

The Causes and Effects of Quality of Brand Relationship and Customer Engagement

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Abstract

In order to validate this study, the researchers turned to a quantitative methodology. There were a total of 140 questionnaires handed out at the various private companies; however, only 128 of those questionnaires were returned, and only 128 of those were correctly filled out. The data was obtained through the use of hard copies. The findings demonstrated a significant and positive relationship between quality of brand relationship and customer engagement at selected private businesses in Kurdistan. The findings of this study will be beneficial for the field of culture studies, for example, culture diversification and its relationship with the quality of brand relationships. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that further studies be conducted in the field of cultural issues and the relationship quality of brand relationships to determine whether or not culture will have an effect on accepting certain customer engagement.

Keywords— *Quality, Marketing, Brand, Customer Engagement.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of customer engagement (CE) is garnering an increasing amount of attention, not only from industry professionals but also from academics (Abror et al., 2018). This is in part because the Internet has become such an efficient medium for customer interaction in recent years. Specifically, the environment of the internet has resulted in a variety of new media channels that make it possible for businesses in the tourism and hospitality industries to establish and sustain ties with clients beyond the scope of the initial service contact. A large number of tourism brands, such as Marriott and Cathay Pacific, have established their presence on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as in online discussion boards, in order to engage with their customers through interactions that go beyond the purchase of their products. The Internet gives tourist businesses and their customers the ability to communicate information, ideas, and experiences with one another, not just from the consumer to the business but also from the consumer to another consumer (Choi and Kandampully, 2019). These interactions have brought to light the significance of connecting with clients in order to establish loyalty that extends beyond the transaction, which is particularly important in the tourist industry given its highly competitive landscape. There is a wealth of evidence pointing to the importance of client encounters that are not transactional in nature. For instance, according to Kim et al.

(2020), online user-generated evaluations have the potential to impact not just the quantity of online bookings made at a hotel but also consumers' intents to make a reservation and their opinions of the hotel's reliability (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). In a setting that is not online, the purchasing decisions of a consumer may be influenced by the opinion or recommendation of an existing customer (Carlson et al., 2019). These encounters, taken as a whole, constitute the behavioral manifestation of CE (Anwar, 2016). In addition, firms in the tourist industry can harness CE behaviors to increase the number of clients they attract and keep, as well as get extra information into their operations (Read et al., 2019). When viewed from the point of view of the consumer, the advantages of participating in CE activities include financial gains or incentives as well as emotional fulfillment in the form of enjoyment and pleasant effects (Faeq, 2022). Previous studies on CE mostly focused on conceptualizing relationships rather than empirically evaluating them. Thus, while the advantages of CE are becoming more and more obvious, empirical research into this new idea has been quite limited (Lei et al., 2021). To be more specific, despite the growing adoption of CE strategies by many tourism companies, very little is known about the conceptualization and measurement of CE with tourism and hospitality brands. This is despite the fact that many tourism companies have been increasing their use of CE strategies. By developing a CE scale, this study attempts to fill up the

knowledge gap that previously existed. Because of the increased competitiveness of the tourist and hospitality businesses (Othman et al., 2020), as well as the development of new brands (Faraj et al., 2021), many tourism companies now compete purely through loyalty programs and price discounts. On the other hand, considering the mounting costs that are connected with these activities, it is clear that these techniques cannot be maintained over the long term. Because of this, tourism and hospitality brands have an obligation to cultivate client loyalty from the standpoint of a psychological connection, in which factors such as price or loyalty points become less relevant to future purchase decisions. CE is emerging as a construct that has the potential to enhance brand loyalty and purchase decisions (KM et al., 2021). This is accomplished by establishing a powerful, long-lasting psychological connection with consumers and providing them with interactive brand experiences that extend beyond the point of sale. The CE associated with a brand influences significant facets of consumers' understanding of the brand, perceptions of the brand, attitudes toward the brand, and consequently, loyalty to the brand (Do et al., 2019). Relationships between consumers and brands can be broken down into a number of categories, the majority of which have received an increasing amount of attention from researchers over the past few years. It is extremely crucial to build these relationships with your target audience in the era of marketing, where it is proposed that customers will choose those businesses that satisfy their deepest wants. This article presents a review of two essential concepts that are indicated in such relationships: brand love and customer engagement. These notions will be kept in mind as the article is written. Although each conceptualization places emphasis on a separate stage in the development of the consumer-brand connection, in reality, they address distinct facets of the same process. In addition, they originate from a variety of theoretical frameworks: brand love originates in the academic field of psychology, whereas engagement originates from a variety of subfields within the marketing industry (Faeq, 2022). On the other hand, their empirical growth has progressed further in the field of marketing. In addition, it seems as though both concepts are applied to different empirical perspectives: brand love is typically associated with the fast-moving consumer goods market, whereas customer engagement is associated with the service industry. The rate at which society is transforming is accelerating at an ever-increasing rate, particularly since the turn of the 21st century. This is occurring for a variety of reasons, including the growing prevalence of information and communication technologies (Kujur and Singh, 2020). These shifts are causing various adjustments in the behavior of consumers as well as in the relationships that they build

with businesses, which are all a direct result of the enormous possibilities that ICTs make available. For example, information and communications technologies make it possible to share information about companies, their goods, and their brands on a worldwide scale and beyond national boundaries (Faeq and Ismael, 2022). It is not surprising that by the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, the notion of Marketing – also known as the "values-driven era" – has formed given the current state of affairs, as it is not surprising that this situation has arisen. It is a type of marketing that tries to meet and adapt to the challenges of the present, some of which come from problems caused by globalization (Touni et al., 2020). In this circumstance, one of the cutting-edge research avenues in marketing—the investigation of the interactions between consumers and brands. The emergence of Marketing in particular is one of the major reasons why this specific study line has been garnering increased attention over the course of the previous few years. Marketing places an emphasis on the requirement to treat customers not merely as consumers, but rather as complicated and multi-faceted human beings who need to be cared for. Because of this shift in perspective, the function of brands as identifiers of products and companies is no longer necessary (Abror et al., 2018). Desire for the brand and active participation on the part of customers are two of the most important aspects of consumer-brand partnerships. As a result, an extensive literature assessment pertaining to these ideas is presented in this piece of writing. To be more specific, we start out by providing a concise assessment of the relevant literature on Marketing and the managerial implications it has. Following that, an explanation of the ideas of "brand love" and "consumer engagement" is given. After that, some conclusions and some advice for managers are presented. The term "customer-brand relationship" (Choi and Kandampully, 2019) has been thrown around quite a bit in the marketing industry, which is said to have gotten its start somewhere in the latter half of the 20th century (Kim et al., 2020). As a direct consequence of this, a number of other concepts pertaining to branding have been developed, such as brand personality, brand attitude, and brand attachment. In the early years, discussions regarding the relationship between customers and brands were one-sided. To be more specific, the brand was solely taken into consideration as an object based on how it was viewed by buyers in terms of human qualities. The CBR principle has been rethought as a result of (Anwar and Shukur, 2015) article, which presented the brand relationship quality model. This new way of thinking about branding considers the brand to be a living creature that is an active participant in the relationship that it has with the customer. As a result, an emphasis is placed on the engagement that occurs in both directions between the

customer and the brand. In this aspect, the client has the ability to both influence the brand and be influenced by the brand, and an emotional connection can be formed between the two parties. In order to keep the relationship with the consumer going strong, the customer could also anticipate or even require some sort of contribution from the brand. In this sense, a customer's attitude and behavioral response towards a brand are determined not just by their cognitive appraisal but also by their emotional evaluation of the brand. Despite the fact that CBR has been around for quite some time, it has only recently started to garner a significant amount of attention from researchers (Carlson et al., 2019). The primary reasons for researchers' attention are the widespread recognition of the significant role of the customer-brand relationship as the primary differentiator for companies to maintain competitiveness and survival (Anwar, 2016); to increase sales, profits, and market shares (Tripathi, 2009); to improve one's competitive advantage (Circles, 2010); to bolster one's brand position (Read et al., 2019); to increase one's (Faeq, 2022). In addition, a high CBR may encourage customers to act in a manner that is more favorable toward the brand (Lei et al., 2021), and as a result, to continue their relationship with a particular brand and its extensions (Hameed and Anwar, 2018). In comparison to the other relationship marketing domains, the customer-brand relationship domain has seen a very low number of initiatives made to research relationships within it. Using the literature that was available, the majority of the studies utilized either the trust-commitment model (Anwar, 2017) or the relationship investment model (Oliveira and Fernandes, 2022). A significant portion of the research has been devoted to determining the factors that contribute to, as well as the outcomes of, a strong customer-brand relationship. Numerous studies have shown the significance of antecedents such as satisfaction (Faeq et al., 2020), alternative attractiveness, investment size (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). As for the relational outcome, the majority of the studies that are currently available have acknowledged the significance of commitment (Fetscherin et al., 2019) or loyalty (Anwar and Shukur, 2015) as the essential component to reflect on the consumers' intention to connect with the brand. The function of customer engagement as a measure of relationship strength received little to no attention until recently (Faeq et al., 2021). There have been a large number of studies that looked at the mediating effect (Hur et al., 2020), but there have only been a small number of studies that looked at the moderating effect. In terms of how the research was carried out, the majority of studies concentrated their attention on the actual consumer (Anwar and Qadir, 2017) rather than the students (Faeq et al., 2021); and on the general brand (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). The bulk of the investigations used a method

of data analysis called structural equation modeling (Doyle et al., 2022). Strong evidence on the significant role that relationship investment plays in the building of relationships has driven an increasing interest in employing relationship investment as one of the dominating factors in the relationship marketing research framework. There is a growing interest in using relationship investment as one of the dominant strategies (Abdullah et al., 2017). Due to the fact that both parties contributed to the relationship, the influence of relationship investment was investigated based on two different conceptualizations in the aforementioned investigations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The key tenet of the social exchange theory is that people will stay in relationships for as long as they feel they are able to derive some value from such relationships (Anwar and Abd Zebari, 2015). According to the social exchange theory's principle of reciprocity, when individuals in a relationship feel that they have received benefits from their partner, they are obligated to reciprocate in kind because they view themselves as being in a position of debt to their partner for the benefits that they have received (Kang et al., 2021). Individuals have a propensity, after getting benefits from a partner, to reciprocate in an equitable manner and, eventually, to support the continuation of the connection (Faeq et al., 2022). As a consequence of this, the customer's impression of the brand's contribution will influence the customer's opinion of their own contributions to the relationship, which, in turn, influences the customer's decision regarding whether or not to engage with the brand. Following this, Morais et al. (2004), in proposing the resource investment model (Anwar, 2017), show that customers' perceptions of provider investment significantly and positively influence customers' perceptions of their own investment, which in turn promotes customer loyalty. This was demonstrated by showing that customers' perceptions of their own investment are significantly influenced by customers' perceptions of the investment made by the provider. Therefore, the more the consumers' perception of the provider's involvement in a connection, the greater the likelihood that the customers will also invest in the relationship, which, in turn, heightens the tendency for customers to remain loyal to the provider. In order for there to be a solid connection established between two parties, there needs to be a large investment of both material and intangible resources made into the relationship by both parties, and this can happen either directly or indirectly (Faeq et al., 2022). The consumer is the one who has the power to choose whether or not to maintain a relationship (Anwar, 2017). Therefore, the customer's perception of the

partner investment (Wang and Lee, 2020), in addition to the customer's perception of his or her own investment (also known as perceived own investment, or POI), is an extremely important factor in determining the continuity of the relationship (Molinillo et al., 2020). It is possible to believe that the customer's willingness to engage in a customer–brand relationship will be determined by the customer's perceived level of investment in the brand as well as the customer's level of investment in the brand itself, given the context of this research (i.e., the customer–brand relationship). According to the relationship exchange model (REM) developed by de Wulf et al. (2001), perceived partner investment (PPI) has a direct impact on the quality of a relationship. Following research that used the model provided strong evidence of the direct relationship that exists between PPI and relational outcome. In particular, it has been demonstrated that PPI is a significant predictor of satisfaction (Anwar, 2017); trust (Faeq et al., 2022); and commitment (Anwar, 2016). A higher perceived level of PPI would strengthen the connection and increase the customer's obligation to reciprocate, which would eventually induce the customer to be satisfied with the relationship, trust the partner, and commit to a relationship. Provided that PPI creates a strong bond and sets the expectation of reciprocation, a higher perceived level of PPI would strengthen the connection and increase the customer's obligation to reciprocate. Studies in the past have shown that there is a positive correlation between the PPI and the quality of the relationship (Itani et al., 2020). This suggests that customers who have a favorable perception of the partner's investment are impressed with the partner's determination to maintain the relationship with them, which further improves the customers' overall evaluation of the relationship. By demonstrating that PPI increases loyalty significantly (Busalim and Ghabban, 2021). This is accomplished by revealing that PPI led to a substantial increase in loyalty. In addition, considering the fact that there is a correlation between the amount of money invested by partners and the degree to which customers are dependent on those investments, one could reason that the greater the customer believes the partner's investment to be, the more the customer will fight to keep from losing the advantages that the partner has brought them (Anwar and Surarchith, 2015). In general, it is evident that the perceived brand investment (PBI) shows the brand's determination to maintain a relationship with the customer and the potential to better serve the customer in the future, and this, in turn, confirms the reason for the customer's relationship continuation. To put it another way, customer loyalty indicates the types of investments that customers enjoy receiving from the brand (Faeq, 2022) and for which, to reciprocate the benefit received from the brand, customers

would exhibit strong intentions and attitudes toward relationship maintenance in order to maintain the relationship with the brand (Pilgrimiené et al., 2020). Previous studies have indicated that the perceived partner investment (PPI) dimensions have a considerable effect on the relationship result, despite the fact that there has been relatively little research conducted on the effect of the PPI dimensions themselves. In particular, Bolton et al. (2003) show that both social and economic investments on the part of the partner drive the consumer to respond more favorably to the relationship between the two parties. Despite the positive effect, the size of the effect of social investment and the effect of economic investment tend to differ greatly from one another. Specifically, investments in social resources have a greater influence on the interpersonal happiness of customers with company representatives and perceived value, but investments in economic resources have a stronger effect on the customers' overall satisfaction with the organization. In addition, they stated that the role of social investment could go beyond the role of economic investment, which results in stronger bonding to the extent that the emotional bonding that is created can compensate for the lack of structural bonding. Therefore, it is arguable that both financial and social investments play a significant part in persuading the customer to place a higher value on the connection. Nevertheless, it is possible that the impact of social investment will be more substantial than that of financial expenditure. Choi et al. (2008) found in their other study that customer views of partner social investment have a significant impact on customer–company identity, which in turn has an impact on company rating. Using the principle of reciprocity as a guide, they stressed the fact that a positive evaluation of the partner's social involvement by the customer would suggest a strong emotional connection as well as a sense of reciprocal duty felt by the customer. The term employee engagement (EE), which appears to have a consistent conceptualization and operationalization, was the original meaning of the word "engagement" when it was used in a setting that was tied to business. However, there is a lack of unanimity over the idea of CE, which is still in its infancy. Because of this, the consistency of the EE construct may provide some insight into CE. In the academic literature on organizational behavior (Sadq et al., 2020), EE is defined as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviors that foster connections to work and to people, personal present, and active, full role performance." EE seems to be a motivational construct that consists of attention and absorption (Faeq et al., 2020), and it may include a component of identification as well (Li et al., 2020). In line with this emphasis on the psychological aspects, engagement has been defined as "a positive, fulfilling,

work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Roy et al., 2018), which suggests that employee engagement (EE) is a persistent and pervasive affective–cognitive state (Sadq et al., 2021). Based on these criteria, it appears that EE conceptualizations place an emphasis on psychological factors. On the other hand, academics who study marketing have conceived of CE as having a significant behavioral focus. The Marketing Science Institute (Anwar and Ghafoor, 2017) identifies customer engagement as a priority research topic and defines CE as "customers' behavioral manifestation toward a brand or firm beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers including word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, customer-to-customer interactions, blogging, writing reviews, and other activities similar to these" (Faeq, 2022). The literature streams of academics (Akrouf and Nagy, 2018) and practitioners (Anwar, 2017) show that such a focus is prevalent in their work (Faeq et al., 2021). Researchers have proposed that the knowledge gained from EE can be applied to the study of CE in their quest to develop a conceptual understanding of CE (Anwar and Climis, 2017). The emotional experiences of EE and CE are characterized by passion, energy, and enthusiasm (Sadq et al., 2020). The focal point of those sentiments, on the other hand, varies (workplace vs. consumer brand). In addition, the conceptualization of CE tends to move beyond an attitude-based approach, representing both psychological and behavioral components. This is achieved by drawing on previous research in the field of EE (Yoong and Lian, 2019). Although the definition of CE proposed by Brodie, Hollebeek, and colleagues (2011) suggests that it may be necessary to take into account both the psychological aspects of engagement as well as behavioral participation, it would appear that there is still a diversity of views with regard to the conceptualization of the concept. For instance, some researchers consider cognitive engagement (CE) to be a behavioral construct (Anwar and Louis, 2017) resulting from a range of motivational drivers (Othman et al., 2020). Other researchers, on the other hand, propose that CE is a multidimensional construct comprising both psychological and behavioral aspects. In either case, cognitive engagement is referred to (Faraj et al., 2021). The conceptualization of composite loyalty (i.e., behavioral and attitudinal loyalty) provides support for the adoption of a multidimensional approach. This conceptualization suggests that behavioral measures alone may lack a conceptual basis (KM et al., 2021) and provide insufficient insight into the factors that underlie repeat behavior. This also holds true when attempting to define the conceptual area of CE, as participation in CE activities does not necessarily ensure a consumer who is fully engaged. For instance, involvement

in a brand discussion forum may result from motivations other than being engaged or connected with the brand (Do et al., 2019). These considerations include the need for product information or the reduction of perceived risks. In addition to actively participating in brand-related activities, a highly engaged client will also have an enduring psychological link to the company's brand. A behavioral method might be able to give an idea of the level of participation that customers have in CE activities, but a multidimensional approach will be able to capture the whole complexity of CE. Accordingly, a high level of social investment would improve the customer's tendency to be a part of the partner, which would eventually increase their willingness to judge their partner in a more positive light. Due to the fact that the study did not investigate the effect of economic investment, it is impossible to demonstrate that economic investment has a substantial influence. In spite of this, a study that was conducted not too long ago by Yu (2015) presented empirical evidence on the significance of economic investment to create reciprocity among customers. Drawing from all of the previous research, we can deduce that both the social and economic investments of the brand will have a positive influence on the relational outcome. However, the effect of the brand's social investment tends to have a more significant bearing on the outcome (Faeq, 2022). To put it another way, if consumers believe that a brand has made significant social or financial investments in them, they will feel a greater sense of obligation to the brand to continue their relationship with the company because they have benefited so greatly from the brand's generosity. It is typical practice to correlate a customer's investment in a relationship with the expense of breaking off that relationship (Kujur and Singh, 2020). To put it another way, the more the customer's resources are involved in a connection, the greater the cost will be for the customer to terminate the relationship. Customers are less likely to terminate an ongoing relationship in order to prevent losing the entirety of the investment made upon terminating the partnership. Therefore, the tendency for an individual to commit to any efforts that will help to maintain a relationship increases in proportion to the degree to which that individual perceives the extent of the investment he or she has made in a particular relationship (Rusbult, 1983). Customers also view their commitment to a partnership as a proportion of the returns they can expect to receive in the form of equity or revenue from the partner (brand) (Morais et al., 2004). Customers are willing to demonstrate positive attitudinal and behavioral responses to the partner and consequently maintain the relationship (Faeq and Ismael, 2022). This is done in order to secure the future benefits that will come from the relationship (Touni et al., 2020). It is obvious from the earlier studies that considerable customer

investment may lead customers to be loyal in a relationship (Abror et al., 2018), regardless of how the customers perceive the value of their investments (Choi and Kandampully, 2019). The scales on which social and economic investments are made typically range greatly from one another. Specifically, investments in social resources have a greater influence on the interpersonal happiness of customers with company representatives and perceived value, but investments in economic resources have a stronger effect on the customers' overall satisfaction with the organization. In addition, they stated that the role of social investment could go beyond the role of economic investment, which results in stronger bonding to the extent that the emotional bonding that is created can compensate for the lack of structural bonding. Therefore, it is arguable that both financial and social investments play a significant part in persuading the customer to place a higher value on the connection. Nevertheless, it is possible that the impact of social investment will be more substantial than that of financial expenditure. Choi et al. (2008) found in their other study that customer views of partner social investment have a significant impact on customer–company identity, which in turn has an impact on company rating. Using the principle of reciprocity as a guide, they stressed the fact that a positive evaluation of the partner's social involvement by the customer would suggest a strong emotional connection as well as a sense of reciprocal duty felt by the customer. Accordingly, a high level of social investment would improve the customer's tendency to be a part of the partner, which would eventually increase their willingness to judge their partner in a more positive light. Due to the fact that the study did not investigate the effect of economic investment, it is impossible to demonstrate that economic investment has a substantial influence. In spite of this, a study that was conducted not too long ago by Yu (2015) presented empirical evidence on the significance of economic investment to create reciprocity among customers. Drawing from all of the previous research, we can deduce that both the social and economic investments of the brand will have a positive influence on the relational outcome. However, the effect of the brand's social investment tends to have a more significant bearing on the outcome. To put it another way, if consumers believe that a brand has made significant social or financial investments in them, they will feel a greater sense of obligation to the brand to continue their relationship with the company because they have benefited so greatly from the brand's generosity. It is typical practice to correlate a customer's investment in a relationship with the expense of breaking off that relationship (Rusbult, 1980). To put it another way, the more the customer's resources are involved in a connection, the greater the cost will be for the customer to terminate the relationship.

Customers are less likely to terminate an ongoing relationship in order to prevent losing the entirety of the investment made upon terminating the partnership. Therefore, the tendency for an individual to commit to any efforts that will help to maintain a relationship increases in proportion to the degree to which that individual perceives the extent of the investment he or she has made in a particular relationship (Kim et al., 2020). Customers also view their commitment to a partnership as a proportion of the returns they can expect to receive in the form of equity or revenue from the partner (brand) (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). Customers are willing to demonstrate positive attitudinal and behavioral responses to the partner and consequently maintain the relationship (Carlson et al., 2019). This is done in order to secure the future benefits that will come from the relationship (Anwar, 2016). It is clear from the previous findings that significant customer investment may lead customers to be loyal in a relationship (Read et al., 2019), prevent opportunistic behavior, and reduce conflict with the partner. This was true regardless of how the customers perceived their investments (Faeq, 2022). In her relationship investment model (RRIM), Rusbult (1983) also highlighted a direct relationship between customer investment (CI) and commitment. According to Rusbult (1983), CI is meant to powerfully bond with the consumer so they can continue in a relationship with the brand. When considering the influence of the many aspects of customer investment, Rusbult (1980) pointed out that greater levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic investments result in increased levels of commitment and attachment, which, in turn, lead to the continuation of relationships. However, the independent impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic investments were found to be relatively variable in following investigations. To be more specific, Nysveen et al. (2005) discovered that direct (intrinsic) investment, and not indirect (Lei et al., 2021) investment, was a significant predictor of the customer's intention to consume the main channel of the brand in question. As a result, only intrinsic investment may improve the customer's dependency and psychological connection to a brand, as well as the relationship termination cost, to the point where the consumer is more likely to maintain consumption levels. On the other hand, Goodfriend and Agnew (2008) demonstrated the significance of intangible investment as a predictor of commitment, but they did not demonstrate the value of tangible investment in this regard. They felt that intangible investment turned out to be the important predictor of commitment because, in comparison to tangible investment, intangible investment is more vulnerable to subjective interpretation and is easily impacted by emotions. To put it another way, consumers have a propensity for overreacting when judging the value of their

intangible investments in comparison to their concrete investments. In a similar vein, Chung et al. (2012) recently brought to light the fact that the influence of intangible investment, as opposed to tangible investment, has been shown to have a major impact on transactional dependency. They asserted that intangible investments carry more weight than tangible investments and will significantly inspire customers to rely on their partners for an extended period of time. This will occur as a result of the fact that intangible investments are more difficult to measure. It is reasonable to anticipate that the effect of extrinsic investment on relational results will be fairly significant given that extrinsic investment is slightly more subjective and is likely influenced by emotions (Hameed and Anwar, 2018). As a consequence of this, there is no question in anyone's mind that the outcome of a relationship is greatly impacted by both intrinsic and extrinsic investments. Therefore, one could say that both the intrinsic and extrinsic components of customer investment, also known as emotional and financial investments, have a beneficial influence on the customer's propensity to continue their relationship with the company. That is, when customers believe that they have made a significant amount of both intrinsic and extrinsic investment in the relationship, they have a strong belief that they have a significant amount of equity in the relationship, and in order to protect such equity, they would be willing to remain in the relationship (Anwar, 2017). In addition, it is generally acknowledged that a high degree of engagement shows a deeper emotional connection between the customer and the brand, which will encourage the customer to be willing to build and maintain a relationship (Oliveira and Fernandes, 2022). It has also been asserted that customer involvement is more important than the role of commitment in determining the strength of a connection (Faeq et al., 2020). This is due to the fact that customer engagement can reflect not only the longevity of a relationship but also its closeness (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). Therefore, consumer involvement serves as a stronger and more accurate measure of a strong relationship between a customer and a business (Fetscherin et al., 2019). Therefore, the level of customer engagement will be treated as a dependent variable throughout this investigation. A significant amount of research on consumer interaction focuses more on theory than on empirical evidence. In light of this, it is necessary to take into account both theoretical and empirical evidence in order to comprehend the part that relationship investment plays in determining the level of customer engagement achieved. To this day, theoretically supported evidence has

pointed to the predictive role that customer satisfaction (Anwar and Shukur, 2015), trust, commitment (Faeq et al., 2021), and involvement (Hur et al., 2020.) play in customer engagement. In addition, it has been established that customer interaction has an impact on factors like satisfaction, trust, commitment (Anwar and Qadir, 2017), and word of mouth (Faeq et al., 2021). From an empirical standpoint, it has been demonstrated that high levels of customer engagement are correlated with satisfaction, trust, involvement, and commitment (Doyle et al., 2022). On the other hand, loyalty (Anwar and Shukur, 2015) appears to be the primary outcome factor. Based on these findings, it is possible to argue, based on these findings, that customer engagement is a more comprehensive concept that can reflect the level of customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment, as well as accurately predict loyalty. When viewed from this angle, it is reasonable to believe that the level of customer engagement can more accurately indicate the strength of the relationship. It is assumed that customer and brand relationship investments affect customer engagement as well, given the fact that customer and perceived partner investments have a significant and positive effect on satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Abdullah et al., 2017). Further, the indication that the customer must be persuaded that a brand relationship is worth their investment in order for them to engage (Tripathi, 2009) also provides an initial basis for this research to expect that the favorable perception of brand investment may increase the customer's tendency to engage in a customer-brand relationship. As a result, one might hypothesize that an increase in a customer's tendency to engage in a customer-brand connection might result from the customer's perception of the investment made by the brand as well as the customer's own involvement in a relationship. The fact that social and economic investments, in addition to intrinsic and extrinsic investments, have a substantial effect on relational outcomes leads one to the possibility of making the prediction that the dimensions of relationship investment may favorably influence consumer engagement. In light of this, the study proposed the following:

- H1: Brand relationship has a significant and positive influence on customer engagement.
- H2: Brand association has a significant and positive influence on customer engagement.
- H3: Perceived quality has a significant and positive influence on customer engagement.

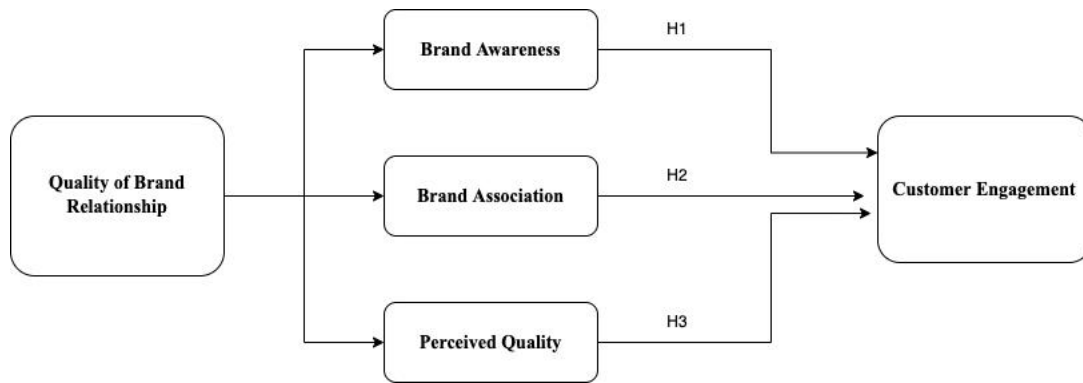


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to validate this study, the researchers turned to a quantitative methodology. A questionnaire that is used to obtain the data that is required. Kumar (2005) says that this study can be classified as a cross-sectional study because there were a lot of possible connections between the people who were chosen for the study.

Sampling

A strategy for selecting a representative sample from a given population is referred to as a sample design. The researcher will use the approach or method that they are willing to accept when choosing items for the sample. This is what is meant by the term "sample design." The term "sampling" refers to "the process of picking a few (a sample) from a wider group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information." The method of random sampling was utilized in the study to determine the

connection between the quality of the brand relationship and the level of customer involvement. Because of this, the components of the sample need to be representative of the overall population. The aforementioned random sample was carried out at places that belonged to a variety of private industries. There were a total of 140 questionnaires handed out at the various private companies; however, only 128 of those questionnaires were returned, and only 128 of those were correctly filled out. The data was obtained through the use of hard copies.

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The main aim of this research is to analyse the relationship between quality of brand relationship and customer engagement. As it mentioned previously total of 128 participants were involved in completing the questionnaire. The respondents were requested to rate how important they perceived each item on five point ordered scales. All data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20.

Table 1. Reliability Test

| Factor | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| Brand awareness | .76 | 37 |
| Brand association | .66 | 26 |
| Perceived quality | .68 | 28 |
| Customer engagement | .712 | 30 |

The results of the reliability test for three independent variables and one dependent variable are presented in Table 1. The Alpha for brand relationship was calculated to be .760 > .6, indicating that 37 of the items used for brand relationship were reliable (Kothari, 2004). The alpha for brand association was calculated to be .660, which indicates

that 26 of the items utilized for brand association were reliable. The reliability of the perceived quality styles was determined to be .680, which indicates that there were 28 reliable things used in the analysis. The analysis of customer engagement was found to be .712 reliable, which means that 30 reliable items were used in the analysis.

Table 2. Correlations Analysis

| Factors | Pearson Correlation | Customer engagement |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Brand awareness | Pearson Correlation | .662** |
| | Sig. (2-Tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 128 |
| Brand association | Pearson Correlation | .526** |
| | Sig. (2-Tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 128 |
| Perceived quality | Pearson Correlation | .629** |
| | Sig. (2-Tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 128 |

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

The correlations between the three independent variables and the dependent variable are presented in the second table. Customer engagement and brand relationship were discovered to have a significant relationship ($r = .662^{**}$, $p 0.01$). The linear link between the strength of a brand's relationship and the level of customer involvement is considered to be modest. Furthermore, the level of customer engagement is significantly correlated with the brand

association style ($r = .526^{**}$, $p 0.01$). Customer engagement is strongly related to perceived quality and style ($r = .629^{**}$, $p 0.01$). The strength of the linear relationship between brand association and customer engagement is modest. Regarding the intensity of the linear connection that exists between customer engagement and perceived quality, it is of moderate strength.

Table 1: Coefficients

| Independent variable | Coefficients | t-value | P-value |
|----------------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| Perceived quality | .529 | 9.455 | .000 |
| Brand association | .046 | 6.929 | .000 |
| Brand awareness | .426 | 8.208 | .000 |
| R ² | .642 | | |
| F value | 374.202 | | .000 |

Dependent Variable: Customer engagement

It was found that perceived quality significantly predicted customer engagement (Beta = 0.529, $p.001$), which indicates that perceived quality will have a direct positive association with customer engagement. Additionally, it was found that brand association significantly predicted customer engagement (Beta = 0.046, $p.001$), which indicates that brand association will have a direct positive but weak association with customer service. Table 3 presents the findings of the multiple regression analysis. It was found that perceived quality significantly predicted customer engagement (Beta This suggests that brand relationships will have a direct positive link that is only slightly weaker than customer engagement. In addition to this, it was discovered that the value of R square was equal to.64. This suggests that the three qualities of brand

relationships (perceived quality, brand relationship, and brand association) are responsible for explaining 64% of the total variation in customer engagement. Additionally, the F value for the three qualities of brand relationship (perceived quality, brand relationship, and brand association) as independent variables is equal to 374.202, which is greater than one. This suggests that the three aspects of brand relationship (perceived quality, brand relationship, and brand association) that we've been talking about have a lot to do with consumer engagement.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Increased focus in recent years has been placed on the connections between consumers and brands, with Kang et

al. (2021) being one of the most recent publications on the subject. This research contributes to the literature by investigating the interplay between brand adoration and participant innovation. Brand love and consumer engagement are the two core notions in the academic study of consumer-brand relationships. In this study, we provide a conceptual separation of these two important concepts. Because of this, we've begun to pause for a moment and think about the bigger picture of marketing and how it's impacted our ability to examine the interplay between customers and companies. According to this theory, shoppers look for products that will help them achieve their goals of social, economic, and ecological sustainability. Consumers now look beyond a brand's function as an identification of a product, service, or company and instead make purchases based on the positive connections and feelings they associate with that brand. A conceptual divide between brand adoration and client participation has therefore been laid out. In particular, it has become obvious how such phrases have often been used in diverse empirical situations and how they arose from distinct academic areas. Given the dramatic shifts in the marketplace, it is crucial to keep tabs on the ever-shifting dynamics of the consumer-brand connection. The prospects presented by the effective management of big data and the arrival of marketing are two examples of future trends that are likely to have a significant impact on these connections and should be taken into account. With the support of big data, businesses are better able to forge lasting partnerships. Big data marketing is what we call Marketing (Wang and Lee, 2020). From customer-centric strategies to content marketing, Marketing prepares businesses for the dynamic digital economy (Molinillo et al., 2020). Understanding the history of marketing—and especially Marketing—is essential for those working in marketing. Also important is a look at how different kinds of technology, not just the Internet and social media, can be used to create marketing plans that make brands and their customers feel closer to each other.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

According to the conclusions of the research that was discussed earlier, there is more information to be uncovered on the topic of the quality of brand relationships and consumer engagement in a variety of private enterprises. It would be helpful to have a larger sample size that included all of the important races that live in Kurdistan. The findings of this study will be beneficial for the field of culture studies, for example, culture diversification and its relationship with the quality of brand relationships. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that further studies be conducted in the field of cultural issues and the

relationship quality of brand relationships to determine whether or not culture will have an effect on accepting certain customer engagement.

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