Y18,5}\eta_5$	$+\varepsilon_{18,18}$
Y19	$=\lambda_{Y19,5}\eta_5$	$+\varepsilon_{19,19}$
Y20	$=\lambda_{Y20,6}\eta_6$	$+\varepsilon_{20,20}$
Y21	$=\lambda_{Y21,6}\eta_6$	$+\varepsilon_{21,21}$
Y22	$=\lambda_{Y22,6}\eta_6$	$+\varepsilon_{22,22}$
Y23	$=\lambda_{Y23,6}\eta_6$	$+\varepsilon_{23,23}$

selection of the estimation procedure. The covariance matrix is considered to be appropriate compared with correlation matrix when the problem in hand is model testing. As the study objective is more of model testing, it has been decided to use a covariance matrix as the input matrix. There are several options available in LIS-REL for the estimation procedure, among them Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) is the most generally accepted procedures. This study used MLE to estimate the parameter estimates. The details of which are presented in the next chapter.

Assessment of Model Fit

In this stage of model fit assessment, researchers examine different fit indices that generates while running LISREL, which confirms the extent to which the implied covariance matrix is equivalent to the observed covariance matrix. These fit indices allow the researcher to confirm the quality and soundness of the measurement and structural parts of the model in terms of supporting the operationlization and

theory-based hypotheses. In Chap. 5, the study will present the details of this model fit indices.

Model Modification

In the light of the results obtained in the previous stage, the study should modify or make alternations to the base based upon theory. In this stage, the basic thing to remember is that these model modifications are made to the model based upon the theory and guard against the temptation of making data-driven modifications just to get a model that fits the data better. In Chap. 5, the study analyzed the alternative models, which were driven by theory and compared these alternative models with the hypothesized model.

Model Cross-Validation

Model cross-validation is the final stage of LISREL modeling. This stage involves fitting the model to a fresh data set (called the validation sample). This sample can also be obtained through using a split-sampling approach, in which the total sample is divided into two parts, first part can be used for model development and its modification (calibration sample) and the second part can be used for validation purpose or model testing (validation sample). Under no circumstances, the same sample data set is used for both model development and testing. Chapter 5 presented in detail these model calibration and model validation process.

Section Summary

The section of this chapter describes the quantitative methodology, which elaborates the construct and instrument used to measure the construct, data collection, sampling, and plan for data analysis, which includes the use of SEM as the appropriate technique. Next chapter, Chap. 5, presents the analysis and results, focusing specifically on the identification of consumer–brand relationship concepts, its refinement, verification, the development of a theoretical model, and finally its empirical testing and validation.

Chapter 5
Analysis and Results

This study used a sequential dominant status mixed method design to explore, build, and test an exclusive model of consumer–brand relationships. As part assessing the study objectives, this chapter explains the data analysis and its results. The analysis and results of the study are divided into two major sections. The first section examines the results of the grounded theory approach used in this study, wherein presented a conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships. The second section presents the results of structural equation modeling (SEM) in which the conceptual model has been tested and validated statistically. This research is guided by the following three research questions, therefore the analyses have been carried out viz-a-viz with these research questions:

1   Is the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral components for the conceptualization of the consumer–brand relationships being really meaningful?
2   What are the underlying attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships? Is behavioral relationship really influenced by attitudinal relationship?
3   By operationlizing consumer–brand relationships through integrating the attitudinal and behavioral aspects, does the empirical testing of new consumer–brand relationship model truly advance the understanding of consumers' deep-rooted bond with brands?

Section I: Conceptual Model Development: Qualitative Exploration

In this section, the data analysis is divided into three major parts. First, the study presents the results of open coding, wherein the researcher followed a computer-aided data analysis using QDA Miner 4.20 software to help the process of qualitative data analysis, through coding, generation of categories, exploration of the frequencies of codes, and its visual representation. Second, the study introduces the axial coding process, in which data are put back together in new ways after open

coding, by making connection between categories. During the third phase, a selective coding was applied, in which the relating of categories to the core category was done and the theoretical model introduced. These stages are explained in detail in the following sections.

Stage 1: Discovering Concepts and Categories

During this phase, 14 semistructured interviews were undertaken using 14 consumers of the study sample. From this conceptualization, 68 unique concepts or codes were generated. During the second part of categorization, the 68 concepts were grouped through constant comparison of concepts, like with like, to reduce the number of concepts. This led to the formation of seven major categories. Finally, the researchers found that the categories were saturated since no new codes were emerging. The result of this phase led to the generation of four core categories, seven categories, and 68 subcategories. The complete list of core categories, categories, and subcategories identified by the study are shown in Table 5.1.

Stage 2: Provisional Hypotheses Formulation

An axial coding procedure was undertaken at this stage. Four analytical steps were applied simultaneously as follows: (1) relating subcategories to a category using statements, which denote the relationships between themselves and the phenomenon; (2) the verification of these hypotheses against actual data; (3) identification of properties of categories and its subcategories; and (4) linking categories at the dimensional level. During the analysis, it was found that at dimensional level there were four major categories. In all these four stages, there emerged seven forms of CBR, which were interrelated to each other.

The ongoing and simultaneous data collection and analysis (stages 1 and 2) allowed categories and subcategories to emerge out of data and facilitated the establishment of a number of provisional hypotheses. It has been stated that the development of these kinds of provisional hypotheses is the main output of a grounded theory study (Seaman and Basili 1997). Table 5.2 explains the provisional hypotheses, which explains how categories and subcategories were linked during the coding process.

Stage 3: Hypotheses Testing and Theoretical Model Development

In short, the previous stage of axial coding proposed the sequential stages of consumer–brand relationships and specified the linkages between the constructs explored during the analysis. The network of relationships identified during axial coding is considered to be loose and tangled (Strauss and Corbin 1994). This was

Table 5.1 List of codes and categories

Core category	Category	Subcategory
Relationship establishment	Attitude strength	Brand knowledgeability, confidence about the performance in the future, comfortable and easily available, importance of the brand, positive quality evaluation, started accidently and was appealing
	Brand satisfaction	The brand offers more than the expectation, happiness, purchase satisfaction, immense satisfaction, satisfaction with quality and price, satisfaction with the usage of the brand
Relationship augmentation	Brand attachment	Associating with brand, best friend, best companion, brand is a kind of identity, brand is a part of the family, correlate with the brand and person, emotional attachment, feel close to the brand, feeling possessiveness, love toward the brand, make sense to buy it again, matching personality, memories about the brand, passionate about the brand, personal connection with brand, positive feelings, serious and intimate, something special, something that suits, reflection of personality, remembrance, emotional quotient, like a mate, brand shows personality, something special, want to hug it, bonding
	Brand trust	Confidence about the brand, high faith, nothing gone bad till date, reliable and global, brand credibility, secure, trustworthiness, consistency in performance, keeping the promises
Relationship maintenance	Brand commitment	Brand as a future option, intention to purchase different varieties of the brand, intention to buy, decides to stick with the brand, like to stick to the brand
Relationship outcome	Brand loyalty	Brand recommendation, long-lasting relationship, everlasting, loyal and consistent, purchase of every product variety of the brand, repeated buying
	Brand equity	A differential effect, which others can't provide, always prefer brand irrespective of competitor brand is the first preferred one, brand matters most, gives a punch, which other brands don't, knowledge of everything about the brand, substitutes can't compensate the brand, brand is a synonym for the product, brand is more important

tackled and sorted out during the selective coding stage. This stage of selective coding phase involved six semistructured in-depth interviews using six consumers. During this stage, the interview questions were primarily developed from the previous stage (stage 2) and its provisional hypotheses. In this stage, the patterns were identified and the data were grouped to achieve theoretical specificity. This process helped the researchers to understand the conditions leading to the formation of CBR. This phase also helped to test the provisional hypotheses and develop a preliminary model of consumer–brand relationships. The core category, categories, subcategories, and their various relationships were then combined to form a theoretical framework shown in Fig. 5.1.

In the selective coding phase, the concepts identified in stages 1 and 2 were combined to create the phenomenon of consumer–brand relationships as a set of four

Table 5.2 Provisional
hypotheses

Number	Hypotheses
H1	A consumer–brand relationship starts with brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction, in which consumers use cognitive resources for information processing
H2	A consumer–brand relationship will be augmented through brand trust and brand attachment, in which consumers would use affective resources for information processing
H3	A consumer–brand relationship will be maintained through brand commitment, in which consumers would use conative resources for information processing
H4	A consumer–brand relationship outcome will be generated through brand equity and brand loyalty, in which consumers would perform the action or behavioral part of relationships

stages. These were: (1) the relationship establishment stage in the cognitive context; (2) the relationship augmentation stage in the affective context; (3) the relationship maintenance stage in the conative context; and (4) the relationship outcomes stage in the action context.

The data analysis showed that during the relationship establishment stage, cognitive aspect of CBR would play a major role. Consumer's brand relationships during this stage were derived from current or previous knowledge, interaction with the brand, and information about the brand from other sources. The majority of the respondents stated that their relationship during this stage (establishment stage) would develop though their evaluation and comparison between their preferred brands with its alternatives based on their earlier interaction or reference. It was also evident from the analysis that CBR during the cognitive context mainly consisted of: (a) attitude strength, (composed of the valence and strength of the attitude toward the brand) and (b) satisfaction from the brand, in which consumer assesses the performance of the brand in terms of their expectations. It was also evident during the analysis that the consumer relationship during this context was weak and shallow.

The second core dimension of consumer–brand relationshipswas the relationship augmentation stage. This was a deeper sense of CBR in the affective context. At this phase, CBR is related to trustworthiness, self-connection and prominence about the brand. In this regard, analysis showed that the second phase of relationship augmentation involved brand trustand brand attachment.

Nonetheless, consumer–brand relationshipswere not sufficiently stable in the affective stage. It could be influenced by various deteriorations, mainly caused by the attractiveness of competitive offerings.

Thus, the CBR maintenance would happen in conative context, in which consumers showed their intention or commitment to achieve a goal related to the brand in a particular manner. It was also found that consumers build a deeper level of relationships with brands compared to the former stages.
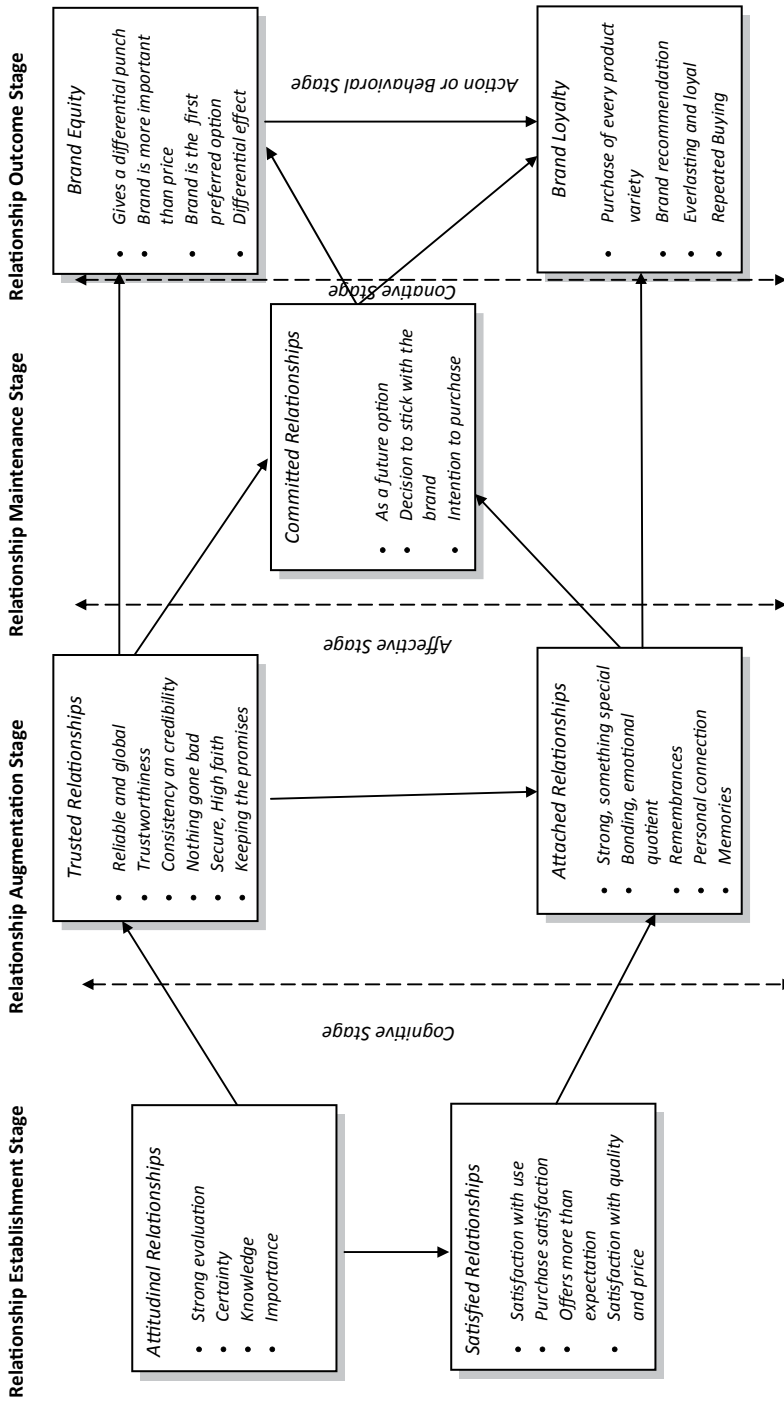
Fig. 5.1 Theoretical model of consumer–brand relationships

To complete the CBR sequence, the analysis went beyond the assessment of these three contexts, namely cognitive, affective, and conative. The results support the fact that the outcome phase of relationship happens only in action context. In other words, the consumers first develop cognitive brand relationships with brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction, then affective relationships, with brand trustand brand attachment, then conative brand relationships with deeply held commitment and intention to buy, and finally action part of relationships overcoming obstacles to achieve the action with brand equity and loyalty. The following subsections will present these findings in detail.

Relationship Establishment Stage: Brand Attitude Strength and Brand Satisfaction

Two types of relationships emerged from the data: (1) attitudinal relationship and (2) satisfied relationshipwhen consumers elaborated on relationship establishment. Attitudinal relationships could be further subdivided into two parts. First was a positive evaluation toward the brand. This was evident from a respondent, who opined,

> Initially when I bought this brand I didn't know about its performance because it was still in the testing period, I came to know about the performance of the brand from my friends. The first watch that I got of this company (brand) is still with me and I have got it repaired just once in 10 years. So the quality aspect is very good and it has this pick up service as any no other brand could provide. Design, Ease of carry, how well as you can relate to your personality and other add on features it can give are the differentiating aspects of this brand. Even a Rs. 500 watch can give you time, or satisfy your needs, but if the company can surprise you with a brand which you can never imagine with a watch, it would act as a major hold on for me.

The second was the strength of the evaluation. This aspect of attitude related to seeking more information about the brand and develop more confidence. Several respondents reported the strength dimensions: such as certainty, knowledge, and importance. For example,

> My friend suggested this brand, it helped me to develop a positive attitude and confidence that since I am travelling and live in a hostel, it's a quick snack and better than brands like McDonalds because its oil free, good for health, and known for customization.

The role of strength dimension was also clear in their knowledge, in which the amount of information about the brand that accompanies one's attitude toward it was always recalled and assessed by knowledge parameters. It was also evident from the conversation that the importance consumers personally attached to a brand also played a crucial role in relationship establishment and the strength-related aspects of attitude are antecedents to brand satisfactionand brand trust.

The majority of the participants frequently mentioned their relationship to be satisfied when the interviewer asked to describe the type of relationship. However, detailed probing on the same brought out the exact nature of the relationship. Participants stated that satisfaction comes when performance of the brand meets their expectations and this satisfaction is a motivating factor behind brand attachment.

> First of all satisfaction comes when you do what you really want to do. This is because everything is just so simple from making calls to surfing the net. Even if any message comes you don't have to unlock your phone, the message just gets flashed on your screen. It's simple, easy and its operations are too smooth hence I attached using iPhone or iPod.

From the answers, it was evident that satisfaction was a prerequisite for relationship augmentation and maintenance.

Relationship Augmentation Stage: Brand Trust and Brand Attachment

Respondents opined that trustworthiness of a brand was very important in building CBR. Trustworthiness as per the respondents was the confidence that the brand (product) works according to the consumer expectations or it is reliable. It was clear from the conversation of two respondents:

> It has been trustworthy and as the length of a cigarette is 69 mm, so the time it takes to burn according to my level is 5 to 6 min. If I am working, and feeling sleepy during my work, a smoke I can go on with my work for an hour more.

Or

> It's a relationship of trust, I feel the brand to be my partner because whenever I bought this watch I was sure enough that this is never going to be bad.

It was also clear from their conversation that the brand was honest in its promises and claims and was respectful of its customers. Most of the respondents were in support that the trusted brand would not cheat them:

> It has till date not deceived me and I am sure it will not do so in future as well…I have complete trust on it to deliver what it stands for.

It was clear that trust developed from strong positive attitudes, whenever the brand kept the promises of the customers, it develops into trust that keeps the customer with the brand for a long term.

The respondents' brand stories suggest that detailed brand knowledge structures developed around deeply held attachment with brands, such as deeper associations, feelings, and strong bonds. The expressed associations were a kind of kinship, such as:

> I consider this brand like a close associate, a friend and certainly is in a good relationship with it because it's been my favorite brand for past 3 years and yes I would like to have a long term relationship with it.

It was also evident from the expressions of some of the respondents that they felt the brand to be a part of the self:

> The brand is absolutely a part of me because whenever I want to have something, drink something…I go and grab it (brand).

It was also clear from the analysis that these deeply held attachments were the outcomes of consumer trust and satisfaction with that brand:

Since it's like my partner and so will go on and high on emotional attachment, it's basically coming from my trustworthiness with it and the satisfactory performance.

Relationship Maintenance Stage: Brand Commitment

The findings showed that high level of commitment toward the brand or the intention to maintain relationship longevity was common across strong brand relationships. During the interviews, respondents openly expressed their intention to stay with the brand through brand pledges such as:

Yes this brand is still and will always be in option in future because there is a sense of loyalty associated with it," or "If tomorrow I need to buy a phone again it has to be Apple. Till now they have always come up with better versions from 2g to 3g to 4s. Every product of this brand has outperformed others.

It was also evident that commitment toward brand became stronger with time:

Whenever I go to purchase a watch, it (my favorite brand) has a distinct design ready for me which is totally different from what I had owned. So my relationship is going deeper and deeper because without going to other brands I know that probably this has the watch I am looking for.

It was also evident that a long-term orientation was the basic factor that prompted the consumer to repeat purchase the brand. Commitment also fostered stability by showing a differential effect that other brands could not provide; it encouraged derogation of alternatives in the environment.

Yes it is here to stay in my life… I don't think for some time to come I will move away from this brand, this brand adds something different, that others can't provide.

Relationship Outcome Stage: Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty

The core outcome of strong brand relationships for relationship maintenance was a rich differentiating effect or brand equity that the consumers expressed while explaining their relationships. Although consumers expressed their intentions to stay with the brand, they also showed their endowed value toward the brand:

For me, price is not an issue when selecting my brand. And even if there are offers, I still would buy it at whatever price it is available.

It was also evident that this differential effect came from brand trustand its associated credibility:

I will go for Apple iPhone because I have been using this brand from quite some time and I have trust on Apple. One will always go for something that one trusts even though the others might be good. Until and unless I get some good and strong reason, I won't think of buying another brand.

This differentiating value protects the relationship through a full range of relationship biases and repeated buying:

> I feel it is an aura because once you start using an Apple product you can't really go to another product. I had Apple products before and I wanted to buy a phone, so I bought the next version, which is Apple 4s. Even though I had options to buy other phones too but I am still sticking to phone.

Respondents' brand stories suggested that relationship strength was implied in the notion of behavioral loyalty. The action-related behaviors or behavioral loyalty were also revealed on the outcome stage of consumer–brand relationships. Encouraging intentions to continue with the brand through structural barriers to exit the relationship developed into behavioral phase or true brand loyalty. Respondents also expressed behavioral loyalty, but their stories showed the fact that their loyalty came from the brand's trustworthiness, differential effect, and their feelings and emotions or affective componentthat the brand provided. It was also evident that loyal consumers would be biased toward the brand and would recommend the brand to others.

Although branding literature is rich with the descriptions of specific forms or typology of consumer–brand relationships, this study is systematic and unique in its examination of the process of consumer–brand relationship formation. This is because it followed the procedures of theory building using grounded theory arguments and also it was an exclusive application in branding from the perspective of real consumers rather than having undue dependence on psychological theories. A theoretical model of the consumer–brand relationship process of 20 real consumers was constructed through qualitative data analysis, which included involving consumers during data analysis in order to ensure that the model reflected their relationships with brands. The model developed in this study was from a multitude of experience, examples, and anecdotes. The result has been a coherent construct-oriented framework for understanding the often difficult and confusing constellation of different behavioral patterns of consumers' brand relationships.

Consumers' strong attitudes are the starting point of relationship with brands. As Wegener et al. (1995) emphasized "brand relationships are likely to begin with positive attitudes toward the brand, and these relationships are likely to be maintained, at least in part, as a result of these positive attitudes being strong" (p. 297). Therefore, it is important for the researchers and practitioners to examine the starting point of a relationship. An examination and understanding of this starting point would shift the focus from other generic constructs of relationship and lead to the creation of strong consumer-brand bonds. Researchers have suggested that the amount of processing roles and self-validation have the greatest potential for creating lasting brand relationships (e.g., Wegener et al. 1995).

Discussion of the Results

This analysis supports the view that strong and positive attitudes are embedded in the cognitive structure of the personal self (Holland 2003). Consumers' importance, confidence, and accessibility in attitudes would enable decision making without much deliberation. When the attitude components are low, the evaluation would

be affected by context-specific components, thereby reducing the likelihood of relationship maintenance. The two components of attitude valence and strength were in consonance with Krosnick and Petty's (1995) attitude strength dimension. If the strength component of attitude is present, context-specific components would not influence the relationship creation, maintenance, and augmentation.

Satisfied relationships with a brand would be mainly attributed to the strength of its evaluation. It is evident in the analysis that the strength of brand evaluation would result in satisfaction when the performance of the brand met with customer expectations. It is also apparent in the analysis that satisfaction plays a vital role in building relationship maintenance behavior. These satisfactory relationships would pave the way to continue with the existing relationship. Related literature (e.g., Kelley and Thibaut 1978; Rusbult 1983) supported the finding that people would generally stay in satisfying relationships.

The study generated two categories in relationship augmentation stage, namely, brand attachmentand brand trust. Brand attachment is similar to Thomson et al. (2005) and Park et al.'s (2010) concept of brand attachment. Park et al. (2010) stated that attachment is a multidimensional construct composed of three dimensions: affection, connection, and passion. Thomson et al. (2005) define the concept of brand attachment as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self, ………. that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand's relationship to the self." This analysis yielded support for both the conceptualizations. The study also identified the affect category brand trust, which is similar to Moorman et al. (1993) and Morgan and Hunt's (1994) conceptualization of brand trust. The results showed that the category of brand trust is derived from strong consumer attitudes. Therefore, it can be postulated that the attitude strength or strong positive evaluation of the brand developed from consumption or nonconsumption experience would ultimately generate brand trust (Ganesan 1994; Selnes 1998).

From the analysis of the conative aspect, brand commitment was found to play a vital role in relationship maintenance. The concept of commitment derived during data analysis is similar to that suggested by Moorman et al. (1993). The study also found support for Morgan and Hunt's (1994) concept of commitment as an ongoing relationship between exchange partners believing in one another.

Two major outcomes for CBR behavior were identified as brand equity and brand loyalty. Brand equityas a relational construct found support with the extant literature (e.g., Hunt 1997; Srivastava et al. 1998, 2001). The analysis shows that consumers with strong commitment would impart a different value to the product, which supports with Keller's (1993) definition of brand equity. The results also supported Jacoby's (1978) concept of brand loyalty. The analysis also found support that the category of brand loyalty is derived from brand equity. Strong behavioral loyalty is the consequence of strong customer-based brand equity and change in brand equity will lead to change in brand loyalty (Kaynak et al. 2008; Leon et al. 2006).

The establishment of the theoretical model would add value to the existing literature in the consumer–brand relationships in several ways. First, it provides more comprehensive, detailed, and integrated understanding of how consumers actually form relationships with brands than the previous study of individual constructs. Second, the theoretical model of CBR demonstrates how relationship formation

changes with changes in relationships and helps to identify the most useful pathway through which consumers might develop relationships with the brand.

Section Summary

The grounded theory approach used in this chapter identified a range of significant themes and seven major categories of consumer–brand relationships. The approach used in this section also helped the research to explore, refine, verify, and develop the conceptual framework that would be further verified and tested empirically. The conclusions derived from this grounded theory approach contributed to the conceptualization of consumer–brand relationship dimensions.

Section II: Model Testing and Validation: Quantitative Analysis

Respondent's Demographic Profile

The study used a mall intercept survey, in which a total of 500 samples were presented the questionnaire. A total of 475 useful questionnaires were returned, which constituted a 98.75% of the targeted sample size. In Table 5.3, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented, in which 60% of the respondents are females. Among the collected response, the majority of them were aged between 22 and 35 (46.73%), having graduation (41.68%). Approximately 39.57% of the respondents were doing professional and related occupation, while 18% of the respondents were students, with another 11% each involved in administering and government jobs.

The 32.63% of household's income ranged from Rs. 30,000–40,000. At the same time, nearly 19% each belonged to an income group of 20,000–30,000 and 40,000–50,000, respectively. The average purchase frequency of the selected brand is 2.21 in each month. Among this purchase frequency is higher for the age group of 22–35. The respondents were from five different regions of the country: South (34%), East (20%), North (26), West (16%), and North East (4%).

Table 5.2 indicates that 63.37% of the respondents visiting the store two–three times in a month that particular shopping mall from which they have responded. At the same time, 36.63% of the people visit the store more than three times in a month. The majority of the respondents (22.52%) indicated that they usually purchase the selected brand from specialty stores.

Other than specialty stores, respondents prefer supermarkets (18.31%), Kirana stores (18.80%), and departmental stores (18.31%) for the purchase of their selected brand. Among the respondents, the majority of them (52.21%) purchased this brand two to three times before they have responded to this questionnaire. The 41.68% of respondents purchased this brand more than three times. The majority

Table 5.3 Respondent's
demographic profile

Variables	Frequency	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Gender			
Male	300	63.15	63.15
Female	175	36.84	100
Age			
≤ 21 years old	98	20.63	20.63
22–35	222	46.73	67.36
36–50	75	15.78	83.14
51–65	42	8.88	92.02
> 65 years old	38	8	100
Education			
High School	52	10.94	10.94
+2	48	10.10	21.04
Graduation	198	41.68	62.72
Postgraduation	102	21.47	84.19
Doctorate degree	12	2.52	86.71
Others	63	13.26	100
Occupation			
Professional and related	188	39.57	39.57
Retired/not in the workforce	30	6.31	45.88
Government	56	11.78	57.66
Self-employed	35	7.36	65.02
Administrative support	55	11.57	76.59
Student	88	18.52	95.11
Others	23	4.85	100
Annual household income			
>20,000	56	11.78	11.78
20,000–30,000	88	18.52	30.3
30,000–40,000	155	32.63	62.93
40,000–50,000	90	18.94	81.87
50,000–60,000	46	9.68	91.55
<60,000	40	8.42	100

of the respondents indicated that they usually get information about the brand from previous purchase (46.73 %). It was also indicated that 17.89 % people generate information about the brand from advertisements.

The key question answered by these respondents is the amount of money (an average amount) they have spent for the purchase of their selected brand. Results indicated that 32.63 % of the respondents spend on an average Rs. 1,000 to 2,000 for the purchase of the selected brand. The 26.31 % of respondents opinioned that on an average they were spending Rs. 3,000 to 4,000 for the selected brand.

Data Analysis

The data analysis (Sect. 2) of this study has been divided into two major parts: model calibration analysis and model validation analysis, in which the study intended to use the advantage of relatively large sample size: For achieving this objective,

Table 5.4 Respondent's relationship profile

Variables	Frequency	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Frequency of visits			
1 time	76	16	16
2–3 times	225	47.36	63.37
More than 3 times	174	36.63	100
Primary destination of purchase			
Super markets	87	18.31	18.31
Specialty store	107	22.52	40.83
Hyper markets	67	14.10	54.93
Kirana stores	89	18.80	73.73
Departmental stores	87	18.31	92.0
Others	38	8	100
Frequency of purchase			
1 time	29	6.1	6.1
2–3 times	248	52.21	58.31
More than 3 times	198	41.68	100
Information sources about the brand			
Previous purchase	222	46.73	46.73
Word-of-mouth	68	14.31	61.04
Internet	45	9.47	70.51
Advertisements	85	17.89	88.5
Friends and relatives	55	11.57	100
Average spending for the brand			
>1,000	89	18.73	18.73
1,000–2,000	155	32.63	51.36
3,000–4,000	125	26.31	77.67
4,000–5,000	43	9.05	86. 72
5,000–6,000	38	8.0	94.73
<6,000	25	5.26	100

the total sample collected (475) is divided into two random halves, the first half consisting of 250 respondents, considered for calibration analysis and the second half consisting of 225 respondents taken in validation analysis. During the model calibration analysis, the study followed Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach. During the process of model calibration, first, the assessment of measurement model was conducted using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA)and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In the first phase of model calibration, EFA has been used as a procedure to aid item purification and unidimensionality assessment, from a traditional and nonconfirmatory perspective using IBM SPSS 20.0 software program, which has been later confirmed using CFA with LISREL 8.72 software program. Subsequently, in the second phase of structural model assessment, the testing of the proposed model has been carried out to test the proposed hypotheses, also with SEM served as a confirmatory assessment of nomological validity. In the structural model assessment phase, the study carried out a series of cross-validation analysis such as model stability analysis using the validation sample to check the feasibility of the proposed model in other samples and model selection analysis, for analysis of alternative/rival models using the calibration sample.

The study considered some of the preliminary issues, which deemed pertinent attention before doing structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL 8.72,

these are: (a) decision regarding the type of input matrix; (b) decision regarding estimation technique; (c) handling missing values; and (d) testing the assumption of normality. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

Data Screening Prior to Model Estimation and Testing

Prior to the estimation and testing of the proposed model, the study confirmed the absence of data coding errors. Wherever the data coding errors were detected, the study used the original questionnaire to detect and correct the coding errors (Churchill 1999). Also, the study recoded some of the variables using SPSS 20.0, where it is required, particularly for reverse-coded items. Moreover, the study carried out a visual inspection of a covariance matrix with the aim of identifying extreme values that might cause some serious problems during estimation, no such values were found during the inspection. In addition to these, the study carried out a detailed check with the objective of diagnosing missing values. During missing value inspection process, it was found that around 5 % of cases were containing missing values. The study followed a list wise deletion approach to handle missing values. This is considered to be a better method when the number of missing values is not too high (Hair et al. 1998) and also an analytical tool requires high sample size, as this is the case in this study.

Testing of Multivariate Normality

Before testing the proposed model, the study tested the most important assumption behind SEM, i.e., normality assumption. It has been stated that in SEM it is necessary to consider the issue of normality assumption, because the violation of this assumption can cause to create inflated chi-square statistics, biased critical values, and influences in standard errors (Hair et al. 1998). Table 5.5 gives the result of multivariate normality check. The results show that all the observed variables revealed significant skewness; this might indicate that potential problem or deviation from normality.

However, Hair et al. (1998) stated that large sample size, which is the case in this study, tends to mitigate the violations of normality. In addition, it has been already mentioned that the adoption of estimation technique, such as maximum likelihood (ML) is robust against the violation of normality assumption. Vieria (2011) stated that the low value of relative multivariate kurtosis also supports the assumption of multivariate normality. The value is 1.416, which shows that, in spite of the items that do not show multivariate normality, collectively the multivariate distribution is reasonably normal (Benson and Bandalos 1992).

Decision Regarding Type of Input Matrix for SEM

Generally, there are two different input matrices, which are very predominant in SEM: correlation matrix and covariance matrix. This study used covariance matrix

Table 5.5 Multivariate normality testing

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and kurtosis	
	Z-score	P-value	Z-score	P-value	Chi-square	P-value
ATT1	−3.523	0.000	0.428	0.668	12.597	0.002
ATT2	−3.233	0.001	1.040	0.299	11.534	0.003
ATT3	−3.236	0.001	−0.378	0.706	10.614	0.005
ATT4	−3.408	0.001	0.304	0.761	11.707	0.003
TR1	−5.535	0.000	2.129	0.033	35.167	0.000
TR2	−6.051	0.000	3.030	0.002	45.799	0.000
TR3	−5.703	0.000	2.485	0.013	38.700	0.000
TR4	−6.022	0.000	3.059	0.002	45.618	0.000
SAT1	−4.023	0.000	1.767	0.077	19.303	0.000
SAT2	−5.399	0.000	2.538	0.011	35.594	0.000
SAT3	−5.014	0.000	2.694	0.007	32.397	0.000
ATTH1	−3.947	0.000	1.165	0.244	16.934	0.000
ATTH2	−5.539	0.000	3.020	0.003	39.801	0.000
ATTH3	−5.341	0.000	2.726	0.006	35.954	0.000
ATTH4	−5.462	0.000	2.602	0.009	36.606	0.000
EQ1	−4.237	0.000	1.482	0.138	20.146	0.000
EQ2	−4.556	0.000	1.252	0.211	22.324	0.000
EQ3	−4.687	0.000	1.249	0.212	23.527	0.000
EQ4	−4.441	0.000	1.661	0.097	22.479	0.000
COM1	−5.927	0.000	2.298	0.022	40.412	0.000
COM2	−5.371	0.000	1.121	0.262	30.105	0.000
COM3	−4.696	0.000	1.034	0.301	23.122	0.000
COM4	−4.822	0.000	0.514	0.607	23.512	0.000
LOY1	−5.700	0.000	2.174	0.030	37.220	0.000
LOY2	−5.569	0.000	1.660	0.097	33.762	0.000
LOY3	−4.233	0.000	0.813	0.416	18.576	0.000
LOY4	−4.517	0.000	0.896	0.370	21.211	0.000

Relative multivariate kurtosis = 1.416

as the input matrix for doing SEM. The literature suggested several reasons for this ardent use of the covariance matrix. When one wants to test the theoretical model, the covariance matrix is considered to be one of the best options (Hair et al. 1998), as is the case of this study. It has also been suggested that most of the statistical theories behind SEM have been developed based on the assumption that the analysis applies to a covariance matrix (Bentler et al. 2001). Technically, covariance-based SEM is superior because in an SEM model, based on the covariance input matrix, it is also possible to get standardized solutions or a correlation matrix (Bentler et al. 2001). Finally, the covariance matrix is recommended over correlation matrix because deriving correct chi-square statistic and its standard errors are difficult in those models using correlation matrix (Bentler et al. 2001). See Appendix 4 for covariance matrix.

Identifying Underlying Dimensions of Consumer–Brand Relationships Using EFA

In order to identify the underlying dimensions of consumer–brand relationships, the study applied EFA with principal component analysis using varimax rotation. This

Table 5.6 KMO and Bartlett's test for consumer–brand relationship dimensions

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO measure of sampling adequacy		0.948
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	6,519.117
	df	351
	Sig.	0.000

technique helps to obtain the relatively smaller number of dimensions that explains most of the variation among consumer–brand relationship attributes.

To determine the suitability of factor analysis, data were examined to ensure the assumptions were met. First, the correlation matrix was examined to ensure that the data in hand are suitable enough to run factor analysis. It is considered that if the magnitude of correlation among the variables is less (less than 0.30), then factor analysis is inappropriate. Given the magnitude of correlation between variables, it is clear that the hypothesized factor model appears to be appropriate. Looking at the correlation table for larger number of variable is a tiresome job, therefore, we have some other measures to check the adequacy of correlation or interrelationship between the factored items, and these measures are:

1. The determinant

This is the determinant of the matrix (27×27), the value is located under the correlation matrix. In this study, we got a determinant value of 0.007; it is neither exactly zero nor one, which is greater than the cut-off value of 0.00001. Therefore, we can conclude that the correlation matrix is neither an identity matrix nor a singular matrix. This value confirms the assumption that there are sufficient interrelationships among our study items.

2. Bartlett test of spherecity and the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Test (KMO).

Table 5.6 gives the results of KMO and Bartlett Test (Bartlett 1950). Bartlett Test of Spherecity tests the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix (there is no relationship between items), and follows a chi-square distribution. The larger value of Bartlett testindicates greater likelihood that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and null hypothesis will be rejected. In this study, the Bartlett test value (6,519.117) is significant (i.e., a significance value of less than 0.05). This indicates that we may reject the null hypothesis that our correlation matrix is an identity matrix and will conclude that the variables are correlated highly enough to provide a reasonable basis for factor analysis. The KMO is a measure of sampling adequacy. The KMO measure should be greater than 0.70, and is inadequate if less than 0.60. All these three measures (determinant, Bartlett test, and KMO) show the evidence that there are good interrelationships between study items or measures. Therefore, we can go about extracting factors using these items.

Table 5.7 presents the commonality of each item or measure to the common factor (i.e., the proportion of variance in each variable accounted for by the common factors). When using principal component analysis for factor extraction, we could get as many factors as variables. When all factors are included in the solution, all of the variance of each variable is accounted for by the common factors. Thus, the proportion of variance accounted for by the common factors, or the commonality of a variable is 1 for all the variables.

Table 5.7 Underlying dimensions of consumer–brand relationships

	Eigen-value	Variance explained	Factor loading	Commu-nalities
F1: Brand attitude strength	3.24	12		
ATT1			0.784	0.733
ATT2			0.733	0.752
ATT3			0.686	0.703
ATT4			0.659	0.797
F2: Brand satisfaction	4.11	15.2		
SAT1			0.764	0.803
SAT2			0.430	0.764
SAT3			0.441	0.756
F3: Brand trust	3.26	12.07		
BT1			0.645	0.775
BT2			0.644	0.759
BT3			0.784	0.853
BT4			0.782	0.807
F4: Brand attachment	2.53	9.37		
ATTH1			0.510	0.686
ATTH2			0.500	0.736
ATTH3			0.550	0.727
ATTH4			0.506	0.755
F5: Brand commitment	4.20	15.5		
COM1			0.889	0.931
COM2			0.884	0.923
COM3			0.888	0.928
COM4			0.855	0.922
F6: Brand equity	1	3.70		
BE1			0.734	0.779
BE2			0.630	0.760
BE3			0.729	0.806
BE4			0.778	0.849
F7: Brand loyalty	3.44	12.75		
LOY1			0.803	0.892
LOY2			0.796	0.891
LOY3			0.730	0.834
LOY4			0.782	0.901

In Table 5.7, the total variance is divided into seven possible factors because of the use of principal component analysis. In our factor extraction option in SPSS, we have selected factor extraction option as "Based on eigenvalue and eigenvalue greater than one" criteria, which means that the factor should explain more information than a single item would have explained. Based on eigenvalue criteria, we have retained only seven-factor solution. These seven factors account for 12%, 15.2%, 12.07, 9.37%, 15.5%, 3.70%, and 12.75% of the total variance, respectively. That is, almost 72.29% of the total variance is attributable to these seven factors.

The factor loadings for the 27 variables ranged from 0.44 to 0.89, above the suggested threshold value of 0.40 for practical and statistical significance. The loadings also presented a clean and highly interpretable solution: the 27 variables loaded significantly on seven factors as the researcher conceptualized brand attitude strength,

brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand attachment, brand commitment, brand equity, and brand loyalty; no variables loaded significantly on more than one factor.

Measurement Model Assessment Using CFA

The study carried out a measurement model analysis during the second stage. The focus is on the analysis of the relationship between the latent variables and their manifest variables or observed variables. The objective of this stage is to assess the validity and reliability of the measures used to represent the hypothesized constructs. The validity of the measures shows the extent to which the scale used measures what it is supposed to measure. The reliability of the scale measures the extent to which the scale is consistent, i.e., the extent to which the measures are free from random error. Apparently, unless the study confirms the validity and reliability of the scale, then any assessment of the hypothesized relationship between constructs will be misleading. Therefore, the assessment and confirmation of measurement model validity should precede the detailed analysis of structural analysis of the proposed model.

The study conducted measurement model testing through CFA using LISREL 8.72. In the hypothesized model, the study considered seven latent factors: brand attitude strength, brand attachment, brand trust, brand satisfaction, brand commitment, brand equity, and brand loyalty. All these latent constructs were measured using a total of 27 manifest or observed variables. In a measurement model analysis, all these manifest variables are assumed to be affected by a unique unobserved error. Each error is uncorrelated with other errors, and also these errors are uncorrelated with the latent variables. Since the study expected correlation between the hypothesized factors, in CFA all these factors are allowed to correlate each other (see Fig. 5.2). The study used covariance matrix as the input matrix to estimate the measurement model, which is given in the Appendix 4.

Examination of Offending Estimates

In measurement model analysis, the study first examined the offending estimates. Offending estimates are coefficients that exceed the minimum acceptable limit (Hair et al. 1998). The common forms of offending estimates that appear in measurement model are: negative error variance; standardized loading of the manifest variables exceed one; and high standard errors for the estimated coefficients (Reisinger and Turner 1999). These offending estimates must be examined carefully before evaluating the model results. From the results, it was found that there were no offending estimates of any kind. Therefore, it was recommended to proceed with the analysis of measurement model.

Examination of Unidimensionality

After examining the offending estimates in the measurement model, the study examined the unidimensionality of the latent constructs. Anderson and Gerbing (1988)
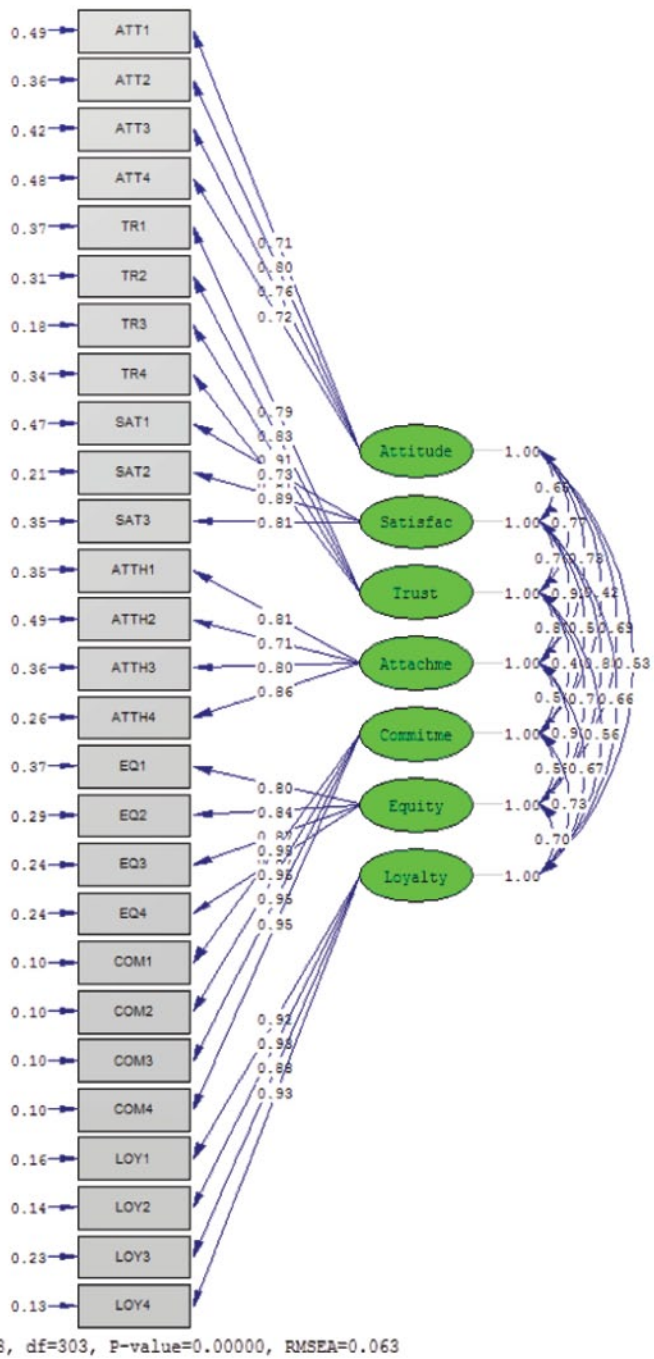
Fig. 5.2 Measurement model

identified the role of one-dimensional measure and stated its importance in the following words:

> Achieving unidimensional measurement (….) is a crucial undertaking in theory testing and development. A necessary condition for assigning meaning to estimated constructs is that the measures are posted as alternative indicators of each construct must be acceptably unidimensional. That is, each set of alternate indicators has only one underlying trait or construct in common (…).

It is generally acknowledged that EFA is insufficient to prove unidimensionality (Hunter and Gerbing 1982). Therefore, it is advisable to further investigate and confirm this property of the construct using CFA. A possible evidence of potential threats to unidimensionality using CFA is to check the matrix of standardized residuals. An absolute value of standardized residual above 2.58 shows lack of unidiemnsionality or the model is not satisfactory estimate of the relationship between a given pair of variables (Gerbing and Anderson1988; Joreskog and Sorbom 2001). Modification indices above five may also be another sign of potential threats to unidimensionlity (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). The examination of both standardized residuals and modification indices shows no potentially problematic cases. Therefore, the study confirmed that there are no potential threats to unidimensionality.

Examination of Convergent Validity

In the next stage of measurement model assessment, the study examined the validity, particularly the convergent validityof the indicators. Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000) stated that:

> Focusing initially on the validity of the indicators, this can be readily assessed by examining the magnitude of the paths between each latent variable and its indicators. If say, x is supposed to be a valid measure of, say ξ, then clearly the direct relation between x and ξ should be substantially (significantly different from zero).

This can be evaluated by assessing the magnitude and significance of the indicators or observed variables. The study results showed that all nonstandardized indicator loadings are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This supports the validity of the factors that indicators used to measure the constructs actually measures that construct. Having said that, the results also support the measurement model through the significance of error variance. All the error variance is statistically significant, and this supports that there are less chances of specification error. It is also recommended to use standardized factor loadings to confirm validity indicators. Table 5.8 shows the standardized loading. The results showed that all the loadings range in between 0.71–0.95 and exceed the minimum cut-off of 0.50 (Hair et al. 2008). This supports and shows substantial evidence for convergent validity. A benchmark of 0.70 has also been suggested for parameter estimate indicating convergent validity to be considered as exhibiting substantial magnitude (Garver and Mentzer 1999). This is true for all parameter estimates in this study. Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991) stated that a good overall fit of the model also gives enough evidence of convergent validity, as this is the case in this study (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.8 Standardized loadings, reliability, squared multiple correlation, and AVE

Constructs	Lamda-x	Theta-delta	CR (Cronbach's alpha)	LamdaSQ	AVE
Attitude strength			0.83(0.83)		0.56
ATT1	0.71	0.49		0.50	
ATT2	0.8	0.36		0.64	
ATT3	0.76	0.42		0.57	
ATT4	0.72	0.48		0.51	
Trust			0.90(0.89)		0.69
TR1	0.79	0.37		0.62	
TR2	0.83	0.31		0.68	
TR3	0.91	0.18		0.82	
TR4	0.81	0.34		0.65	
Satisfaction			0.85(0.85)		0.65
SAT1	0.73	0.47		0.53	
SAT2	0.89	0.21		0.79	
SAT3	0.81	0.35		0.65	
Attachment			0.87(0.87)		0.63
ATTH1	0.81	0.35		0.65	
ATTH2	0.71	0.49		0.50	
ATTH3	0.80	0.36		0.64	
ATTH4	0.86	0.26		0.73	
Equity			0.90(0.90)		0.71
EQ1	0.8	0.37		0.64	
EQ2	0.84	0.29		0.70	
EQ3	0.87	0.24		0.75	
EQ4	0.87	0.24		0.75	
Commitment			0.97(0.97)		0.90
COM1	0.95	0.10		0.90	
COM2	0.95	0.10		0.90	
COM3	0.95	0.10		0.90	
COM4	0.95	0.10		0.90	
Loyalty			0.95(0.95)		0.83
LOY1	0.92	0.16		0.84	
LOY2	0.93	0.14		0.86	
LOY3	0.88	0.23		0.77	
LOY4	0.93	0.13		0.86	

Lamda-X standardized loadings, *Theta-delta* error varience, *CR* composite reliability, *LamdaSQ* Squared multiple correlation, *AVE* average varience extracted

Examination of Reliability

After confirming the unidimensionality and convergent validity, reliability of the scale has been examined, arguing that a construct can exhibit good reliability even if it does not satisfy convergent validity criteria (Steenkamp and van Trijp 1991). Cronbach's (1954) coefficient is considered to be a good measure of reliability. It has been argued that this coefficient of reliability check should be assessed only after confirming unidimensionlity (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Hunter and Gerbing (1982) stated that:

> Coefficient alpha provides an unbiased estimate of the reliability of the cluster score only if the scale is unidimensional.

Table 5.9 Discriminant validity checks

	Attitude	Satisfaction	Trust	Attachment	Commitment	Equity	Loyalty
Attitude	*0.56*						
Satisfaction	0.65	*0.65*					
Trust	0.77	0.76	*0.69*				
Attachment	0.73	0.92	0.8	*0.63*			
Commitment	0.42	0.52	0.46	0.54	*0.90*		
Equity	0.69	0.85	0.75	0.9	0.58	*0.71*	
Loyalty	0.53	0.66	0.56	0.67	0.73	0.7	*0.83*

It has also been stated by Hulin et al.(2001) that:

> It is possible for a number of items to be interrelated (i.e., show internal consistency) and still not homogeneous (i.e., not be unidimensional).

As it can be evident from Table 5.8, the Cronbach's alphas for the hypothesized constructs are above Nunnally's(1970) 0.70 threshold, suggesting adequate reliability. In addition to the assessment of reliability using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, the study also analyzed composite reliability (also known as construct reliability) value for each latent variable. Table 5.8 shows composite reliability values for each of the components, which exceed Bagozzi and Yi's (1988) 0.60 threshold. Thus, it provides further support for the constructs' reliability. This is (convergent validity) also confirmed by looking at the squared multiple correlations (R^2) of the indicators. The R^2 shows the proportion of variance in the indicators that is explained by its underlying latent variables, and the rest is owing to the measurement error. High R^2 value shows high reliability of the indicator under consideration. In this study, it was found that all the R^2 values are high and range between 0.50 to 0.90, which provides additional support for the constructs' acceptable reliability.

Examination of Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validityof the measured constructs was performed using an approach suggested by Joreskog (1971). For each pair of constructs, the discriminant validity is achieved in two stages. In the first stage, the correlation between the two constructs is constrained (fixed as one). In second stage, these two constructs are allowed to correlate freely (unconstrained). After the completion of these two stages, the χ^2 difference of these two models (constrained and unconstrained) is obtained. The significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained model proved that the constructs are not perfectly correlated and that discriminant validity is achieved. Table 5.9 gives the results of discriminant validity checks.

The chi-square difference test for discriminant validity, which was measured through performing CFAs using one pair of constructs at a time, indicates that all pairs have significant discriminant validity. Kline (2005) suggested that when two factors have a correlation over 0.85, they may not be accommodated in one structural equation model, as the two factors demonstrate the poor discriminant validity. From the analysis (see Table 5.7), it was found that no correlation between

Table 5.10 Correlation and average variance extracted (AVE)

Constructs	Unconstrained χ^2 (df, p values) (1)	Constrained χ^2 (df, p values) (2)	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta$ df) (2−1)	P-values
Attitude strength with other constructs				
Brand satisfaction	19.33(13, $p=0.000$)	225.75(14, $p=0.000$)	206.42(1)	0.000
Brand attachment	47.95(19, $p=0.000$)	209.14(20, $p=0.000$)	161.19(1)	0.000
Brand trust	67.14(19, $p=0.000$)	206.77(20, $p=0.000$)	139.63(1)	0.000
Brand commitment	49.60(19, $p=0.000$)	430.90(20, $p=0.000$)	381.3(1)	0.000
Brand equity	71.04(19, $p=0.000$)	292.27(20, $p=0.000$)	221.23(1)	0.000
Brand loyalty	19.04(19, $p=0.000$)	363.96(20, $p=0.000$)	344.92(1)	0.000
Satisfaction with other constructs				
Brand attachment	11.64(13, $p=0.000$)	37.41(14, $p=0.000$)	25.77(1)	0.000
Brand trust	36.84(13, $p=0.000$)	181.68(14, $p=0.000$)	144.84(1)	0.000
Brand commitment	27.27(13, $p=0.000$)	281.07(14, $p=0.000$)	351.8(1)	0.000
Brand equity	72.41(13, $p=0.000$)	144.62(14, $p=0.000$)	72.21(1)	0.000
Brand loyalty	20.62(13, $p=0.000$)	231.62(14, $p=0.000$)	211(1)	0.000
Brand attachment with other constructs				
Brand trust	53.21(19, $p=0.000$)	222.63(20, $p=0.000$)	169.42(1)	0.000
Brand commitment	31.36(19, $p=0.036$)	487.02(20, $p=0.000$)	455.66(1)	0.000
Brand equity	54.54(19, $p=0.000$)	101.78(20, $p=0.000$)	47.24(1)	0.000
Brand loyalty	28.76(19, $p=0.000$)	293.56(20, $p=0.000$)	264.8(1)	0.000
Brand trust with other constructs				
Brand commitment	72.35(19, $p=0.000$)	2830.31(20, $p=0.000$)	2757.96(1)	0.000
Brand equity	62.88(19, $p=0.000$)	382.99(20, $p=0.000$)	320.11(1)	0.000
Brand loyalty	29.75(19, $p=0.000$)	582.34(20, $p=0.000$)	552.59(1)	0.000
Brand commitment with other constructs				
Brand equity	69.82(19, $p=0.000$)	634.98(20, $p=0.000$)	565.16(1)	0.000
Brand loyalty	45.69(19, $p=0.000$)	838.13(20, $p=0.000$)	792.44(1)	0.000
Brand equity with loyalty				
Brand loyalty	52.38(19, $p=0.000$)	507.66(20, $p=0.000$)	455.28(1)	0.000

Diagonal elements show AVE

factors exceeds 0.80 threshold, again it supported the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Another measure to analyze the discriminant validity is to compare the average variance extracted for any two constructs with the square of correlation estimate between these two constructs (Hair et al. 2008). The analysis results showed that all the AVEs exceed the square of correlation estimate (see Table 5.10). This further supports that the constructs that measure two different concepts differ empirically.

The analysis of goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) for the measurement model showed that all of them are within the generally accepted thresholds and support a good fit with the data. Table 5.11 shows the GFI for the measurement model.

In fact, even though the chi-square test of the measurement model is significant ($\chi^2 = 606.38$, $p = 0.000$), the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom is in the acceptable level (DF = 303, $\chi^2/DF = 2.01$), this is considered to be an acceptable fit (Cote et al. 2001). In addition, other GFI, such as GFI (0.85), adjusted GFI (0.81), normed fit index (NFI; 0.97), and comparative fit index (CFI; 0.99), as well as the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; 0.06), are within acceptable limits indicating a good fit (Diamantopolous and Siguaw 2000).

Table 5.11 Summary of fit indices of measurement model

Indices	Shorthand	General rule of thumb	Model indices
Absolute/predictive fit indices			
Chi-square	χ^2	Lower value shows good model fit	606.38, 301 ($p=0.0$)
Ratio of chi-square to DF	χ^2/df	Ratio of χ^2 to DF ≤2 or 3	2.01
Akaike information criterion	AIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	756.38
Expected cross-validation index	ECVI	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	3.04
Comparative fit indices: comparison to a baseline (independence) or other model			
Normed fit index	NFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.97
Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.99
Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.99
Parsimonious fit indices			
Parsimony-adjusted NFI	PNFI	Very sensitive to model size	0.84
Parsimony-adjusted GFI	PGFI	The closer to 1 the better, though typically lower than other indices and sensitive to model size	0.68
Other			
Goodness-of-fit index	GFI	≥0.95 Not generally recommended	0.85
Adjusted GFI	AGFI	≥0.95 Performance poor in simulation studies	0.81
Root mean square residual	RMR	Smaller, the better; 0 indicates perfect fit	0.09
Standardized RMR	SRMR	≤0.08	0.04
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.06 to 0.08 with confidence interval	0.063

Structural Model Assessment

Continuing on the results of the assessment and confirmation of the measurement model validity carried out in the previous section, and to follow the two-step approach for SEM suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), this section analyzes the structural model validity. That is, the proposed set of relationship among the latent variables and test the hypotheses of interest, and also aimed to analyze the nomological validity (Steenkamp and van Trijip 1991). Three issues are relevant during the assessment of structural model validity. First, to assess the direction of the relationship between the constructs: whether the direction of the relationships is as hypothesized (positive or negative). Second, to assess the strength or magnitude of the relationship between the constructs: whether the estimated parameters are significant or it provides important information on the strength of the hypothesized relationships, i.e., their respective t-values should be greater than |1.96|. Third, to assess the amount of variance in the endogenous variables accounted by the respective determinants: whether R^2 for the structural equations shows the good explanatory power of the hypothesized antecedents.

This section of the chapter assesses the structural modelfollowed by a step-by-step approach, which involves a three-stage process. In the first part of structural

Table 5.12 Structural model assessment: calibration sample, proposed model

Parameter	Estimate	Std error	t-value	R^2	Hyp.	Result
ATT => SAT	0.68	0.09	7.80		H1	Sig
				0.42		
ATT => TR => ATTH	0.73	0.11	6.66		H2	Sig
				0.89		
SAT => TR => COM	0.012	0.001	0.13		H3	NS
ATT => ATTH => COM	0.59	0.09	6.57		H4	Sig
SAT=> ATTH => COM	0.59	0.09	6.57		H5	Sig
				0.30		
ATT => TR => EQ	0.76	0.09	8.78		H6	Sig
COM => EQ	0.21	0.04	5.04		H8	Sig
				0.70		
TR => ATTH => LOY	0.34	0.12	2.93		H7	Sig
COM => LOY	0.55	0.06	8.51		H9	Sig
EQ => LOY	0.33	0.11	3.09		H10	Sig
				0.64		

ATT brand attitude strength, *SAT* brand satisfaction, *TR* brand trust, *ATTH* brand attachment, *COM* brand commitment, *EQ* brand equity, *LOY* brand loyalty, *NS* nonsignificant, *Sig* significant

model assessment, the study examined the extent to which the model replicates in samples other than the one on which it was derived; this was done through a cross-validation. Under this cross-validation, the study first conducted a model stability test, in which the total sample is randomly divided into two parts: calibration sample and validation sample and carried out the analysis separately for each sample assesses the validity of the sample. The calibration sample is used to develop the model (and undertake any modifications deemed necessary) and the validation sample is used to test the derived model. In the second part, the study conducted another form of cross-validation called model selection, in which the study compared different competing models from theory with the hypothesized model. In the third part, the study carried out an assessment of statistical power of the final model.

Part I: Assessment of Structural Model Based on Calibration Sample

As shown in Table 5.12 and Fig. 5.3, the results of the test of SEM using calibration sample and the signs of the coefficients representing the hypotheses incorporated in the model are as expected. In other words, all signs of the relationship between constructs in the model under analysis are in accordance with the hypotheses specified and also in accordance with the qualitative exploration. The most obvious examination of the structural modelinvolves the significance tests for proposed hypotheses, which provide the basis for accepting or rejecting the proposed relationships between latent constructs. The LISREL results (Table 5.12) showed that all the paths
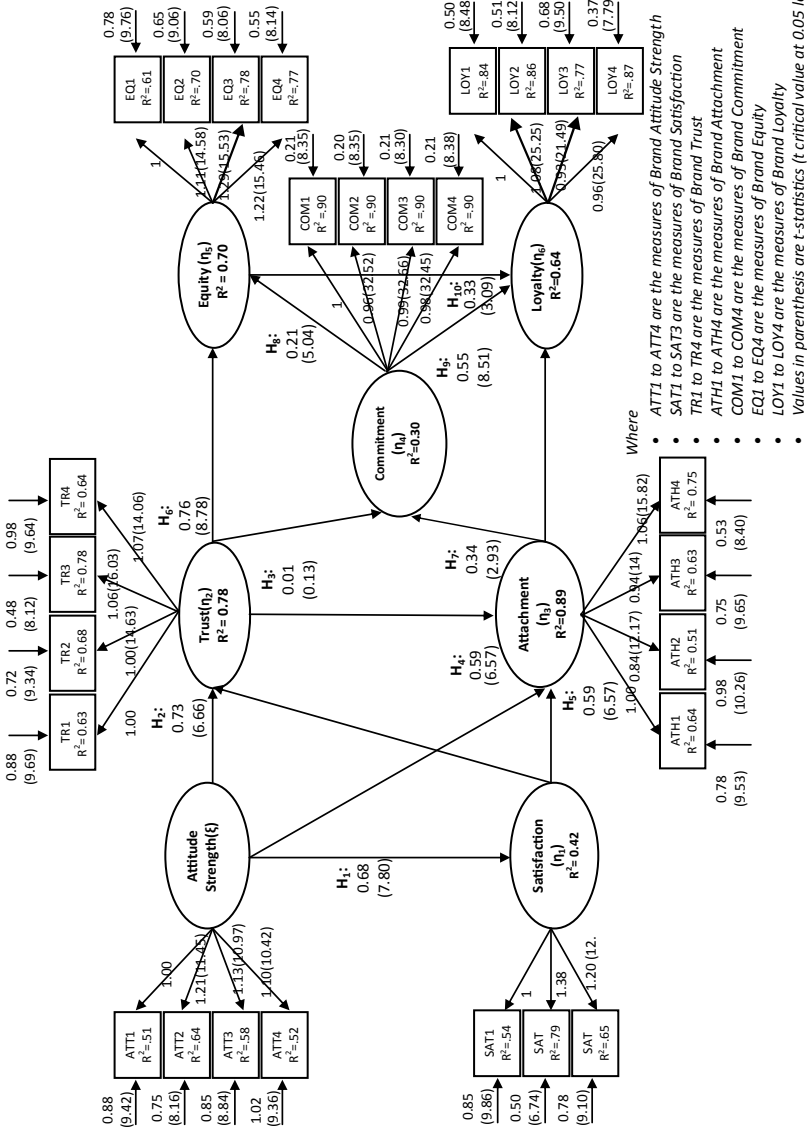
Fig. 5.3 Results of consumer brand relationships (calibration model)

proposed in the "Consumer–Brand Relationships Model" are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), except the one corresponding to the relationship between satisfaction and commitment wherein trust moderates the relationship between these two (H3 rejected, 0.01 t = 0.13). The other hypotheses were supported: (1) brand attitude strength has a positive influence on brand satisfaction (H1 could not be rejected, 0.68; t = 7.80); (2) brand attitude strength positively influences brand attachment wherein brand trust moderates the relationship between these two (H2 could not be rejected, 0.73; t = 6.63); (3) brand attitude strength and brand commitment relationship is moderated by brand attachment is statistically significant (H4 could not be rejected, 0.59, t = 6.67); (4) brand satisfaction will lead to brand commitment but this relationship is moderated by brand attachment is statistically significant (H5 could not be rejected, 0.59, t = 5.57); (5) brand trust is mediating the relationship between brand attitude strength and brand equity is statistically significant (H6 could not be rejected, 0.76, t = 8.78); (6) brand trust will have an indirect effect on brand loyalty through brand attachment is statistically significant (H6 could not be rejected, 0.34, t = 2.93); (7) brand commitment will have a direct effect on brand equity and brand loyalty is significant (H8 and H9 could not be rejected, 0.21, t = 5.04 and 0.55, t = 8.51); and finally, (8) brand equity having a positive influence on brand loyalty is statistically significant (H10 could not be rejected, t = 3.09).

In addition to the direction of the relationship between the constructs, the results also support the fact that all the six R^2 values for the endogenous variables in the model are in acceptable range; for SAT (Brand Satisfaction), $R^2 = 0.42$; ATTH (Brand Attachment), $R^2 = 0.89$; TR (Brand Trust), $R^2 = 0.78$; COM (Brand Commitment), $R^2 = 0.30$; EQ (Brand Equity), $R^2 = 0.70$, and for LOY (Brand Loyalty), $R^2 = 0.64$.

In addition to the assessment of the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the constructs, the study assessed GFI measure, which shows the correspondence of the actual or observed covariance matrix to the covariance matrix predicted from the proposed model. In SEM, the absolute fit measures provide information on the extent to which the model as a whole provides an acceptable fit to the data. The most commonly used absolute fit measures are; the likelihood ratio of chi-square, the GFI, the root mean square residual (RMR), and the RMSEA. The chi-square statistic determines if the restrictive hypothesis tested can be rejected. A model is considered to have an acceptable fit if the difference between the variance–covariance matrices generated by the original data and by the hypothesized solution is small, yielding a nonsignificant chi-square. However, the chi-square statistic is dependent on sample size and often results in a statistically significant difference when large samples, like those in this study, are used, even when fit appears good using other indices. Despite this limitation, the chi-square was included because it is one of the most frequently used fit indices in SEM analysis. In this study, the chi-square value (χ^2) of 701.29 with 311 degrees of freedom was significant at the 0.000 level. The Goodness-of-Fit Measure is a measure ranging from 0 (worst fit) to 1.0 (best fit). Here, the GFI value of 0.83 is at a marginal acceptance level. It has been suggested that owing to the sensitivity of these two measures (χ^2 and GFI) to sample size and model complexity, other measures also found to be complement these two measures (Hair et al. 1998). The RMSEA provides another measure of fit that adjusts for parsimony by assessing

Table 5.13 Summary of fit indices for structural model: calibration sample

Indices	Shorthand	General rule of thumb	Model indices
Absolute/predictive fit indices			
Chi-square	χ^2	Lower value shows good model fit	703.29, 311 ($p=0.0$)
Ratio of chi-square to DF	χ^2/DF	Ratio of χ^2 to DF ≤2 or 3	2.25
Akaike information criterion	AIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	837.74
Expected cross-validation index	ECVI	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	3.36
Comparative fit indices: comparison to a baseline (independence) or other model			
Normed fit index	NFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.97
Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Parsimonious fit Indices			
Parsimony-adjusted NFI	PNFI	Very sensitive to model size	0.86
Parsimony-adjusted GFI	PGFI	The closer to 1 the better, though typically lower than other indices and sensitive to model size	0.68
Other			
Goodness-of-fit index	GFI	≥0.95 Not generally recommended	0.83
Adjusted GFI	AGFI	≥0.95 Performance poor in simulation studies	0.79
Root mean square residual	RMR	Smaller the better; 0 indicates perfect fit	0.12
Standardized RMR	SRMR	≤0.08	0.05
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.06–0.08 with confidence interval	0.07

the discrepancy per degree of freedom in the model. In this study, the RMSEA value is 0.07. An RMSEA value less than 0.08 is considered to be a good fit (Hair et al. 1998). Another absolute fit measure is Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR), which represents an average of the absolute discrepancies between the observed correlation matrix and the hypothesized correlation matrix, and the closer to zero, the better the fit. The RMSR value of 0.12 is considered to be acceptable. Other than the absolute fit indices, the incremental and parsimonious fit indices are needed to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives (Reisinger and Turner 1999). The incremental fit indices differ from absolute fit indices in that they assess how well a specified model fits relative to some alternative baseline model or null model (the simplest model that can be theoretically justified). The major fit indices in this category are: Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), non-NFI (NNFI), NFI, and CFI. All the incremental fit indices exceeded the cut-off of 0.90; is considered to be good (Hair et al. 1998). This supported the acceptance of the proposed model. Third stream of fit indices called Parsimonious Fit Measures, which relate goodness-of-fit of the model to the number of degrees of freedom or considering the model complexity. In this study, the Parsimonious NFI (PNFI) value is 0.86, which is considered marginally acceptable. Table 5.13 shows the fit indices in detail.

In summary, the results presented earlier showed a scenario where all the relationships are significant, except one. In principle, these results have shown substan-

Table 5.14 Summary of fit Indices of structural model: validation sample

Indices	Shorthand	General rule of thumb	Model indices
Absolute/predictive fit indices			
Chi-square	χ^2	Lower value shows good model fit	633.08, 311 ($p=0.0$)
Ratio of chi-square to DF	χ^2/DF	Ratio of χ^2 to DF ≤ 2 or 3	2.02
Akaike information criterion	AIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	767.08
Expected cross-validation index	ECVI	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	3.42
Comparative fit indices: comparison to a baseline (independence) or other model			
Normed fit index	NFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.97
Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Parsimonious fit indices			
Parsimony-adjusted NFI	PNFI	Very sensitive to model size	0.86
Parsimony-adjusted GFI	PGFI	The closer to 1 the better, though typically lower than other indices and sensitive to model size	0.68
Other			
Goodness-of-fit index	GFI	≥ 0.95 Not generally recommended	0.83
Adjusted GFI	AGFI	≥ 0.95 Performance poor in simulation studies	0.79
Root mean square residual	RMR	The smaller the better; 0 indicates perfect fit	0.12
Standardized RMR	SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.05
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.06 to.08 with confidence interval	0.068

tive evidence that the proposed conceptual framework is supported by the collected data. It is also evident in the model fit indices. In short, these results also substantially support the nomological validity of the constructs in the theoretical model.

Part II: Assessment of Structural Model Based on Validation Sample

The procedure followed in this section to build the model that corresponds to the estimation of the structural modelusing validation sample is similar to those discussed in the previous section. In this section, the study carried out the estimation process using 225 samples, that is, the validation sample. The objective of this section is to check how the model fitswith samples other than the one it actually developed and modified. The result of the analysis showed that the structural model of the validation sample seems to corroborate those based on the calibration sample. In outcome, when the study tested the model based on validation sample, the model fit indices also found to be satisfactory: $\chi^2=633.08$ ($p=0.000$), DF $=311$, χ^2/DF $=2.02$, RMSEA $=064$, GFI $=0.83$, AGFI $=0.79$, NFI $=0.97$, and CFI $=0.98$. Table 5.14 shows model fit indices of structural model using a validation sample.

Table 5.15 Structural model assessment: validation sample, proposed model

Parameter	Estimate	Std error	t-value	R^2	Hyp.	Result
ATT=>SAT	0.68	0.09	7.40		H1	Sig
				0.42		
ATT=>TR=>ATTH	0.73	0.12	6.32		H2	Sig
				0.89		
SAT=>TR=>COM	0.01	0.001	0.13		H3	NS
ATT=>ATTH=>COM	0.59	0.09	6.42		H4	Sig
SAT ATTH COM	0.50	0.15	3.42		H5	Sig
				0.30		
ATT=>TR=>EQ	0.76	0.09	8.33		H6	Sig
COM=>EQ	0.21	0.04	4.78		H8	Sig
				0.70		
TR=>ATTH=>LOY	0.34	0.12	2.78		H7	Sig
COM=>LOY	0.55	0.07	8.07		H9	Sig
EQ=>LOY	0.33	0.11	2.93		H10	Sig
				0.64		

ATT brand attitude strength, *SAT* brand satisfaction, *TR* brand trust, *ATTH* brand attachment, *COM* brand commitment, *EQ* brand equity, *LOY* brand loyalty, *NS* nonsignificant, *Sig* significant

In the validation sample, in addition to the model fit indices, all the signs of the relationship between the constructs are also in agreement with the hypothesized relationship. Similar to calibration sample, estimated coefficients of the validation sample support all the hypotheses, except one (H3), wherein brand trust moderates the relation between brand satisfaction and brand commitment. Indeed, it is evident from Table 5.15 in which all the parameter estimates are also more or less similar to calibration sample.

The validation sample results also corroborate the calibration sample in terms of both the magnitude and the strength of the relationship between the constructsor interest. The validation sample results also support the fact that the amount of variance explained is analogous across all endogenous constructs.

As far as the insignificant link is concerned, which corresponds to the relationship in which it is hypothesized that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand commitment (H3), the estimated value is very low and worryingly close to zero, raising doubts on whether or not to include it in the hypothesized model. If a parameter estimate is not different from zero, then it would mean that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that it is zero, and recommended to fix this nonsignificant link as zero (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw 2000). In this scenario, one can test the model without allowing the nonsignificant path. Table 5.16 shows the revised model test results without allowing the nonsignificant path

The estimation result of the revised model showed the fact that the model would not fit well to the data in comparison with the initial model. The GFI showed relatively low fit for the revised model in comparison with the initial model: $\chi^2 = 749.99$ ($p = 0.000$), DF $= 313$, $\chi^2/DF = 2.36$, RMSEA $= 074$, GFI $= 0.82$, AGFI $= 0.78$, NFI $= 0.97$, and CFI $= 0.98$. Indeed, the results of this modified version of the model show bad fit with the data compared with the initial model, which can be seen in Table 5.17.

Table 5.16 Structural model assessment: revised model

Parameter	Estimate	Std error	t-value	R^2	Hyp.	Result
ATT => SAT	0.81	0.09	8.58		H1	Sig
				0.56		
ATT => TR => ATTH	0.96	0.12	5.77		H2	Sig
				0.89		
ATT => ATTH => COM	0.67	0.09	7.22		H4	Sig
SAT => ATTH => COM	0.51	0.08	6.31		H5	Sig
				0.30		
ATT => TR => EQ	0.83	0.09	8.91		H6	Sig
COM => EQ	0.23	0.04	5.60		H8	Sig
				0.67		
TR => ATTH => LOY	0.38	0.08	4.61		H7	Sig
COM => LOY	0.55	0.06	8.47		H9	Sig
EQ=> LOY	0.32	0.10	3.32		H10	Sig
				0.64		

ATT brand attitude strength, *SAT* brand satisfaction, *TR* brand trust, *ATTH* brand attachment, *COM* brand commitment, *EQ* brand equity, *LOY* brand loyalty, *NS* nonsignificant, *Sig* significant

Table 5.17 Summary of fit indices of structural model: revised model

| Indices	Shorthand	General rule of thumb	Model indices
Absolute/predictive fit indices			
Chi-square	χ^2	Lower value shows good model fit	740.08, 313 (p=0.0)
Ratio of chi-square to DF	χ^2/DF	Ratio of χ^2 to DF 2 or 3	2.36
Akaike information criterion	AIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	870.08
Expected cross-valida-tion index	ECVI	Smaller the better; good for model comparison	3.49
Comparative fit indices: comparison to a baseline (independence) or other model			
Normed fit index	NFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.97
Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.95 for acceptance	0.98
Parsimonious fit indices			
Parsimony-adjusted NFI	PNFI	Very sensitive to model size	0.86
Parsimony-adjusted GFI	PGFI	The closer to 1 the better, though typically lower than other indices and sensitive to model size	0.68
Other			
Goodness-of-fit index	GFI	≥0.95 Not generally recommended	0.82
Adjusted GFI	AGFI	≥0.95 Performance poor in simula-tion studies	0.78
Root mean square residual	RMR	The smaller the better; 0 indicates perfect fit	0.16
Standardized RMR	SRMR	≤0.08	0.07
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.06 to 0.08 with confidence interval	0.074
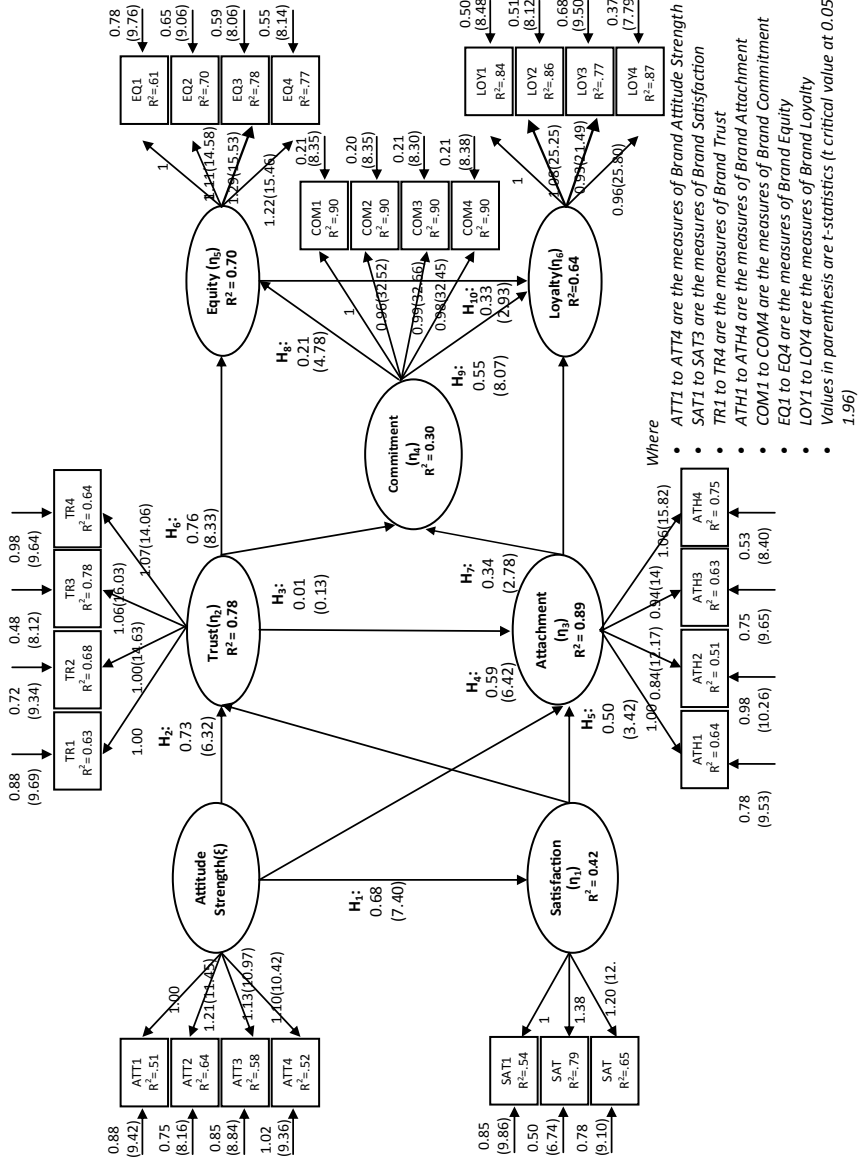
Fig. 5.4 Results of consumer brand relationships (Validation sample)
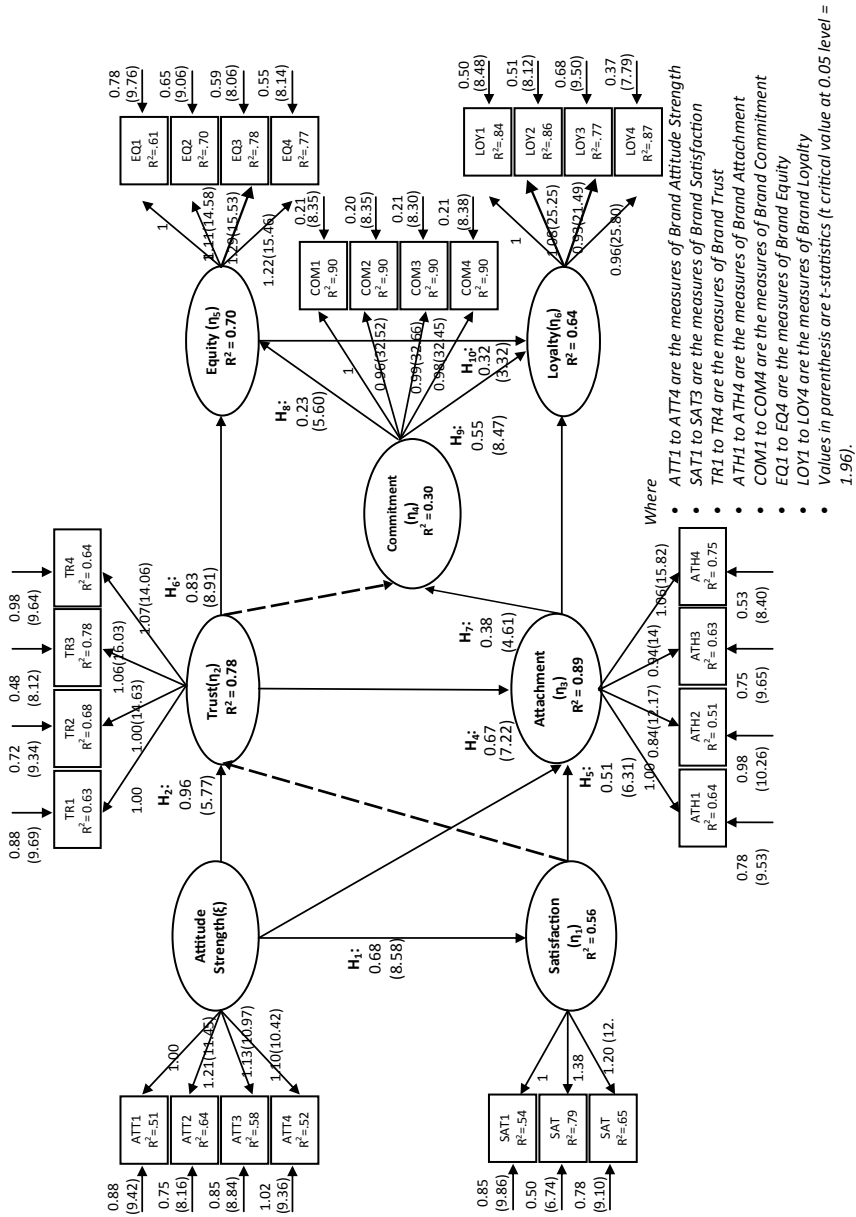
Fig. 5.5 Results of consumer brand relationships (Revised model)

In this context, the revision of the model found to be inadequate to improve the model in terms of both model fitas well as parsimony. Diamantopolous and Siguaw (2000) stated that the acceptance of model modification is possible and appropriate only if the modified model is substantially interpretable and fits well or at least at par fit with the initial model, which is not the case for the revised version of the model. Therefore, it has been decided to go with the initial model and reject the modified (revised) model.
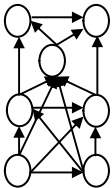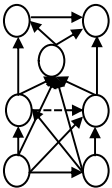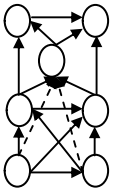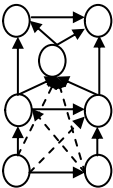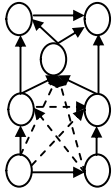
Part III: Cross Validation and Model Comparison

In the previous part of this chapter (Part II), the study looked at cross-validation-from the perspective of seeing how the model fitwith the data to a different sample other than the one it developed and modified. Even if this cross-validation supports the proposed model and shows good fit to the data, there may be many alternative models, containing different relationship among constructs, which could show the same level of goodness-of-fit. In this context, it is essential to compare the proposed model with alternative models, it is considered to be a fundamental practice (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Diamantopolous and Siguaw 2000). In this section, the study carried out another type of cross-validation procedure in which the study considered four alternative models based on theory and compared these models with the most theoretical model (Mt). In the alternative models, the study considered two unconstrained (Mu) and two constrained models (Mc). The structural submodels to be compared in this study are nested in a sequence such that Mc < Mt < Mu.

In this study, the proposed model has been named as Mt because this model is considered to be more theoretically sound and unconstrained model both in terms of parsimony and theoretical soundness, than our Mu2 and Mu1. The Mu1 is an unconstrained model with the relationship between brand trust and brand attachment excluded, and Mu2 is the most unconstrained model that includes every theoretically justifiable path or relationship between the constructs. But these two models (Mu1 and Mu2) compromise the model parsimony.

Table 5.18 shows the GFI of competing models with the Mt. The GFI has shown evidence that Mt model provides good model fit (despite the significance of χ^2) while comparing the other competing models. The most unconstrained model (Mu2) is very comparable to Mt except two additional paths from attitude strength and satisfaction to commitment (Attitude Strength Commitment; Satisfaction Commitment). This is evident in ratio to chi-square (χ^2/DF); the value for Mt is 2.26 and 2.29 for Mu2. Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988) decision tree framework of SCDT's, it is clear that Mt is the better model compared with Mu2, because Mt is more parsimonious than Mu2. To compare Mu1 and Mt, which are non-nested, the study followed Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC), which is considered to be good when we consider the comparison of one model with its rival models—lower value of AIC shows good fit (Alden et al. 2006; William and Holahan 1994). Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) is considered to be an indicator of a model's overall fit—the lowest ECVI shows high replication/generalization of the model. The PNFI

Table 5.18 Competing models and GFI

| Model	Paths excluded from the full model	Competing models	χ^2/df	GFI	ECVI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC	NNFI
Mu2	None		2.29	0.83	3.38	0.97	0.98	0.072	0.054	841.51	0.98
Mu1	Brand trust=>brand attachment		2.25	0.83	3.35	0.97	0.98	0.071	0.055	840.69	0.98
Mt	1. Brand attitude strength=>brand commitment 2. Brand satisfaction=>brand attachment		2.26	0.83	3.36	0.97	0.98	0.071	0,054	837.14	0.98
Mc1	1. Brand attitude strength=>brand commitment 2. Brand satisfaction=>brand attachment 3. 1. Brand attitude strength=>brand attachment 4. brand satisfaction=>brand trust		2.37	0.82	3.50	0.97	0.98	0.074	0.071	872.15	0.98
Mc2	1. Brand attitude strength=>brand commitment 2. Brand satisfaction=>brand attachment 3. 1. Brand attitude strength=>brand attachment 4. Brand satisfaction=>brand trust 5. Brand trust=>brand attachment		2.46	0.82	3.51	0.97	0.98	0.074	0.075	874.97	0.98

Dotted line shows the omitted relationships
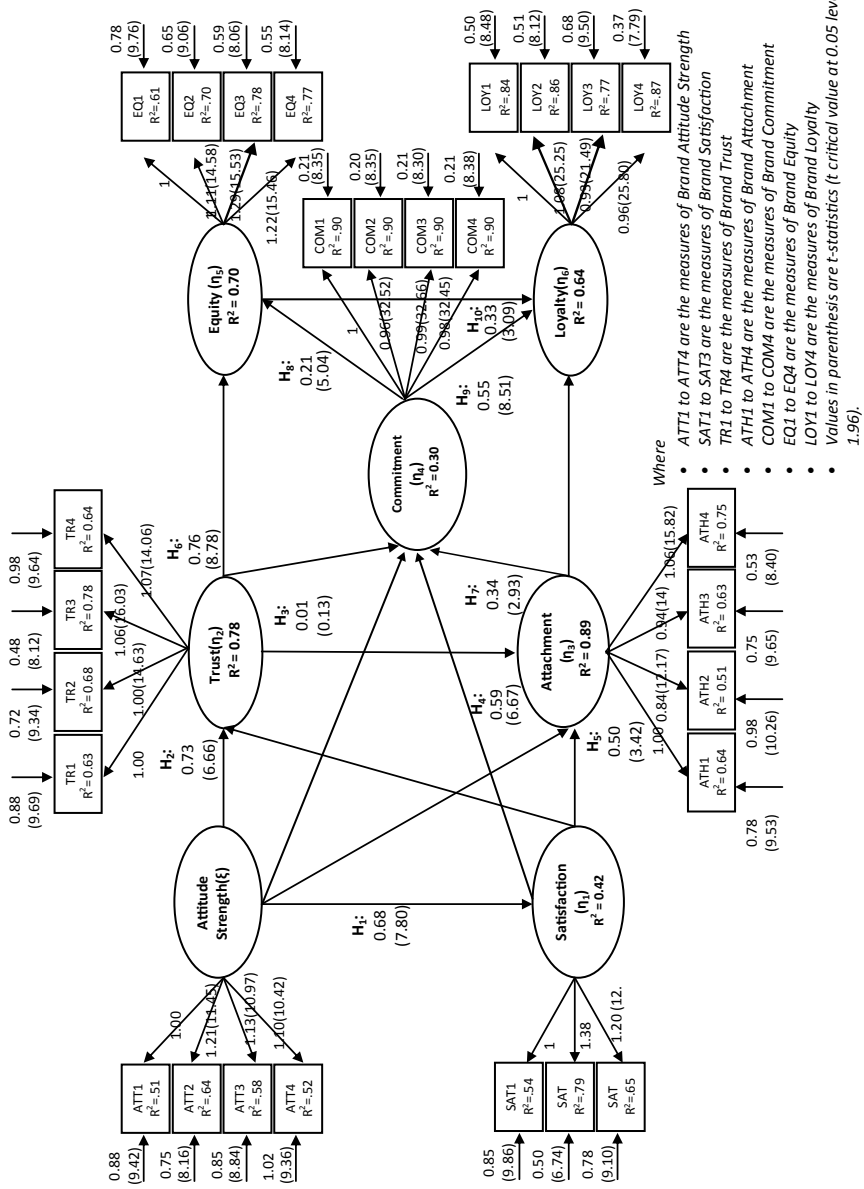
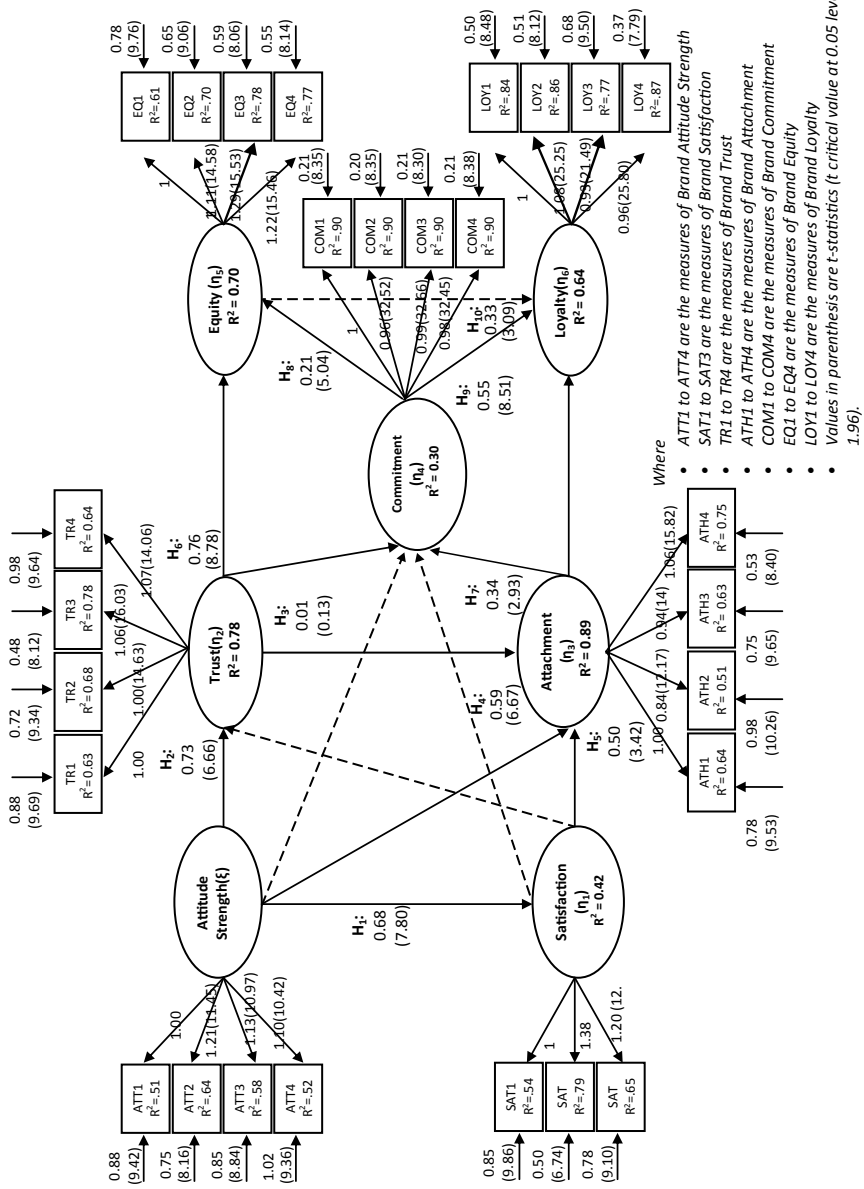**Fig. 5.6** Results of consumer brand relationships (Most unconstrained model Mu2)

Fig. 5.7 Results of consumer brand relationships (Most unconstrained model Mu1)

Fig. 5.8 Results of consumer brand relationships (Most constrained model Mc2)
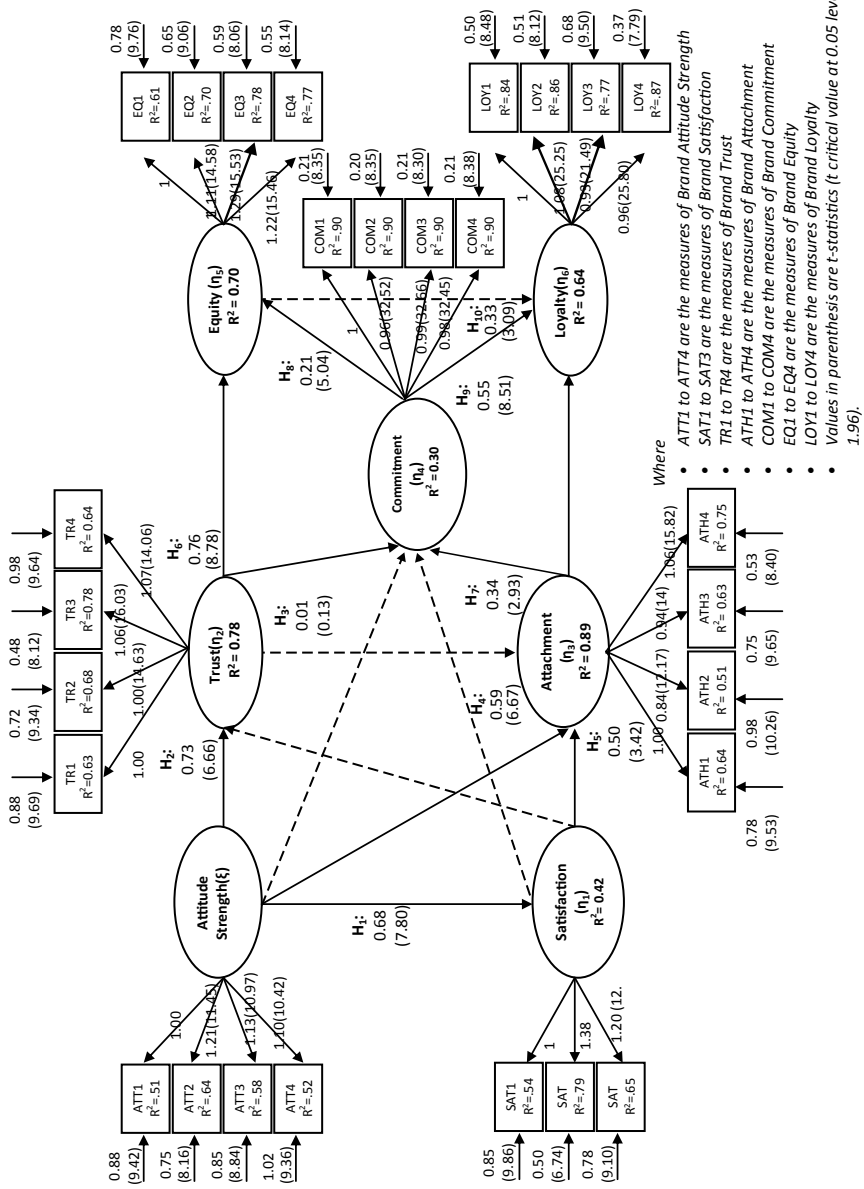
Fig. 5.9 Results of consumer brand relationships (Most constrained model Mc1)

measures model parsimony, the lower the value, the better the model's performance (Diamantopolous and Siguaw 2000). These fit indices are generally used when the alternative model comparisoninvolves the comparison of non-nested models, i.e., models under consideration differ in terms of number of constructs or indicators. In this situation, researcher should not generally rely completely on fit indices, but also parsimony as well (Hair et al. 1998). The indices of all these three (AIC, ECVI, and PNFI) suggest that Mt is more parsimonious than Mu2 and Mu1. The AIC for Mu1 is 840 and for Mt the value is 837. The ECVI indices are 3.35 for Mu1 and 3.36 for Mt, which is very near. The PNFI indices are 0.86 for both the model (Mu1 and Mt). These three indices show enough evidence that Mt is a better model, once parsimony is taken into account.

The study also analyzed model's (Mt) suitability or fit with other two constrained models (Mc1 and Mc2). In Mc1, the study constrained four path coefficients from the full model, these paths are: (1) Brand Attitude Strength to Brand Commitment; (2) Brand Satisfaction to Brand Attachment; (3) Brand Attitude Strength to Brand Attachment; and (4) Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust. In Mc2—the most constrained models, in which the study constrained the paths, which are already constrained in Mc1 and an additional path (Brand Trust to Brand Attachment). The fit indices such as AIC, EVCI, and PNFI are used for the comparison of Mc1 and Mc2 with Mt. The AIC for Mc1 is 872 and for Mc2 the value is 874, higher than the Mt's AIC value of 837. The EVCI indices for Mc1, Mc2, and Mt are 3.50, 3.51, and 3.36, respectively. The PNFI value for both Mc1 and Mt is 0.86 and 0.87 for Mc2. The comparison of all the indices has shown substantial evidence that Mt is a better model in comparison with other two constrained models (Mc1 and Mc2). Although other fit indices have shown almost comparable results across other competitive models, the χ^2 statistic, AIC, EVCI, and PNFI measures suggest that Mt is one that best models that explains the consumer–brand relationship formation process. The path diagram and its respective path coefficients for these competing models are presented in Figs. 5.6–5.9.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the detailed overview of the results of model conceptualization, testing, and validation phases. It included an overview of the process used to conceptualize the constructs of consumer–brand relationships and the results of the grounded theory approach used to conceptualize the model. It then detailed the characteristics of the sample included and the results of the model testing and validation phase of this study. The first part of study results generated seven dimensionalities of consumer–brand relationship model. During the second part, first an EFA was carried out to verify the dimensionality of the conceptualized constructs. Later on using CFA, the validity and reliability of these constructs were confirmed. Finally, using SEM, the model testing and validity confirmation was done, which was supportive of the conceptual model proposed in the first section. In Chap. 6, the study will discuss the findings as they relate to the three research questions central to this study.

Chapter 6
Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

This chapter is presented in five sections. The first section provides an overview of the entire study. The second section summarizes the findings of the study based on the three research questions. The third section considers the theoretical and managerial implications of the study, including implications in strategic management perspective. Following this, Sect. 4 includes the limitations of this research. Finally, Sect. 5 concludes with the recommendations for further research.

Overview

In branding, in its pursuit to identify the factors that promote consumer bond with brands, the studies in brand relationship literature recently afforded the development of models/theories of consumer–brand relationships using undue dependence on interpersonal literature. However, the enthusiasm shown by these theorists to demonstrate these constructs' ability to impact on consumer behavior has misguided consumer's long-term or deep-rooted relationship with brands, apparently assuming "that peoples some of the time form relationships with brands in the same way in which they form relationships with each other in other social contexts." In reality, this process of adaptation will create problems if the concept of brand relationships is not directly analogous to the theory of interpersonal relationship (Brevik and Thorbjornsen 2006). According to Hunt and Menon (1995), the success of the adoption of metaphoric transfer from one literature (here, from interpersonal to branding context) requires necessary translation from that literature to adapting discipline.

Hence, rather than continuing on undue dependence of interpersonal literature for the development of theories (e.g., Aaker et al. 2004; Monga 2002; Ji 2002; Park and Kim 2001; Kaltcheva and Weitz 1999; Olson 1999; Fournier 1998), a more fruitful approach would be to explore and understand the actual experience of consumers who have strong and deep-rooted relationship with brands and to generate a theoretical model of the antecedents and consequences of consumer–brand relationships exclusively in branding paradigm. To this end, this study initiated by pointing out the fact that although both practitioners and academicians have identified the

role of brand relationships as an important concept, the theoretical contribution in his area has been hindered by: (1) extensive adaptation and use of interpersonal relationship theory from high-involving relationships contexts to low-involving consumer–brand relationship context using either exploratory or descriptive studies, (2) lacks clear guidelines for model specification, and (3) the failure to integrate or identify interlinkages between the attitudinal and behavioral components of consumer–brand relationship constructs in proper way. Therefore, the proposed study using a fully mixed research design followed by a grounded theory approach, conducted a qualitative exploration using a series of in-depth interviews backed by theoretical sampling that uncovered seven consumer-experienced brand relationship prototypes. Then, we specified and interlinked these relationship prototypes using existing literature in the consumer–brand relationships and framed a most theoretical model. Thus, this study builds on previous research by considering constructs that have been studied independently and using interpersonal theories and showing that brand relationships can function as an integrated framework exclusively in consumer branding context.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked, *Is the exploration and integration of attitudinal and behavioral components for the conceptualization of the consumer–brand relationships being really meaningful?* It was proposed that the consumer–brand relationship is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components that is an aggregation of four dimensions: (1) cognitive component, (2) affective component, (3) conative component, and (4) action or behavioral component. These four components were supported during the qualitative phase of this study. The empirical interdependency among these components was confirmed during the grounded theory phase and SEM. Brand loyalty was emerging as a highly abstract construct during the grounded theory, as several respondents used it to describe this as the behavioral component. The grounded theory phase of the study suggested that the emergence of these four attitudinal components happens in different stages of consumer–brand relationships. It found that during relationship establishment the relationship is more dependent upon cognitive aspects, relationship augmentation happens during affective phase, maintenance happens during conative phase, and finally, relationship outcome happens during behavioral or action phase. Thus, the results of the grounded theory led the researcher to question the findings of previous literature that consumer–brand relationship happens cognitive or affective or conative components alone. Different from this, this study found that the relationship between brand and consumer is sequential in which relationship starts through the establishment of cognitive aspects, augmented through affective aspects, maintained through

conative, and finally, it would create an outcome during behavioral phase. This conclusion is highly contentious in consumer–brand relationship literature and is a topic for further study.

In addition, the interdependency of the four attitudinal and behavioral components was proposed to represent consumer–brand relationships become apparent during the quantitative phase of this study. In fact, this interdependency created significant path coefficients, which are in turn evident from overall goodness-of-fit indices of the model. In this way, the study found support for the conceptualization of consumer–brand relationships, which were apprently evident in study findings. The more evidences are given in subsequent interpretation of research findings (Research Questions 2 and 3).

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, *What are the underlying attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of consumer–brand relationships? Is behavioral relationship really influenced by attitudinal relationship?*

During the grounded theory phase of the study, it was found that there were seven dimensions of consumer–brand relationships such as brand attitude strength, brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand attachment, brand commitment, brand equity, and brand loyalty. The results also supported the fact that these dimensions belong to four different attitudinal phases and relationship stages. Consumer brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction were the two major cognitive aspects, which would emerge during the relationship establishment stage. Brand trust and attachment were the major source of affective dimensionality, which would augment consumer–brand relationships. Brand commitment was the sole source of relationship maintenance, which is considered to be the conative aspect of the relationship. Finally, the study found support for two major outcomes of the consumer–brand relationship, brand equity and brand loyalty. These two outcomes are finding support as the behavioral aspect of the consumer–brand relationships. The empirical testing and validation of the model supported the fact that the behavioral dimensions are really influenced by attitudinal dimensions.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, *By operationlizing consumer–brand relationships through integrating the attitudinal and behavioral aspects, does the empirical testing of new consumer–brand relationship model truly advance the understanding of consumers' deep-rooted bond with brands?* The findings of the study truly advance the knowledge to the existing body of brand management literature, particularly the brand relationship to literature. This study highlights the role of the strong relationship between all the four attitudinal and behavioral components of consumer–brand

relationships. In fact, the consumer–brand relationship is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components, in which the relationship starts with the development of attitude strength and brand satisfaction, getting augmented through brand trust and attachment, and maintained through brand commitment. This brand commitment would lead to two behavioral components such as brand equity and brand loyalty. Hence, this study advances in the knowledge through its finding that the consumer–brand relationship is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components and consist of cognitive, affective, and conative components, which will lead to behavioral outcomes.

Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

In this study, the exploratory investigation shows that research on consumer–brand relationships that is originated from theories of interpersonal relationships tends to overlook and redefine the critical issues of how strong and intense consumer–brand relationship-generated brands become part of identity and provide intrinsic benefits for consumers and profit centers for marketers.

The study followed a mixed approach that started with a qualitative grounded theory approach and continued to the descriptive phase, wherein we used a structural equation modeling analysis. In this stage, we tested the most theoretical models with other two constrained and unconstrained models from a theoretical perspective. The most theoretical model (as proposed by this study) showed that it better fits with data compared with other alternative models. Thus, through a series of systematic set of studies, the research showed that in terms of good explanations and theoretical power, the process of consumer–brand relationships should be modeled with much more theoretical rigor and support. The study results also augmented the theoretical richness and diagnostic insights while conceptualizing consumer–brand relationships through the generation and integration of the attitudinal and behavioral components, such as: (1) brand attitude strength; (2) brand satisfaction; (3) brand trust; (4) brand attachment; (5) brand commitment; (6) brand equity,; and (7) brand loyalty.

The empirical validation of the theoretical model would add value over the existing literature of consumer–brand relationships in several ways. First, it provides more comprehensive, detailed, and integrated understanding of how consumers actually form relationships with brands than the previous study of individual constructs, as stand-alone theoretical constructs, would suggest. Second, by showing the theoretical model, and its comparison with most constrained and unconstrained models from a theoretical perspective demonstrates how relationship formation changes with changes in relationships and helps to identify the most useful pathway through which consumer might develop a relationship with the brand. Third, looking at the path coefficients, it would be easier to judge which components or subcomponents might have the strongest impact on the brand relationship formation.

Managerial Implications

This study helps the marketing practitioners for greater understanding and execution about when, where, and how to invest in the establishment of customer bond and the process through which the development of bond with a brand could be executed. The identification of relationship establishment constructs would also more directly answer the call from the marketing practitioner community for more precision in terms of relationship establishment and assist in management decision making. The exploration of relationship dimensions, particularly the relationship establishment drivers exclusively from branding helps to know where to begin the process of strong and deep-rooted bond creation with brands. This will also enable marketing practitioners to demonstrate good knowledge for the investment of marketing resources.

The core managerial question, which all managers would like to answer for every brand, is how they can turn the first-time users of a brand into loyal one and maintain relationships over time. The model proposed in this study has implications and will assist managers for investing monetary and nonmonetary resources for relationship maintenance, resolving managerial uncertainty, product and service design, and marketing communications.

We have in this research suggested seven consumer–brand relationship dimensions, these dimensions will help to conceptualize and measure the relationship building process from diversified perspectives. These identified dimensions and their integration are in line with previous literature. This integration of this diversified relationship paradigm helps the managers to resolve managerial uncertainty about how to take necessary actions, (e.g., promotion and marketing communication) at every stage and to put the notion of relationship building to best use of promoting deep customer-brand relationship.

However, the discussion of developing customer bond with the brand goes beyond customer loyalty and making the customer part of the brand. Managers believe that in addition to developing a loyal consumer base and positive word of mouth, customers with high level of attitudinal motivation may also be in a position to help companies to design the next-generation product or services (Jones 2006). Sometimes, the companies with a strong loyal customer base and customers with positive word of mouth often struggle to develop innovative product or services. It might be owing to the fact that the customer is repeatedly showing behavioral relationship with the brand or showing behavioral loyalty because of the absence of other alternatives. In this case, the attitudinal component of the relationship with the customer toward the brand is missing. In this context, this research investigated the feasibility and usefulness of the model empirically with the integration of all the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions such as the cognitive, affective, conative, and action dimensions in order to provide academicians and marketing practitioners with sufficient information to make decisions and to avoid managerial uncertainty.

Implications for Strategic Management

From the consumer–brand relationship model developed in this study, the consumer brand marketers may clearly see the strategic management of consumer–brand relationships starts with establishing the cognitive components of the relationship: brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction. The next step focuses more on the pursuit of augmenting consumer–brand relationships through constructs such as: brand trust and brand attachment, which function as the key mediators in the whole process of consumer–brand relationships. Once the augmentation has achieved, marketers should concentrate on how to maintain consumer–brand relationships. It could be achieved through a conative component, such as brand commitment, which functions as a key component of relationship maintenance.

Noticeably, brand trust and brand attachment in affective stage as explicated by the model are proven to be resulted in brand commitment, which directly influences brand equity and brand loyalty. This exhibits the importance of affective and conative components in the context of consumer branding. Extant research also supports this finding that these two components (trust and attachment) are very essential for behaviors, such as loyalty and equity (Bandyopadhyay and Martell 2007; Bowen and Chen 2001; Evanschitzky and Wunderlich 2006; Kandampully and Suhartanto 2000; Lee-Kelley et al. 2003; Oliver 1997). Therefore, managers should pay special attention to these two components for building strong and deep-rooted consumer–brand relationships.

Overall, the specific indicators for each latent construct as well as its relationship established by the model may help the consumer–brand marketer to establish an evaluation mechanism, which would monitor and keep consumer–brand relationships building efforts. Here, in this research, the researcher would like to show the power that the concept of consumer–brand relationship plays in the context of consumer branding. Strategic management of such relationship dimensions established in this study characterizes as an interrelated sequential process starting from establishing relationships through cognitive aspects, to augmenting using affective aspects, maintaining through conative aspects, and generating its outcomes. Therefore, the consumer brand marketers are advised to keep updating on each stage and develop strategies accordingly to have real benefit from their relationship building efforts.

Limitations of the Research

The consumer–brand relationship model introduced in this study is based on seven different constructs, which were derived using a nonmetaphorical approach, which form the basis of this study. The final consumer–brand relationship model introduced by this study is generalizable across different product categories and consumer segments, but it must be acknowledged that the scope of the SEM phase was

limited to three product categories and a single population group. This study does not purport that the results, particularly the relationship among variables, possess any level of external validity. Therefore, any attempt to replicate the study in other product categories and population group must be done with caution.

The extant literature in branding identified the role of consumer–brand relationships in management perspective. The issues are tied to the inability of the study to measure this aspect of the consumer–brand relationship. Moreover, it recognizes the failure to consider all the external variables, particularly other than the one from the consumers' point of view, which may have influenced the results. This study identifies this as an inherent limitation of this study.

One of the recognizable limitations of this study is that the research was not designed as a longitudinal study. The study was designed to test and validate the conceptual model at a single point in time using cross-sectional data. To have more confidence and understanding, the model should be tested using longitudinal data. It will help the researcher to understand significant statistical change in a single population over an extended period.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study provides another step in confronting the complex challenge associated with the process of consumer–brand relationships. Specifically, the study offers a framework to better understand the relationship between consumer and brands. In this regard, the study added more questions than answers. The following are some of the questions that are yet to be answered:

1. Is the relationship identified in this study between consumer and brand context-dependent?
2. Is it possible to isolate and measure the moderating influence of product involvement and brand involvement in the formation of consumer–brand relationships?
3. Are there any other constructs, other than from the consumer side, particularly from manager's perspective that influence the relationship between consumer and brands.
4. Are there any inherent heterogeneity or consumer segments based on the constructs identified at each stage of relationships in the model?
5. Do other moderating variables such as culture, gender, and age of the consumers have an influence on consumer–brand relationships?
6. Is the consumer–brand relationship model adaptable to other industries and other consumer groups? A future research must simultaneously examine multiple industries and multiple consumer groups within a single framework. This will provide more understanding about industry-specific changes and dynamics of consumer–brand relationships.

Chapter Summary

Today, marketers are challenged by allocating financial and nonfinancial resources with the goal of strengthening the relationship between consumers and brands. However, the investment made by these companies ranging from corporate social responsibility activities to advertising are often misguided, and it happens mainly because of the lack of proper metrics to measure and evaluate the outcomes of these relationship building efforts. Consequently, the objective of this study was to develop and test an empirical model that could measure consumer–brand relationships. Following a holistic approach through using a diverse methodological approach, the study developed the model of consumer–brand relationships. This model was developed and tested for reliability and validity following sequential mixed method design, incorporating the qualitative tradition of grounded theory followed by a quantitative method of structural equation modeling. The study provided a comprehensive approach for analyzing the dynamic relationship between consumers and brands. In conclusion, the finding of this study offers a wide range of theoretical and managerial contributions.

Appendix

Appendix 1: In-Depth Interview Protocol

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking your precious time to meet with me today. My name is Sreejesh S, conducting a study on consumer–brand relationships, and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the brand to which you are loyal. This information is mainly for assessing consumer–brand relationships, particularly identifying the major themes and process of consumer–brand relationships.

This interview will take around 1 h. The conversation would be recorded for study purpose, because I do not want to miss any of your valuable comments. In addition to that, I will be taking some notes during our discussion. As we are using mobile phones to record your conversation, please make sure to speak loudly so that we do not miss any of your comments. Your valuable comments would be kept confidential. I will assure you that the information collected from you will be included in my research work as it does not identify your identity. Finally, you can finish your interview at any point, and you do not have to talk about anything if you do not want to talk.

Are there any clarifications about what I have just explained?

Can I go ahead with the interview?

Warm-Up Questions (10 min)

1. Tell me about a brand with which you have a relatively strong relationship?
2. What kind of relationship you have with that brand?
3. What specialty that brand possesses?
4. Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?

Section 1: Questions (15 min)

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

1. When (time)
2. How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)
3. Who referred this brand
4. From where
5. What you felt
6. Did you buy that brand at that time
7. What kind of evaluation you had at that time (strong or weak) why?
8. About importance (positive or negative) why?
9. About the confidence (High or Low) why?
10. About the certainty of its performance (positive or negative) why?
11. How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time (Good or brand) why?

Section 2: Questions (15 min)

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

1. Do you feel that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?
2. Do you feel emotionally bonded to (brand name), explain?
3. Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?
4. How often are your thoughts and feelings toward (brand name) often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?
5. How often you have many thoughts about (brand name)?
6. How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?
7. Did you feel the brand is trustworthy as a relationship partner, how?
8. Elaborate on the satisfaction aspect related with your brand

Section 3: Questions (10 min)

Specific questions about conative or intentional component in relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of specific intentional aspects consumer felt about the brand.

1. Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs, if yes, then when did you decided or intentioned to stay with the brand for your future purposes. Why?
2. Why did you decided that it makes sense to continue using the brand
3. Why did you decided that staying with the brand is a very reasonable choice
4. Is it comes from your emotional connection and trustworthiness?

Section 4: Questions (20 min)

Questions related to outcome component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of this outcome component.

1. Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to your preferred brand and even on price. Which will you go for, your Brand or Brand B?

If the answer is the respondent's favorite Brand then:

- Is this intention to stay with the brand and the trustworthiness makes sense to buy the brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same, how, why?
  If the answer is Brand B then:
- How would you now justify your loyalty towards your favorite Brand?

2. Situation 2

There is Brand B which is equal on all aspects but is little less costlier than your favorite Brand. Now will you still buy your brand?

If the answer is the respondent's favorite Brand then:

- Is this intention to stay with the brand and the trustworthiness makes sense to buy the brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same but differ in price how, why?
  If the answer is Brand B then:
- How you would now justify your loyalty towards your favorite brand is price so important?

Appendix 2: Final Instrument

Do you think you have made a strong and deep rooted relationship with any brands in the past 12 months or before?

IF YES, to which of the following product category does that brand belongs:

- Apparels
- Laptops
- Automobiles

If you have not made a relationship with any of brands under the product categories listed above in the past 12 months or before, please disregard this survey. Thank you for your willingness to help!

This study is being conducted by the Department of Marketing, IBS Hyderabad, IFHE University, Hyderabad, AP, India. Your input in the following questionnaire will help us understand consumers' relationship with brands. Careful responses to questions about your brand relationships will be greatly appreciated by us, the researchers, as well as the thousands of people who have strong and deep rooted relationships with brands. You will have up to 15 min to complete this survey.

1. Approximately when (which year) was your first < brand name> purchase? (Please fill in 4-digit year)

   _____Year

2. During the last 12 months or before how many purchases have you taken from the selected product category?

   _____

3. During the last 12 months or before, how many times did you purchased <brand name>?

   _____ Times

4. During the last 12 months or before, how many times did you purchased any other products from the same brand < brand name>?

   _____ Times

5. What kind of relationship do you think you have with it < brand name>?

   _____

6. As a consumer/customer how would you rate your attitude strength towards <brand name> as opposed to other brands Please choose the number that best represents how much you agree with the following statements.

   My attitude to my favourite brand is

Very Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very positive

   How certain do you feel about your attitude toward your favourite brand in this product category?

Not very certain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very certain

   How important would you say your favourite brand is to you personally?

Not very Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important

   How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand?

Not very Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Knowledgeable

7. The following statements are related to the satisfaction <brand name>. Please rate each item on a scale of 1 to 7.

Considering all my consumption experience with [brand name] I am…

Not Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Satisfied
Not Pleased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Pleased
Disappointed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not Disappointed

8. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding trustworthiness with brand, from 1 "*strongly disagree*," to 7 "*strongly agree*."

	Strongly disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	
I Trust this brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I relay on this brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a honest brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This brand is safe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. The following statements regarding your relationship with <brand name>. Please choose the number that best reflects your feeling. Please indicate the degree to which your response ranges for the bi-polar adjectives

To what extent is (brand name) part of you and who you are?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High

To what extent do you feel personally connected to (brand name)?

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Highly connected

To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to (brand name)?

Not very Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important

To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward (brand name) often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?

Not very Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important

10. Listed below are several statements regarding your relationship with <brand name>. Please choose the number that best reflects your intentional aspect of brand relationships, from 1 "*strongly disagree*," to 7 "*strongly agree*."

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
It makes sense to continue using the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am committed to the brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying with the brand gives me emotional gratification	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying with the brand is a very reasonable choice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Below are several statements that describe different behaviours that you might consider as a customer of <brand name>. Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements, from 1 "*strongly disagree*," to 7 *strongly agree*."

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
I consider myself to be loyal to [brand name]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Only under extreme circumstances would I consider purchasing a brand of this product different from [brand name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If the store was out of [brand name], I would go somewhere else to buy some	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even when another brand is on sale, I would prefer the brand [brand name]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. We are interested in understanding the differentiating aspect or value that you have imparted towards the brand. Please choose the number that best represents how much you agree or disagree with the following statements from 1 "*strongly disagree*," to 7 "*strongly agree*."

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
It makes sense to buy [brand name] instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if another brand has the same features as [brand name], I would prefer to buy [brand name]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If there is another brand as good as [brand name], I prefer to buy [brand name]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If another brand is not different from [brand name] in any way, it seems smarter to purchase [brand name]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. Are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female

14. Which year were you born? (Please fill in 4-digit year) _____Year

15. Which of the following best describes your education level?

   ☐ Less than High School
   ☐ Graduation
   ☐ Post Graduation
   ☐ Others

16. What is your ethnic background?

   ☐ South
   ☐ North East
   ☐ West
   ☐ North
   ☐ Others

17. What was your approximate total household income last year?

   ☐ Less than 20000
   ☐ Rupees 20000-30000
   ☐ Rupees 30000-40000
   ☐ Rupees 40000-50000
   ☐ More than 50000

18. What is your marital status?

   ☐ Married
   ☐ Single
   ☐ Divorced/Separated
   ☐ Widowed

Information Sheet

Development and Validation of a Comprehensive Model of Consumer–Brand Relationships

Thank you for participating in the study of "Development and Validation of a Comprehensive Model of Consumer-brand Relationships." The purpose of this study is to develop and validate a conceptual model of consumer–brand relationships in Indian context. This study will involve consumers/customers who have purchased any brand at least once in the past 12 months or more, who are over 18 years old and volunteer to complete this survey. This study is confidential in that no identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to fill out the questionnaire, which will take approximately 15 min. All your responses will be used only for the purpose of the study. You understand that your participation in this study is very important.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with IBS Hyderabad. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected. This research study has been reviewed by the PhD office, IBS Hyderabad, IFHE University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Director, IBS Hyderabad through Dr. Venu Gopal Rao, Associate Dean Research. By responding to this survey, you acknowledge that you understand the following: Your participation is voluntary; you can elect to withdraw at any time; there are no positive or negative benefits from responding to this survey; and the researcher has your consent to publish materials obtained from this research.

If you have further questions, you can contact Dr. Subhadip Roy, Associate Professor, Department of Marketing & Strategy, IBS Hyderabad at (+91) 9553319133. By signing on the button below you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided above and that you agree to participate in this survey.

Appendix 3: Covariance Matrix

	TR1	TR2	TR3	TR4	SAT1	SAT2	SAT3	ATTH1	ATTH2	ATTH3	ATTH4	EQ1
TR1	2.4											
TR2	1.42	2.24										
TR3	1.62	1.71	2.18									
TR4	1.66	1.56	1.87	2.71								
SAT1	0.86	1.13	1.1	1.06	1.83							
SAT2	1.42	1.4	1.38	1.34	1.37	2.39						
SAT3	0.97	1.15	1.09	1.02	1.2	1.62	2.2					
ATTH1	1.23	1.3	1.23	1.26	1.1	1.47	1.39	2.2				
ATTH2	1.27	1.19	1.14	1.1	0.83	1.23	1.01	1.18	1.97			
ATTH3	1.03	1.13	1.01	0.96	0.95	1.45	1.23	1.35	1.11	2.01		
ATTH4	1.28	1.31	1.33	1.36	1.14	1.58	1.45	1.47	1.2	1.5	2.11	
EQ1	1.06	1	1.04	0.94	0.88	1.21	1.36	1.38	1.05	1.24	1.25	2.01
EQ2	1.36	1.23	1.29	1.27	1.05	1.52	1.24	1.33	1.15	1.29	1.38	1.49
EQ3	1.35	1.39	1.32	1.37	1.14	1.75	1.41	1.44	1.28	1.46	1.51	1.5
EQ4	1.28	1.32	1.32	1.41	1	1.51	1.38	1.49	1.21	1.33	1.56	1.5
COM1	0.82	0.97	0.77	0.69	0.64	0.96	0.97	0.87	0.65	0.88	0.94	0.87
COM2	0.73	0.9	0.77	0.71	0.64	0.9	0.9	0.85	0.61	0.83	0.86	0.83
COM3	0.84	0.97	0.78	0.75	0.62	0.94	0.93	0.88	0.69	0.93	0.94	0.93
COM4	0.81	0.87	0.8	0.86	0.67	0.96	0.98	0.86	0.67	0.93	0.93	0.95
LOY1	1.26	1.27	1.18	1.23	0.97	1.47	1.26	1.18	1.13	1.11	1.29	1.21
LOY2	1.17	1.23	1.18	1.2	1.01	1.47	1.35	1.39	1.24	1.33	1.4	1.39
LOY3	1.03	1.16	1.08	1.07	0.99	1.4	1.41	1.33	1.01	1.3	1.31	1.25
LOY4	1.05	1.21	1.13	1.24	0.96	1.43	1.32	1.24	1.13	1.19	1.3	1.27
ATT1	1.05	0.86	0.84	0.9	0.59	0.83	0.72	0.83	0.95	0.74	0.78	0.74
ATT2	1.42	1.03	1.12	1.25	0.66	0.99	0.81	0.98	1.06	0.75	0.92	0.96
ATT3	1.16	1.17	1	1.07	0.79	1.07	1.03	1.16	1.03	0.95	1.08	1.08
ATT4	1.11	1	1.11	1.26	0.77	0.84	0.7	0.89	0.86	0.7	0.84	0.75

	EQ2	EQ3	EQ4	COM1	COM2	COM3	COM4	LOY1	LOY2	LOY3	LOY4	ATT1	ATT2	ATT3	ATT4
EQ2	2.18														
EQ3	1.72	2.62													
EQ4	1.58	2.05	2.39												
COM1	1.07	1.1	0.99	2.13											
COM2	0.97	1.04	0.96	1.88	1.96										
COM3	0.98	1.15	1.05	1.89	1.8	2.08									
COM4	1.04	1.17	1.08	1.85	1.78	1.88	2.04								
LOY1	1.49	1.55	1.32	1.57	1.5	1.5	1.63	3.11							
LOY2	1.6	1.67	1.46	1.73	1.66	1.67	1.78	2.86	3.53						
LOY3	1.45	1.46	1.34	1.57	1.48	1.51	1.63	2.39	2.61	2.92					
LOY4	1.52	1.62	1.39	1.51	1.53	1.51	1.61	2.53	2.7	2.34	2.8				
ATT1	0.9	0.81	0.73	0.47	0.4	0.39	0.37	0.79	0.72	0.7	0.67	1.79			
ATT2	1.19	0.96	1	0.76	0.68	0.73	0.79	1.1	1.1	0.94	1.01	1.17	2.08		
ATT3	1.09	1.04	1.03	0.8	0.66	0.72	0.75	1.06	1.03	0.98	0.89	0.99	1.22	2.02	
ATT4	1	0.9	0.93	0.49	0.44	0.54	0.54	0.86	0.87	0.67	0.81	1.02	1.18	1.14	2.11

Appendix 4: Interview Participant Response Summary

Respondent 1

Interview Date	2nd Sept 2012
Name	Eureka Singh
Gender	Female
Age	25
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Zara (Apparel brand)

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	The brand I associate with is Zara
Define the relationship with your Brand	I feel Zara is the only brand that justifies my taste in clothes. It makes me feel special and different at the same time
What specialty your brand possesses?	The specialty of Zara is that it keeps itself updated with the latest trends in the fashion, so I hardly catch hold of anything that is outdated
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	The magnitude is huge to an extent that when I see a Zara outlet, other stores automatically vanishes. Yes it is augmenting because whenever I visit the store it offers new designs all the time
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes as I mentioned earlier that it follows the trend so one would always find some new design, so I always look forward to visiting the store since I know that Zara can surprise me!

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about your brand	I got to know about this brand through my dad
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	He attended the conference in London, at that time India was not familiar with the brand Zara and neither was I. he bought a top and I fell in love with it from the first look
What did you feel at that time?	When I tried the top, it made me feel like princess since it has classiness associated with it and also the fit was amazing
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Since Zara was not introduced in India at that point, so I never had a prior knowledge about this brand until my dad got it

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes it is part of me since it depicts my personality to the core in terms of uniqueness and sophistication
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Zara as a person would catch every one's attention as soon as he/she walks in. the person will look royal, classy, sophisticated and at the same time trendy and in sync with the latest fashion. The person will be a head turner
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Yes definitely, when I wear Zara I get poured with complements all the time…so yeah! In that matter it never ditches me, but yes since I am always inspired by royal look and classiness so yes people automatically use these adjectives whenever I wear Zara
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	The brand is credible in terms of quality and yes every penny is worth spent when you enter a Zara store
Do you feel Zara as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	As of now it has never deceived me and I am sure it will never do it in future because Zara is one brand that never compromises on style and quality and has remained the same throughout its existence so I completely trust this brand
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes this brand is still and will always be in option in future because there is a sense of loyalty associated with it
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand? Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	Yes absolutely! I say it out of emotion because it's my favorite nut also in terms of logic because it has always happened with me that I look out for other store just to try out the new stuff but I end up buying from Zara because its styling is out of this world

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	Any day Zara because I am saying it from my personal experience. I will not even give a second thought to it.
Even Brand equity is same	I am not sure but I can at least give it a try
So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	No I never compromise on quality, even if it's cheaper I will still buy from Zara because there is credibility and affection associated with it

Respondent 2

Interview Date	7th Sept 2012
Name	Noel D'Souza
Gender	Male
Age	28
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Apple

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	My favorite brand is Apple. When the first Apple had come I really wanted to buy it but that I didn't have the money but then I finally got it when I was working that was in 2009. Since 2009 I have never changed my brand
Define the relationship with your Brand	Giving it a one word, I feel it is an aura because once you start using an Apple product you can't really go to another product. I had a 3GS before & I wanted to buy a phone & I bought the next version that is Apple 4s even though I had options to buy another phones too but I am still struck to iPhone. I feel it's an aura because it still attracts you
What specialty your brand possesses?	The Touch & the feel because no other touch screen phones have same feeling on touch panel plus the status, when you use an iPhone & you compare with other brands like Samsung it just has different feeling altogether & different brand value
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Definitely because if I had to buy another phone I would have got it but then what made me buy iPhone 4s was the features because when I used the 3GS that time I had totally different feeling for Apple & when 4s came which was far better than 3GS, it made me stuck to an Apple rather than going to another brand no naturally I am building up my relationship with Apple

With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes I am getting more from my previous purchase from Apple in terms of the features because 4s now has more features than 3GS, Apple has improved the operating systems. The applications have improved to large extent, hence justifying my every purchase
Is it because of features you are with Apple	No, not really because same features you can get in another phones too but the feel you get while operating same application in iphone & other phone is totally different

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Apple	The first time I heard about Apple was when I was in school when you use to get that colorful desktop's & all from Apple which were pink green & those lighted desktops. That was the time when I saw an Apple product. From that point I fantasized having one
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	I came to know from my school only since our computer labs used to have them from that point I came to know Apple as a brand exited
What did you feel at that time?	In school like we all use fight for the seat which had newest Apple desktop there & no one allowed to sit on someone else's desktop.
	The feeling at that time was the thing which I fantasized about was not in my reach because I was just a kid at that time & I didn't know how to use a desktop at that time
What was the importance you associated with that seat which had Apple desktop	Even though I didn't own that desktop but working on it itself made me feel better because I could compare it with my desktop at home & the difference was huge so I use to feel better because of its appearance at that time because my desktop was bulky one & Apple being sleek. Specially the shape & the color which Apple provided was not available
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	At that age I didn't really pay heed to the configurations & all but during my 11 when I got into gadgets I leant more about them, the features & what all other products Apple cater too

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes definitely. See I have two phones a Sony Ericson too but if I leave my Apple iPhone some where it makes me feel incomplete & this doesn't happen with Sony Ericson, it feels I am missing something
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Someone who's my best friend because what I share with my friends I do not share with everyone so he will be someone whom i am too close with
	Someone I can be with anytime
	Someone I can depend upon as when I need him I would know he will be there with me
	Personality: Outgoing, maybe helpful, not an introvert
	Looks: If it's a girl then she has to be beautiful & if he is a guy then he has to be handsome. Attractive looks
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	What I feel is when I carry I phone that the message it gives to other is that I am different from other people, m not similar to anyone else
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	See for example I search something on internet on iPhone the data it will give me is instant & I know I can rely on iPhone because it will never hang so it is life when you trust your friend you know it will never backstab you, it's just same thing with Apple
Do you feel Apple as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	See with every new phone Apple has come up the sales have actually increased. With every new phone Apple has actually increased its image & it has never decreased so they have made people to think that Apple will never deceive them
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes definitely
	If tomorrow I need to buy a phone again it has to be Apple & yes provide Apple comes up with better version & until now they have always come up with better version from 2G to 3G to 4s. Every product has outperformed other
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	For me it makes sense because as when you stick to something you really can't change & as of for me until I get good reference I don't try out things
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	it is difficult for me to change my brand until some outstanding product is launched by anyone
	You can say that because with time (almost 5 years) I share a bond with apple which will always remain & that is enough for me to not to think to go another brand

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	I will still go for Apple iPhone because I have been using this brand from quite some time n I have trust on Apple so one will always go for something that one trusts even though the other one might be good and until and unless I get good reference I won't think of buying that Brand
Even Brand equity is same	I might because if the source is credible enough which says that Brand B is better than iPhone then I can think of
So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	By credible source I mean someone who is close to me & has actually used both iPhone & Brand B & then has landed up to this conclusion

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Yes I will still prefer because money is not the criteria it's about Apple, it's about what the product has it for you

Respondent 3

Interview Date	7th Sept 2012
Name	Akshay Babbar
Gender	Male
Age	25
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Kennth Cole, a watch brand

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	I would say that would be Kennth Cole, it's a watch brand & I have been buying this brand for quite some time now & I feel close to this brand. First thing I do whenever I go to buy a watch is probably look out for this brand before I see the others
Define the relationship with your Brand	It's a relationship of trust what I feel like because whenever I bought this watch I was sure enough that this is never gonna go bad
How do you perceive your brand on the terms of satisfaction?	This brand is pretty different from the other ones because most the brands do not pertain to youth & even if you do they seems to be too childish but this brand has mix of youth & sophistication.
As you said this watch is worn by celebrities so does that makes you go for this brand?	They also come up with very innovative stuff as in these watches are worn by those who are at very high post, sportsmen of be it a businessmen & in that case they cater to combined set of style & elegance
	That definitely comes to my mind because as the concept of Brand equity says & because I know this brand is worn by people who has that sense of style & sophistication so when you wear it you feel comfortable with it but apart from that it has additional features which others don't provide as in they were the first one to come with touch dials which was totally different & good concept
What specialty your brand possesses?	It is completely differentiated you know as in if you look at the Brand called Rado they have a particular style with black watch so even you look at from far point u get to know that its Rado so same it is with this because of the Touch dials & illumination they provide
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Today I own four watches of this brand but every time I go I feel probably this time they may not have a watch that is going to satisfy me again because usually all watch companies have similar styling but Kenneth Cole has proved me wrong every time. Whenever I go it has a distinct design ready for me which would be totally different from what I had own. So my relationship is going deeper & deeper because without going to other brands I know that probably this has the watch I am looking for

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about this brand|	I was in 11 when my dad gifted this brand to me. I wasn't aware of this brand but when you wear it people ask you what brand is this because it's one of the rare brands so people don't know about this so I studied about this brand & came to know that this is a good brand
Would you say that because your dad gifted this so probably you might have emotional connection to buy this brand?	Yes definitely it had emotional connection since my dad gifted it but even if that has been gifted but I am not satisfied so probably I won't go for second buy just for the sake that it has been gifted by my dad.
	Its about the style statement because all watches give you time only they only differentiate in style
What did you feel at that time?	Initially when I got this brand I didn't know about its performance because it was still in testing period but then the first watch that I got of this company is still with me & I have just got it repaired just once in 10 years so quality aspect is very good & it has this pick up service as in its not the brand of India so you can register your complain online & they would come to pick the watch from your place so convenience aspect is also there.
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Yes I did some research online about what all models they had & what I he money you would like to buy each of the brand feel that with each of the watch model was different so that the kind of thing. So probably if you have money you would tend to buy every model.
What kind of satisfaction you have with this brand?	You buy a watch just for the time sake but this watch give you more in terms of style & added features like touch dial is pretty cool because you don't find in regular watches &
Elaborate on the satisfaction aspect	then you it's always going to be with you, will always show the right time so it's like you have that trust on this brand.

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes, because whatever you wear it becomes part of you be it clothes or watch for that matter, it kind of depicts my personality showing that my sophisticated with a bit of trendiness
Talk about your emotional connection with this brand	On the emotional aspect I am connected to it emotionally for the reason being it was gifted by my dad & he preferred this brand & wore it so it's like this brand comes to my mind automatically.
	But for me it's also about quality & suitability of this brand to me

This seems to be expensive watch so did price ever affect you?	It's pricy but all good things come with a price tag so its high quality high price, simple
	It's worth every penny
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, personality attributes, features, attitude	First thing is that person would definitely know about the style statement because I will call him very stylish.
	It has bit of elegance
	Person who would try out different variety of things, unique things
	Personality: The person will make you feel special because it's a premium brand so give you an extra edge
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Credible is because of quality & uniqueness
	I know it is always going to give me right time & with every new purchase I will get altogether new design
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes definitely
	It has never disappointed me before so wouldn't do that in future too that much trust I have in this brand
	But yes I might try out other brands too because there are other good brands too & looking at price, you cannot always go for this pricy brand

Situation 1

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	It depends upon price difference because if its little cheaper like difference is only of 3k to 4k I would probably go for Kenneth Cole because I have that trust factor with it but yes if price difference is more & features, style, design are same then I might think of going for Brand B
Suppose you bough Brand B because you got everything at half the price now depict your relationship with your brand since you chose some other brand over it?	Trust factor would go down if 5 years down the line I got to know that some other Brand was equal on all the aspect & were charging less than Kenneth Cole so probably I would feel cheated as in all these years I would be overpaying
	But then it's also about brand even though it's expensive but then people know about this brand & you are wearing it on your wrist so even if it's not worth it, it does make you feel special
Justify your trust factor now?	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms	I will go for my Brand if all aspects are same because I am justifying my loyalty towards Kenneth Cole but then if some other brand is better even 1% than mine I won't hesitate in switching
If I have to ask you what features apart from price will make you buy Brand B	Design, Ease of carry, how well you can relate to your personality, add on features it can give like even Rs.500 watch can give you time but if the company can surprise you stuff which you can never imagine with a watch so that is a major hold on for me

Respondent 4

Interview Date	7th Sept 2012
Name	Shoaib Ahmed Khan
Gender	Male
Age	23
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Apple iPhone

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	It would be with Apple,
	I have iphone, iPad, iPod & MacBook Pro
	Actually my first Apple product was iphone before that I knew about Apple but didn't have craze for it but after using the iphone & seeing the market conditions that everybody is copying iphone & above all the user experience that you get from iphone, the simplicity, design, innovativeness, touch panel has actually made me such a huge fan of Apple
What specialty your brand possesses?	That would be innovation…Every product of theirs is always new with new features, something that has never been done before on a large scale
	Their product features brings a lot of easiness, it makes your life simpler as in case of iphone it would be its Applications. Iphone was the first phone to give real gaming power on the phone as like that of PC
	Second it is ease of communication, before this in the era of Nokia we had to call customer care to download our internet settings but in case of iphone you just insert the SIM & the work is done, your internet stats working automatically so need of calling customer care moreover it's very easy to operate, you don't have to be tech-savvy to use iphone even 5 year or 6 year old can use it efficiently
Define your satisfaction level with Apple	On a scale of 10 I would say my satisfaction level is 9.5
	First of all satisfaction come when you do what you really want to do
	This is because everything is just so simple from making calls to surfing net. Even any message comes you don't have to unlock your phone message just gets flashed on your screen.
	It's simple, easy & its operations are too smooth hence I love using iphone or ipod.
	It's about the feeling & quality because my phone in last 4 years have never hanged so I know my using the best product.
	Like you can use your phone even if only 1 % on battery is left whereas in other phones you cannot do that, batter dies immediately even if you click few numbers.
	Then my phone can switch over 2G & 3G network automatically without hampering my work
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Yes it is augmenting because with every purchase I know I had actually bout the best in market. That feeling has always been there
Is it because of features you are with Apple	See, I would say Features yes & above all the experience of using those applications

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Apple	It was in 2002 & I was in 11th std when my cousin's friend had got this classic ipod from Apple but he didn't know how to put songs in it so he got it to me since I was good with technology & then I used that ipod for a day or two & actually liked it a lot because it was so easy to use. That was my first experience with Apple
What did you feel at that time?	I felt its user friendliness a lot at that time
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	I sync the ipod looking up at the internet since it was a new product so at that time I searched about the company gained knowledge about this product. That was the instance I would say made me know more about this product. I regularly started following this brand through their websites & though their product news. Like before this I knew about Macintosh but didn't know Apple has produced it but after this incident I came to know about it
How confident were you at that point in regard Apple.	At that time memory cards were new & most of them came with 64 MB at the max but this ipod had memory of 4 GB & at the same time the computer I was syncing with too had the memory of 4 GB so I was quiet impressed that you fit such a huge memory in such a small device.
	So I anticipated at that time that if they come out with new product it will be better than this. Therefore I had a positive evaluation of Apple at that time

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Of course, yes because I have 4 Apple products so they are very much part of me. My every work is through them. Without them I would feel incomplete
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Since childhood I like trying out different things, doing something new, I don't like monotony & even Apple always tries to do something new
	That's what make my relationship with Apple so strong
Do you feel some emotional connection with Apple	Yes because as we know Steve made Apple what it is today so reading about him & listening to him made me admire him today. He was the person who would break the rules will do something without thinking of loosing something or fear of losing some money so feel that emotional connection

Can you describe your bond with Apple…. why do have that emotional connection	Thing about Steve Jobs is way he express himself…he talks about what good can be done to people, what new can be added to the world. So they are just not concerned with their profits instead what value they can add to the world
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude, personality	Sleek & stylish If it's a girl in a party then all the men will be looking at her If it's a man them he would be a well built man. Inner attributes: Straight forward person with a smile & helping nature
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why and how?	Credibility comes from the fact that they have always been best on their products. Apple has
Do you feel Apple as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	No, it has never deceived me before & will never do that, this much trust I have on them on their technology because up till now I have not faced any problem with Apple products
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes Apple will be the first option. See iPhone 5 is yet to be launched & before knowing how that phone will be, without seeing I have already thought of buying it. Because I know Apple will come something different This also shows credibility of Apple that you were talking about
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	See my family don not have Apple products they have Samsung, Sony so when I compare my Apple with them I could see the change. Apple is sleek, stylish, simple & has the best touch panel. All are just copying Apple but as said by cheating you cannot win
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	Apple has always done what he has said like Apple never said it would have a Bluetooth but long time back they said they would have video conferencing. They actually cannot have Bluetooth because their most of the revenues come from iTunes & with Bluetooth people can forward for free music which is loss making thing for them

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for? Even Brand equity is same	I would prefer Apple only because of already said reasons

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	See Apple is worth every penny so even if you are shelling out more you are getting more in return to so still Apple

Respondent 5

M. Hello Sir, can I please know your name first of all.

R. Mittal Parik

M. Ok.…tell me something more about yourself

R. Reading magazines and watching cricket

M. The brand which you like the most

R. Tupperware related to bottles and food related containers.

M. So why is it your favorite brand?

R. value for money, durability.

M. So what kind of relationship do you share with your brand?

R. Faith and trust

M. So there are number of people around us whom we share a very special relationship with…now if I bring back the same concept to a brand…like u have relationships with people and now I say you have a relationship with Tupperware..so how would you define your relationship with this brand?

R. Secure & Trustworthy.

M. So friend, it's like your friend? So how is it like your friend?

R. It cares for my well being by providing safe food

M. tell me something that is very special about this brand?

R.

M. Evaluation for the first time?

R. Initially ok, but substitutes couldn't compensate for it.

M. so you said your brand is like your mate, so if I ask you your magnitude of relationship with this brand, what would it be like? Is it like your best friend or casual friend? How do you see this relationship?

R. Blind faith(10/10).

M. What would be importance of Tupperware and level of dependency on the particular brand.

R. High since related to health and the level of confidence I have in this brand is immense and confidence upto the mark.

M. Now let's talk about some flaws in your brand?

R. Bundling up problem as a single piece of a product cannot be bought. Availability is a big issue. Lack on promotion and more purchasing options should be there

M. If there is a new brand in the market which lay emphasis on the above mentioned flaws in Tupperware and also providing the same quality would you wanna shift with a escalated price?

R. Yes would want to try to and would then surely adopt the product.

M. Words that could associate your relationship with Tupperware?

R. Trust, Reliable and safety with respect to health.

Respondent 6

M. Hello ma'am, can I please know your name first of all.

R. My name is Divya.

M. Ok….tell me something more about yourself

R. I am a very chilled out person when I relate myself to clothing.

M. You said clothing…so this means you love clothes

R. Yes

M. So are you a shopaholic?

R. Ya I am too much of a shopaholic.

M. If I ask you then what are your favorite brands when you go out for shopping?

R. When I go out for shopping my favorite brands are Tommy, UCB, Esprit, Mango, chemistry, woodland….

M. Oh my God! So you are a big Brand Freak.

R. Ya yes I am a very big brand freak

M. So what your one personal favorite brand then?

R. When it comes to variety I would be probably choosing United Colors of Benetton….that is my favorite brand when it comes to shopping.

M. So why is it your favorite brand?

R. Actually I like its clothing, variety, accessories and all…so its o.k. when it comes to UCB

M. Is it o.k. or is it very good? You said it's your favorite brand?

R. Ya, it's my favorite brand. It gives me a comfortable feeling when I go and shop there. It makes me feel real.

M. So it makes you feel real…tell me what is this real?

R. Like when you go for shopping they have variety of things…and it's not artificial..Like when you compare it with the other things, I have to think but in UCB I don't think, I just purchase it.

M. So there are number of people around us whom we share a very special relationship with…now if I bring back the same concept to a brand…like u have relationships with people and now I say you have a relationship with UCB..so how would you define your relationship with this brand?

R. My relationship with this brand is….it's like my mate

M. So friend, it's like your friend? So how is it like your friend?

R. Like when it's compared to friendship it's like I every time carry this thing with me.

M. So what all UCB's stuff do you already have?

R. Ahh…when it comes to summer clothing I have summer clothes and for winter I have my winter collection…accessories and all..I have almost everything of UCB.

M. Tell me something that is very special about this brand?

R. Its variety

M. Ohk

R. Like when it comes to party-wear they have good party wear, In casuals they have good casuals. Beach wears, lingerie's, etc.

M. So you said your brand is like your mate, so if I ask you your magnitude of relationship with this brand, what would it be like? Is it like your best friend or casual friend? How do you see this relationship?

R. Yes yes, it's like my best friend.

M. So can I say you can't live without this brand?

R. Yes I can't be without this brand.

M. Ohk, so let me now go back to the time when your friendship with this brand started…so when was the time when u got introduced to this brand?

R. It was back when I was in grade 9th, I saw its commercial and thought it to be worth a try and since then I have been with this brand.

M. So it's been like what 5 to 6 years right?

R. Ya, more than that I guess

M. So how did this association start? Was it some friend or relative who introduced you to the brand or how was it?

R. In the start I saw an advertisement and then I was motivated by my friends and all…so probably it was various influence that I had.

M. What was it of this brand that you first bought??what was your first purchase?

R. My purchase was a simple t-shirt.

M. So when you wore this t-shirt, how did you feel?

R. It was like whenever I make a purchase it is for a long use and when I wore this t-shirt, it was very comfortable..its fabric was nice..and even after washing it again and again, its color didn't fade…its flexibility and the way it stretched were too good…such that it lasted for 2 or 3 years.

M. So can we say that u had a very positive kind of experience?

R. Yes, it was very positive

M. So you feel confident when you wear this brand?

R. Yes, wearing a UCB t-shirt makes me feel so confident of myself.

M. Ohk…so how do you rate your knowledge about your brand? How well do you know your best friend?

R. Yes I think I know a lot, I often keep looking for new deals that they offer…I am also their member …so every time I keep looking for their schemes.

M. So tell me do you feel this brand is a part of who you are?

R. Yes surely, you can say that.

M. And how can I say that?

R. Like I am carrying this brand everywhere, my shoes, my belts, my t-shirts, almost everything.

M. So you are emotionally bonded to this brand?

R. Yes totally …I am emotionally boded.

M. So if I take out this brand from your life, how will that impact you?

R. It would be like walking away from my friend.

M. So how will you live then without this brand?

R. No, I am very much attached to it.

M. Ok, so tell me does the brand name UCB say something to the other people of who you are? like how do they perceive you when they see you wearing this brand?

R. Everybody see's and says she is wearing a UCB t-shirt…this gives you a distinctive feeling from others.

M. So how often are your thoughts and feelings are about this brand? Does it come very naturally?

R. Yes

M. So when you go out to shop and see a UCB outlet, do you rush towards it or you feel no, let me first check out some other stores?

R. See it's like when I see a UCB retail store, it gives a very positive vibe…as if its clothes will fit me perfect, these are meant for me..so my thoughts and feelings are attached to that feeling.

M. Do you think the brand is very credible on whatever products it might have given you or have you encountered some bad experiences as well?

R. Till now it has given me a good experience so yes I can safely say it's credible.

M. So this brand is worth sticking for a long time? so do you see yourself using this brand in future as well?

R. Actually the thing is that when you compare UCB with any other brand, even in terms of price if I say…with Tommy or Espirit, you can't buy much but UCB is very affordable and you can buy a lot of t-shirts or accessories in one go.

M. So only because of price you have gone in for UCB or is there some other association as well?

R. Price and variety, both are important for me. But price for sure is very important.

M. So, ohk if I ask you about your second favorite brand, what would that be?

R. I think it will be Espirit.

M. So ok, if I give you two dresses now, one UCB of 2500 and the other esprit of 2000, everything about the two dresses is the same…the only difference is price, how will you chose one of them?

R. I will still stick to UCB as I am very much attached to it.

M. So give me 3 words about your relationship with this brand.

R. It gives me life, trust it and has a good quality.

M. Ohk, thank you so much for time.

Respondent 7

M. Hi ma'am…I am from IBS and we are conducting a survey on consumer brand relationship. Can we start with your introduction…

R. Hello…I am Shubhangi Bose…I am doing my MBA from ICFAI University and I have taken Finance as my major's.

M. So after taking finance as major are you left with any time to have some hobbies of your own?

R. Yes, u have to manage time that is life all about and if u talk of hobbies those would be reading books, watching movies, shopping…well that is every girl's favorite pass time.

M. Ok…so what do you shop generally then?

R. Well normally it's all about clothes, apparels, cosmetics…

M. And what is it on that you send your maximum time on shopping?

R. I think that would be cosmetics and apparels.

M. So now that you are so much into shopping can I ask you that what's your favorite brand then?

R. Well clearly, my favorite brand is Revlon

M. And why do you say it's Revlon?

R. It's mainly because I like their products…I have been now using it from a long time.

M. So what all range is Revlon offering to you?

R. Well range of products?

M. Yes, yes range of products

R. Well they have everything from eyeliner to lip gloss to lipstick to mascara to foundation.

M. So are you using all the products?

R. Yes almost

M. So are you satisfied by using all the products they offer?

R. Yes I am satisfied.

M. Ok, so if I ask you what is your level of satisfaction on the scale of one to ten?

R. I would rate it at 9.5

M. Why did you leave that.5?

R. Well because there are some products of other brands which are better.

M. And what are these other brands?

R. Other brands as in Oriflame, Avon, Lakme.

M. So are you not brand loyal den?

R. I am brand loyal, that's why I have rated it 9.5, else it would have been somewhere around 2.5 or 3.5 maybe.

M. So if u had to tell me a specialty about your brand Revlon, what would that be?

R. I think it goes with my skin very well, and I have been using this product and I am very comfortable with this product.

M. Well just like we have people around us and we share some relationship with them, in the same way if I ask you your relationship with your brand, what kind would it be?

R. Well I have been with this brand for a very long time now, so it's like my best friend now

M. So, what is it in the brand that makes it your best friend?

R. Well the way it goes with the texture of my skin that is very important for me and so it is like my best friend

M. And are you satisfied about all the things related to your brand? The price, the quality?

R. The quality comes first for me and I am satisfied with the price as well

M. Ok, so apart from the products you mentioned, do they have any other kind of products as well, like body showers maybe?

R. No, they are only into cosmetics not into body care

M. So tell me when did your relationship with this brand began?

R. I think right from the teenage I have been using this product..Right from when I was 15–16 years old.

M. Who introduced you to this brand?

R. Well I had my friends and some of my family members using their product and that's how I got to know about it

M. So it was because your friends were using that you started using?

R. Yes, I started because of them.

M. So gradually when you started using, how did you feel?

R. I liked the product, compared to other products I liked it better in every sense.

M. So if I go back to your teens when you started using this product, what was their first product that you used?

R. The first product was probably eyeliner and now I have been using it from a very long time…gradually I started using other products.

M. So the first time you used that eyeliner how did you feel about yourself?

R. I felt nice, also that yes the product is good, glazier…and I also got a lot of compliments on using the product and it looked nice on me.

M. So, other people's appreciation…was it one of the factors that you continued with this product?

R. Yes

M. So it was your liking the product and others appreciation then?

R. Yes, it was both the factors being comfortable with the brand and other's liking it on you

M. So if I ask you, how knowledgeable do you feel about brand Revlon?

R. As far as its Revlon, I think I know about 80% about the brand…

M. So where do you think are you missing out on the 20%?

R. I don't know about like some other products…like I don't know like compacts.

M. So have you ever had any bad experience with the brand? Any skin allergies?

R. As of now I have not encountered any bad experience…none that I can think of.

M. So, has this brand become a part of you?

R. It's been very long now that I have been using this product…and I have used other products as well…but over time I have come to know that this product is much suited to my skin than any other product…that's why I am so comfortable with the brand and I like it.

M. Do you feel emotionally bonded to this brand?

R. Yes, if you take this brand out of my life it will be a problem. Because for my make up means the products of Revlon.

M. Well that's a nice thought. So you were telling me, that when you wear the Revlon products, you get a lot of compliments? Is it every time?

R. Whenever I wear their products it tends to get noticed, maybe that's why I get more compliments when I wear Revlon on.

M. How often does brand Revlon evoke positive thoughts about past, present or future?

R. Lot of times. Whenever it comes to makeup or whenever it comes to dressing up, it is Revlon for me. It's always a good memory.

M. So tell me any good memory associated with this brand.

R. Well it's any friend's birthday or marriage or any other party that I go to. Makeup is an integral part of being a woman so it is like I associate a positive memory with Revlon wherever I go.

M. Do you think this brand is trustworthy to be a relationship partner?

R. Yes totally. Because whenever I have applied it I have got good results. Never have I felt people telling me that it's not suitable, it's not good. Never even has had any negative effect on my skin…so yes it is totally trustworthy.

M. When you apply this product, does it say anything about who you are to other people?

R. Revlon stands for confidence and self esteem and I think that is what defines me.

M. So in future also do you see yourself continuing with Revlon?

R. Well as of now I have got no reasons to say why I shouldn't continue …I am very satisfied with it.

M. So number 1 is Revlon, what would your number 2 be?

R. I think Lakme

M. So can you ever switch to that?

R. I sometimes use Lakme too because for some products Revlon is not available so I have no other choice but to use Lakme. Like you don't have a compact of Revlon so its Lakme then. Also some products of Lakme are better than Revlon.

M. So let me give you a situation where you have an absolutely same eyeliner of Lakme and Revlon …the only difference being price. Now would you go for Lakme if it is cheaper in terms of price but has a similar product to that of Revlon?

R. I think I will still go for Revlon because I use almost all products of Revlon, feel comfortable with it and trust it more…so I will still stick to it.

M. So at this stage when you are doing MBA, the earnings are coming from the family …so how do you manage to buy Revlon then with its premium price?

R. Yes, it's a premium priced product but I can't take any chances with my skin.

M. Is it the sole reason?

R. Yes

M. Do you make impulse purchase or think before you buy?

R. It's often impulse but sometimes when my stock gets over I go for buying Revlon.

M. O.k. Shubhangi, thank you so much for your time!

Respondent 8

Interview Date	18th Sept 2012
Name	Deep
Gender	Male
Age	25
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Budweiser

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	I Think it will be Budweiser which is famous around the world for its beer. I am a huge fan…it's the biggest seller in the world…also like in whisky, it's scotch that is famous and in beer I would say that king of beer's is Budweiser
Define the relationship with your Brand	It's next to water for me
What specialty your brand possesses?	The youth factor in it makes it special. I say that even the advertisements it gives have youth and apart from that for me and most of my friends, beer means Budweiser
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	It has to be 10 on 10 but when I started it was less because I used to have other beer that was available in our supplies but now it has changed and for me it's 10 on 10
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Off course that is true cause every time I enjoy it much more than last time

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about the brand	It was in my graduation 1st year …that would be 2008 and I tried it the very same moment I came to know about it.
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	There was an offer of one on one on this beer in one of the restaurants I went, so I suddenly got attracted and then at that time I had it…later I talked about it to few of my friends and they told me that it is very famous in other countries.
What did you feel at that time?	That time I was just wondering what makes it the best beer in the world, the most sold beer in the world because various brands are there in India like kingfisher that makes beer but I guess when Budweiser came it gave good competition to kingfisher.
What was your expectation? Did it meet them?	Well for a beer love it's the taste that matters and when I first drank it I just felt that it was nice, not very hard hitting…so for me it was like more than expected.
How knowledgeable are you about Budweiser?	I don't know about any other products of Budweiser…I guess it's only beer they make. And yes even if there are offer's I do buy it at whatever price it is available. In India now there are a lot of foreign beer's but I guess Budweiser is the best.

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes it is absolutely a part of me because whenever I want to have something, drink something…I go and grab it
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	I think the beer will be like my wife if it is a human being because I is going to be so close to me every time…also the love and affinity factor comes in too
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	I don't think so because there can be guys around me drinking much better than this one but I associate myself with this, without caring what people think
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how? Do you feel as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust?	It has stood on its promises, never ever deceived and don't think it ever will
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes off course, why not! It's the best option I have…

Section 3

Situation 1

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	There are brands likes Heineken, Carlsberg, Tuborg but I associate myself with Budweiser because it's like a buddy that makes you wiser. So I don't care about the price when it comes to it
3 words to describe your relationship with the brand	My best companion when I am thirsty. one of the best things to have when I am thirsty so you can imagine how good a relationship I have with this brand

Respondent 9

Interview Date	15 Sept 2012
Name	Gurveen Kaur
Gender	Female
Age	24
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Allen Solly

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Allen Solly
Define the relationship with your Brand	Intimate bcoz of great customer service
What specialty your brand possesses?	Variety and good collection, formal as well as casual and have seasonal collection and has reward point system
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Started from 5 to 9 (Scale of 10)
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	More from every purchase and satisfaction has increased

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Allen Solly	4 to 5 years ago and I purchased two formal shirts
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	From advertisement and references
What did you feel at that time?	I got what I wanted and suited me and my taste
What was the importance you associated with Allen Solly	Suits me and I feel more confident
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Not that much knowledge earlier but with every purchase it has increased

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes since I feel more confident wearing it
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Best friend, smart, confident and good looking
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Yes it does since I get more confident. And I get a feel good factor with it
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Till now yes
Do you feel Allen Solly as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	Hope not since it is consistent till date
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes but if I am dissatisfied with the collection I would want to shift
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & less in price. Which will you go for?	No since the brand Allen Solly matters and it is one company that is into premium segment clothing

Situation 2

3 words that descriebes your relation with Allen Solly?	Consistent and every lasting and style quotient.

Respondent 10

Interview Date	12th Sept 2012
Name	Naveen
Gender	Male
Age	25
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Arrow

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	You said rightly its arrow shirts and pants
Define the relationship with your Brand	I guess I have a strong relationship with this brand ever since I have passed out from my engineering college that is since 2008 more than 4 an h
What specialty your brand possesses?	It's into shirts, pants and also trousers, coats
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Arrow is one such brand which has quality whenever u sees a brand arrow you have that is classes apart others. U r assured of quality of arrow. Whenever I used to go to office my first collection was of arrow so that has professional and elite look
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	No it has changed, I had a strong relationship earlier but now 10 on 10 but earlier it was 5 on 10 but after use of the product it has changed
First time purchase was?	Shirt and trousers

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about arrow	The first time I felt that it bit expensive and not that much of worth, but after use it has a long time use, I went to one of the showrooms it was predominantly placed in the middle of the showroom
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	I came to know from a visit to a showroom in 2008
What did you feel at that time?	They don't have extensive range of shirts but whatever they have the range is unique and shades are also unique but the quality is also good
What was the importance you associated with arrow	Even though I didn't own that desktop but working on it itself made me feel better because I could compare it with my desktop at home & the difference was huge so I use to feel better because of its appearance at that time because my desktop was bulky one & Apple being sleek. Specially the shape & the color which Apple provided was not available

How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Not all, some are above my range

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Professionally yes because they are not into I mean other things. I carry to my office
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	See if I say, the characteristics would be harp elite and professional and a celebrity apt for the arrow product will be Hritik Roshan
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Probably yes, they might feel that this guy has kind of features which arrow has, I have strong feeling for this brand
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	True 100%
Do you feel arrow as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	No it will not, it has good quality and product. They are giving perfect quality
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes definitely if tomorrow I need to buy a shirt again it has to be arrow
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes it makes sense Yes because it's being 4 and half years and if I don't wear arrow in interviews or meeting then in fact people also ask where your Arrow is.
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for? Even Brand equity is same So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	Probably not initially, but once Credibility which arrow brings in other brands don't bring in Price is not an issue when selecting a brand

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Probably not initially

Respondent 11

Interview Date	18 Sept 2012
Name	Swati Sharma
Gender	Female
Age	23
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	BagIt

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Bag It (hand bag company)
Define the relationship with your Brand	Casual and its very me, relate to
What specialty your brand possesses?	Bags for every occasion
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Remained same (10/10) caters to every day requirement
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Everything from color, size, pocket and price, value for money

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about BagIt	4 to 5 years ago
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	Met by chance as was shopping and accidently looked at the brand which was appealing and so I liked a bag and bought one and thus relationship started
What did you feel at that time?	Wonderful and beautiful
What was the importance you associated with BagIt	Would want to hug it and would be possessive about it
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	No wasn't but when came home, googled it and saw the various other designs and its other offerings and the brand was for younger generation

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes it is part of me now as I carry it wherever I go since it suits me and I can correlate myself with the brand. It goes with all my color its durability and quality is perfect
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Pretty and like my sister since best friends are not forever and for a girl sister is very precious and cant correlate as a brother since it is not a masculine product
	Beautiful, Intelligent, confident are the attributes
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Bubbly, colorful and shiny girl
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Nothing bad gone till date
Do you feel BagIt as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	Never
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Till date it is catering to me as a student and they have varieties for different age groups and occasions and can cater to my future needs
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes since it's like my sister and so will go on and high on emotional attachment
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	Wont make a shift

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	For me price doesn't matter so I will go for BagIt will be there for me I may take the other brand as a substitute
Even Brand equity is same	
So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Yes might but first preference will be BagIt
3 words that describe your relationship with your brand	I love it

Respondent 12

Interview Date	15 Sept 2012
Name	Shipra
Gender	Male
Age	24
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Bausch and Lomb

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Bausch and Lomb
Define the relationship with your Brand	Comfortable and easily available
What specialty your brand possesses?	Availability and very friendly and its solution is available everywhere
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Deteriorated (the usage part) from the past since when I started using it I was possessive about it and my usage percentage has decreased but loyalty hasn't
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes immense satisfaction

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Bausch and Lomb	Knew about it
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	Recommended by my doctor
What did you feel at that time?	Freedom from specs, especially in monsoons
What was the importance you associated with Bausch and Lomb	Very possessive and I would probably let go my cell phone but not my lens
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Talk a lot about the product and experience since using for past 6 years and about the company I don't have a much idea

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Definitely as I would let go my cell phone and not my lens
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Hospitable, warm, comfortable and easy going
	Features—tomboyish and my attitude to this person would be loyalty
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Yes it does give me a unique personality and adds to my confidence and my style quotient
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Yes since its always been satisfactory
Do you feel as a brand will ever it deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	No
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes will be since I was given perfect training before and while using so it's more than satisfactory
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes trust since I tried another brand but was not satisfied by it
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	I would stick onto Bausch and Lomb
Even Brand equity is same	
So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Yes I would stick to Bausch and Lomb since health factor is more important I would stick onto it
3 words that would describe my relationship with this brand	Long-lasting, loyalty and friendly

Respondent 13

Interview Date	17 Sept 2012
Name	Sidharth Negi
Gender	Male
Age	27
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Casio

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Casio Watches
Define the relationship with your Brand	Casio holds special bonding, remembrances and high emotional quotient
What specialty your brand possesses?	Something which is affordable for everybody and it is like a box of bundled features in a tight little box
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Has increased with every purchase
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes, since from the last purchase I have bought myself a new a high end watch from the same company which is providing me the apt features
Over time has the brand been part of you	Yes since I don't travel without a watch it's like a personal connect with the brand

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Casio	I knew about its existence but since I had a watch earlier I wanted to go in for this particular brand
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	A gift but knew about the brand from advertisements in magazines
What did you feel at that time?	Great since I was longing for one and wanted to experiment with it
What was the importance you associated with Casio	Memories and delivering consistent performance
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	I know about every model which is coming and which would come in the near future

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes since according to me the person is known by the watch he wears. It represents who I am to others depending upon the occasions Something that anybody can connect to
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	One that is confident and can give anybody a run for money and is trustworthy
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Yes depending upon the situation depending upon what watch I wear does show my level of sophistication to people
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Yes since it has a battery life indicator it indicates when battery is low so caters to one thing which one might slip from one's mind
Do you feel Casio as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	No, since I have a large collection of it I haven't had any problem like it
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	See if my pocket allows I would like to try out with a higher end watch
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes since till date it has innovative technology but if a watch comes out of the blue of some other brand which is not there in my brand I would like to try it
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you pre-ferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	Would stick to Casio only
Even Brand equity is same	
So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Yes Casio since it is creditable
3 words you would associate with this brand	Confidence, remembrance and feelings
If I would share a relationship with this brand give me 2 words to describe it	Serious and intimate

Respondent 14

Interview Date	17 Sept 2012
Name	Sourabh Bhattercherjee
Gender	Male
Age	27
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Goldflake cigarettes

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Goldflake cigarette
Define the relationship with your Brand	Matching my personality, strong, something special, Have nothing to do it is like my mate
What specialty your brand possesses?	Availability, Look (packaging), About the product 69 mm long perfect to smoke a time and the time it takes to burn is that I would dedicate to smoke a product like cigarette
	It is like having something that is perfectly suiting you
Tell me about the magnitude of relation-ship, is it augmenting?	Has changed since initially was smoking a different brand from WILLS (Wills Flake) but that was too strong/hard so shifted to Gold-flake. Somebody suggested I tried and now the brand loyalty has moved to 10. Not that much excitement with smoking other brands. Since it is more refined
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes immense satisfaction

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

Interview Date	17 Sept 2012
Name	Sourabh Bhattercherjee
Gender	Male
Age	27
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Goldflake cigarettes

The first time you heard about Goldflake	Knew about it Earlier since opted for it when my earlier brand was not available
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	Suggested by friend
What did you feel at that time?	Excitement with smoking every puff and satisfaction with Goldflake since other brands are light
What was the importance you associated with Goldflake	Something really special since if I do not have a Goldflake and opt for other brand the level on contentment will not be there at all and the price range is suitable according to my budget
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Know the manufacturers and where it is manufactured, gradual increase in price from the time I started and how it is marketed

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes since if I don't smoke and have an urge to smoke the first thing that comes to my mind is the packet and
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Don't know but there are people who smoke lighter cigarettes and others do give recommendations that it is a harder cigarette and will harm you, but the punch lacks with other cigrattes and thus might perceive me as a strong person
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Yes it has been trustworthy and as the length of cigarette is 69 mm so the time it takes to burn according to my level takes 5 to 6 min and if I am working the time suites me to take a quick break and if I am feeling sleepy and if I smoke I can go on with my work for an hour more

Do you feel Goldflake as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	Never and yes immense trust
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes it gives a punch to me so which other brands don't

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for? Even Brand equity is same So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	I could try but I am not sure that any other brand might provide the same thing But for me as I said earlier the punch i.e. the taste matters so would stick onto my brand

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	then I would like to try first and see if the characteristics are same and then I would be in dilemma but would like to evaluate since for me taste is far more important than price

Respondent 15

Interview Date	18 Sept 2012
Name	Charu Atiri
Gender	Female
Age	23
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Subway

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	Subway
Define the relationship with your Brand	Consistent
What specialty your brand possesses?	Tasty, Healthy and no oil content, low content and since I am a hosteller I need food affordable and quick snack. Well stored
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Yes grown from 6 to 8 (on a scale of 10)
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes

Moderator	Respondent
Taste and quality are the only criteria's you emphasize is making your brand so special	High level of customization as one can add and subtract what one wants

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Subway	3–4 years
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	Suggested by friend
What did you feel at that time?	Something good and value for money
What was the importance you associated with Subway	Would want to come back and try out with every variety of subways
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	Menu hasn't changed a bit from the past years and tried out everything

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes since I am travelling and live in a hostel it's a quick snack and better than brands like McDonalds because its oil free, health, customization
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	That I am healthy and hygiene conscious and brand loyal
Do you feel Subway as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	Yes since they have small outlets they is a probability not getting what I want
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Its reliable and global and available every way
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for? Even Brand equity is same So you mean If someone gives you a reference you can go for it	Brand B should have that much Global acknowledgement as Subway and the brand has to pick up for and somebody should come and tell me about this new brand. And to switch I would want people to recommend me

Situation 2

3 words about the relationship with your brand Subway	Everlasting, loyal and consistent

Respondent 16

Interview Date	17th September 2012
Name	Kartikeya Vats
Gender	Male
Age	22
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	Nike

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	I think undoubtedly it will be Nike…I am very fond of Nike shoes and make sure that whenever I am in need of a new pair, I buy only Nike…almost all of my shoe collection is of Nike…here almost all would mean around 90% for sure, the rest 10% may be of other brands
Define the relationship with your Brand	A person buys shoes for long term use and Nike is a very credible brand. My relationship with Nike is of trust and long term benefit. When I buy a Nike shoe, I know it will last long and people will surely notice what I am wearing
What specialty your brand possesses?	Its main specialty is its sportswear and sneakers…very trendy, very new….it's basically for the youth, the go getters
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting?	Well yes it is augmenting, it is giving me greater and greater satisfaction each time I buy it… in fact it has a ability to surprise me…each time I go to the store they have something new to offer, maybe with more comfort or new design

Moderator	Respondent
With every purchase are you getting more from what you got in your previous purchase	Yes, that is very right…as I said, they have a ability to surprise me with their offerings each time I visit their store
Why are you sticking to this brand?	Because it's worth the money… go for a long time, don't get spoiled very soon

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship established with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Nike	Well it's been a long association now…almost 5 to 6 years…I am into sports and Nike shoes give immense comfort and grip so that I can be best at my sport…so from a long time I have been associated with this brand
How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	Well my Mom first brought these shoes for me as my b'day gift…before that I had heard of these shoes but never thought of buying it any sooner …but my mom surprised me with this b'day gift
What did you feel at that time?	Satisfaction…happiness, better than all other times I wore other shoes
How knowledgeable do you feel you are about your favourite brand at that point of time?	At that time I didn't know much about it, had just heard about Nike from friend and had seen its shoes in malls but not really cared to see them very carefully with a buying intention
Is there an emotional connect to this brand then?	Off course, it was a gift from my mom and also it was something that I had longed to have in my life…so yes there is an emotional connect…in fact I still have my first pair of Nike shoes with me till date

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Yes completely…it adds a zing to my look…I am in fact known in my friend circle for my trendy Nike shoes and slippers. So it's like…If not Nike, then what?
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	Its smart, trendy youthful…in tune with today's generation
	It's a very loyal and trustworthy partner and someone I can stay my whole life with

Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	Y not? off course…when I wear new design Nike shoes and slippers, my friends often ask me from where I purchased it…sometimes they even ask if they can have the shoes to wear for a day or two..So basically even my friends perceive it as trendy and very in kinds
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	Well it is very credible till today…I as such have had no issues with the brand…in fact I at times recommend it to some of my friends or relatives
Do you feel Nike as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	It has till date not deceived me and I am sure it will not do so in future as well…I have complete trust on it to deliver what it stands for
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes it is here to stay in my life…I don't think for some time to come I will move away from this brand
Do you think it makes sense to continue using the brand?	Yes, y not? It is fairly priced, good on quality, durable… then y not just stay with it!
Do you say this out of some emotion or logic because if we see there are some better versions available in the market so how do you justify that?	It's somewhat an emotional connect and somewhat my experience with the brand…both factors are very important to me

Section 3

Situation 1

There is Brand B which is equal on all parameters to you preferred brand & even on price. Which will you go for?	My brand off course …I don't plan to switch any time soon
Even Brand equity is same	

Situation 2

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	Yes, with good quality comes a premium and I am ready to pay that for Nike
Lastly, give me 3 words to describe your relationship with Nike	Its trust, trust and more trust

Respondent 17

Interview Date	18th Sept 2012
Name	Jayraj
Gender	Male
Age	23
Brand with whom respondent has strong relationship	US Polo

Moderator	Respondent
Tell me about a brand with which you have relatively strong relationship?	It think so, that it has to be US POLO and I say this because I have seen my cousins and all wearing it and I have also grown up wearing it and It is a semi formal kind of dress that most army people wear, so I can wear it inside army club's also in casuals. In casuals it offers wide range of products like t-shirt's, cargoes, jeans, shoes, shirts, trousers, Capri's
Define the relationship with your Brand	It's like in brands it's my best friend because I keep looking forward to any new t-shirt coming in the store every now and then and I just go and grab it
What specialty your brand possesses?	Nothing as such but it's just that they are simple basic color clothes and I like them. Also quality is very good. Have been wearing its t-shirt from past 3 yrs now and its color has not yet faded
Tell me about the magnitude of relationship, is it augmenting? Was it 10 on 10 when u started or it started low and now is high or vice versa?	Earlier on it was 10 on 10 but now it is somewhere like 7 on 10 because they have been trying to enter into a lot of things. They have introduced a lot of multi colored t-shirts now which I do not like so yes I have gone down on likability. Also the shoe department is now making not very comfortable shoes

Section 1

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

The first time you heard about Apple. How (from ad, or reference or from other sources)?	It was around 4 years ago through one of my cousins. Apart from that I did have some knowledge about it. But the first showroom that came to my place was 4 and a half, 5 years ago
What did you feel at that time?	My first purchase was a white t-shirt and it was a good feeling as not much people around me wore it…so yes it was a different feeling
What was the importance you associated with the place where you saw US POLO for the very first time.	The first time I saw it was in a mall called DT mall, Chandigarh. There US POLO showroom was one of the first to be opened in the mall and while just passing I saw the horses posters of US POLO and at that time there was a curiosity about it. people generally confuse this brand with Ralf Lauren which is a very expensive brand, not here in brand..so US POLO can be counted upon as mini Ralf Lauren kind of thing as those guys who can't afford Ralf Lauren can go in with US Polo

Section 2

Specific questions about affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

Do you felt that the brand is part of you and who you are, how?	Can't really say that because passion for a brand is a different about who I am..I am not that passionate about it… it's just that it's on the radar; this is what can I afford, is easily available and suits my taste…that's it
Let's just suppose your brand is a human being describe that person in terms of appearance, attributes, features, attitude	I think I will make this person a close associate, a friend and certainly be in a good relationship with it because it's been my favorite thing from past 3 years and yes I would like to have a long term relationship with it and help him to do better in future
Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are, how?	No, it doesn't say anything as such cause the other day a guy called me a cricket umpire when I was wearing a POLO t-shirt with a trouser but still I go on wearing it because I don't wear clothes based on people telling me this is nice, this is not. I like it so I wear it
How often do you feel the brand is credible, why how?	It is credible but the only thing is that choice of clothes is going down in casuals but formals it has a good range
Do you feel Apple as a brand will ever deceive you on any aspect? Do you have that trust on your brand?	No… because it isn't deceiving me up till now so I don't see it deceiving me in future as well
Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering your future product needs?	Yes it's a safe option as long as they keep making good clothes

Situation 1

Both Brands are equal on all terms but Brand B is cheaper than your brand. Now will you still buy your brand	I will still go in with US Polo even if it is at 100 $ a t-shirt
	Actually this had happened with me once with a brand called Beverly hills' polo that came up but it actually failed in India because it was priced much low and hence no one could connect to it
3 words to describe your relationship with US Polo	Very good relationship…that's all I can say

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