

Connecting the Dots: Understanding the Relationship between Brand Attachment, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intentions in Online Apparel Purchases

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Abstract

This research aimed to explore the online purchase intention of consumers by combining brand attachment and brand trust in online apparel brands in India. It was conducted with 303 respondents who are exposed to online shopping in the NCR, India. PLS-SEM was used to examine the data and proposed hypothesis of the study. The study revealed a significant positive impact of brand attachment (BA) on brand trust (BT), and brand trust also positively influences online purchase intentions (OPI) of consumers in the apparel industry. Additionally, trust in a brand plays a mediating role between the connection of brand attachment and, purchase intention. Males are found more actively involved in online purchasing than women. This empirical study is based on factors that aids in the purchase of a brand, to foster sales and manage a strong consumer-brand affiliation.

Keywords: Brand Attachment, Brand Trust, Online Purchase Intention, Apparel, and Consumer Experience

1. Introduction

The relationship between purchase intentions, brand attachment, and brand trust is crucial in the ever-changing Indian apparel market. It is useful in shaping consumer behavior. Practitioners and researchers in various industries have emphasized building a strong emotional bond between consumers and brands (Shimul & Phau, 2022). Strong brands are of great importance to companies, mainly because of the brand's ability to attract loyal consumers, contributing to the company's sales (Horváth & Birgelen, 2015). Being strong, a brand should have a deep bond and strength with the consumers' creating a robust consumer-brand relationship. Brand attachment is one of the inseparable factors of consumer-brand relationships, such as it is the "bond connecting consumer to the brand". It affects the behavior of consumers, which fosters the brand's profitability and lifetime value, etc. The technological shift has opened a new window for different businesses in various ways. Retail sales online have been rapidly increasing since 2000. After electronic appliances, apparel and footwear are India's most significant categories of online purchasing (Statista-B2C E-Commerce). The internet has encouraged consumers to shop online rather than offline, saving time and money. The number of internet users and online shoppers has increased tremendously around the

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world. By adopting the internet way of purchase, consumers have a vast range of items and services available to them in just one click around the world.

According to **Statista (2023)**, apparel and clothing are the leading categories of online consumer purchases. Consumers have most often both Clothing (70%) in the past year 2023. A brand name or characteristics positively influence perceived value for customers, significantly related to purchase intention. Positioning brands online has become an essential task for marketers to make consumers trust and buy products online, thereby maintaining consumer loyalty. The success and growth of Internet shopping depend on the characteristics of the products and services being marketed, product uniqueness, distribution channel, etc. (**Young Kim & Kim, 2004**). Numerous renowned global brands of clothing (such as Levi's, Zara, FabIndia, etc.) exemplify how the relationship of attachment, trust, and purchase intention dimension is harnessed to create consumer loyalty and satisfaction. The renowned company Levi's has launched one of the most distinctive and captivating campaigns namely "*Levi's Tailor Shop*" on January 27th & 28th, 2024 to give it's customers an unforgettable experience. It is an experiential marketing initiative to bring self-expression through customization (**Levi's Tailorshop, 2024**). Consumers attending the event gain a wide range of options including fabric patching, embroidery designs, and much more as a part of sustainable practice. Interacting with skilled tailors and craftsmen enhances the brand's authenticity which has and positive impact on brand attachment.

Another prominent example is Zara's "*#Join Life*" which aims to delivering beneficial impacts for nature, people, and the environment (**Join Life, 2024**). By focusing on the personalized needs of consumers' sustainability, and their engagement, these brands demonstrate the powerful impact of cultivating deep consumer-brand relationships in the competitive online apparel market. As human behavior is difficult to define, how we make up our actual decisions, the most popular theory is the "*Theory of Planned Behaviour*" given by Ajzen which has been applied in many studies to explain human behavior in various fields of sociology, psychology, and social psychology. **La Rosa & Jorgensen (2021)** and **Hasbullah et al. (2022)** also used the TPB to explain consumer purchase intentions in apparel shopping. TPB can be applied to determine the relationship between BA, BT, and OPI. One important aspect of TPB, subjective norms, is important when buying clothes online. The impact of friends, family, society, and internet forums on customers' brand-buying decisions is one example of these norms. Encouragement or favorable peer reviews may affect a customer's decision to make an online purchase. Whereas, perceived behavioral control varies according to the situation. Even if the

attitude and subjective norms of the person are high enough to engage in behavior if there is low perceived control then it will fail to perform (**Conner & Armitage, 1998**).

The previous researches still lack a framework for investigating online purchase intentions by integrating these dimensions collectively in the apparel industry in the NCR region. The current study aims to determine the relationship and impact of the less unexplored collective relationship among the same. Various researchers have identified that Indian customers have been a prime demographic for research on purchase intentions, brand attachment, and brand trust. (**Chakraborty & Sadachar, 2021**). Due to rising purchasing power, international brands are drawn to India's developing economy. The elements that improve brand intents and sales in a cutthroat market are the main elements of this study.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Theory of Planned Behaviour

"The TPB theory is also known as the Theory of Reasoned Action." It was proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1991. According to this theory, the behaviors of the person are derived from the intentions determined by factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (**Ajzen, 2011**). It emphasizes the aspects of human information processing in decision-making. **Niloy et al. (2023)** discussed this theory indicating that emotions can have an indirect effect on the intentions and behavior of humans in various fields. According to this theory, both perceived behavior and intention can significantly contribute to the direct prediction of the behavior (**Ajzen, 1991**). It provides a basis for measuring the intentions of people. Thus this theory supports the proposed model of the study determining the consumers' purchase intentions.

2.2. Brand Attachment

The concept of "Emotional Attachment" stems from Bowlby's attachment theory (1982), which has been fundamental in shaping our understanding of human relationships. Brand Attachment is the bond or connection consumers have with a particular product or brand. **Park et al. (2010)** defined it as the intensity or strength of a bond that connects the brand to an individual. Research indicates that consumers' attachment for a brand is impacted by love, passion, and bond strength, with emotional attachment positively impacting various consumer behaviors and relationships, including purchase intentions and brand love. (**Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019**).

2.3. Brand Trust

Being a psychological state in human beings, trust involves the consumer's willingness to perceive a brand as reliable, and it can help them achieve their desired objectives (**Sánchez et al., 2020**). It is one of the vital elements in a consumer-brand relationship that establishes consumers' bond with the brand (**Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001**). It is said that when consumers have high engagement with the brand, they develop a higher level of trust (**Li et al., 2020**), and a higher level of trust produces a favorable consumer attitude (**He et al., 2012**). In the brand literature, trust has been found the strongest pillar between the consumer and the brand itself (**Sahin et al., 2011**).

2.4. Online Purchase Intention

The willingness of consumers to buy a product or service through online stores is the purchase intention. Researchers determined that online purchase intention is derived from the purchase intention; a state of perception in final decision-making. Measuring consumers' purchase intention is a vital element in forecasting consumers' purchase behavior in marketing (**Kamalul-Arifin et al., 2018**). The study of **Thamizhvanan & Xavier (2013)** tried to figure out what influences young people in India to buy things online, and their study revealed that impulse purchase orientation, online trust, and prior online purchasing experience have a significant impact on the consumers' purchase intention.

Table 1. Summary of other research in the context of Brand Attachment, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention.

Authors	The focus of the study	Theory Applied	Sample and Location	Technique	Mediating/Moderating Variable	DV/IDV
Frasquet et al. (2017)	The authors focused on understanding loyalty in the context of multi-channel retailing. To analyze the connection between online and offline loyalty effects on brand --trust and brand attachment.	-	761, UK Spain	CFA, SEM	Online & offline loyalty ;Brand attachment; and trust in Multichannel retailing	Brand Attachment (IDV)
Jain Sundström (2021)	Developing conceptual framework to	CPV (Customer Perceived		Qualitative Study	Satisfaction through Personalized Services	Apparel e-commerce fulfillment

propose
satisfaction
through
personalized
services. To
shape middle-
range theory
within the
context of
apparel e-
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fulfillment.

Note: “CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis; Tukey's HSD = Honestly Significant Difference; SEM = Structural Equation Modelling; & ANOVA = Analysis of Variance”

The study of Tunisian luxury consumers identified buying behavior towards international luxury brands and the role of consumers' attachment to the brand. It revealed that brand attachment is a crucial factor in measuring brand commitment in the context of useful products. It is the consequence of the credibility of the information provided to them about the good or service. Purchase intentions positively impact the actual buying decisions of consumers. The extensive literature review provided that so much research has been done within the framework of brand attachment, brand trust, and purchase intentions in different countries like the USA, the UK, and Malaysia, etc. covering various sectors like the food industry, organic products, automobiles, and electronics. It can be seen through past studies that no direct relationship among the mentioned variables was examined in connection with online shopping of apparel in selected regions. Therefore, the proposed model contributes to determining the direct and mediating relationships of variables to bridge the gap, and to help marketers build strategies to improve consumer-brand relationships effectively.

3. Objectives

- To examine the impact of brand attachment on brand trust in the context of consumers' purchase intention in online apparel shopping.
- To determine the level of the extent of brand trust in online apparel shopping.
- To analyze the extent to which brand trust mediates the brand attachment and online purchase intention relation concerning online apparel purchasing.

4. Hypothesis Development

4.1. Brand Attachment and Brand Trust

The customers who have an emotional attachment to the brand or product are most likely to have positive behavior toward the company. It plays a vital role in the competitive

environment. Self-congruence has a positive impact on consumers' emotional attachment to the brand. The attachment aspect involves cognitive and emotional bonds in a consumer-brand relationship. **Thomson et al. (2005)** revealed a three-factor model characterizing brand attachment based on three emotional components, affection, passion, and connection. **Morgan & Hunt (1994)** described partial support by emphasizing that "the relationship does not include only commitment, but it also involves trust. **Jahn et al. (2012)** explained the dimensions of attachment as self-concept and quality of the partner's connection and quality partners include aspects of predictability, dependability, and faith that directly influence the development of trust. **Malär et al. (2011)** showed that predicting brand attachment is aided by self-congruence with the personality of the brand. Attachment and trust are critical factors in tourism (**Li et al., 2020**).

H1: *Brand Attachment positively affects consumers' Brand Trust in the context of online apparel shopping.*

4.2. Brand Attachment and Online Purchase Intention

Brand Attachment indeed an important component in a consumer-brand relationship, examines the level of affection or an emotional attachment towards a specific brand/product. Organizations and marketers are concerned about relationship marketing in this modern era to observe their consumers' retention ratio and satisfaction. **Ahmad & Akbar (2021)** examined the multifaceted aspects of relationship marketing and its impact on customers' brand attachment in the hotel industry, along with the connection between relationship marketing and purchase intention. The study revealed that the primary areas examined were brand attachment, attitudinal loyalty, and behavioral loyalty. Findings also support the mediation between 'relationship marketing' and 'the intention to purchase'. Online retailers should prioritize enhancing the online experience provided to their customers to promote brand trust online and purchase intention (**Mehmood & Hamid, 2024**).

H2: *The brand attachment has a significant positive impact on consumers' online purchase intention.*

4.3. Brand Trust and Online Purchase Intention

It is crucial to have trust when shopping online. Previous research has demonstrated that the purchase intention of consumers had been significantly influenced by brand trust (**Dam, 2020; Gibreel et al., 2018; & Kim & Kim, 2017**). Similarly, consumer trust creates a positive brand reputation and loyalty (**Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018**). It has been found that brand attachment, attitudinal loyalty, and behavioral loyalty played prominent roles in mediating the relationship between marketing along with purchase intentions.

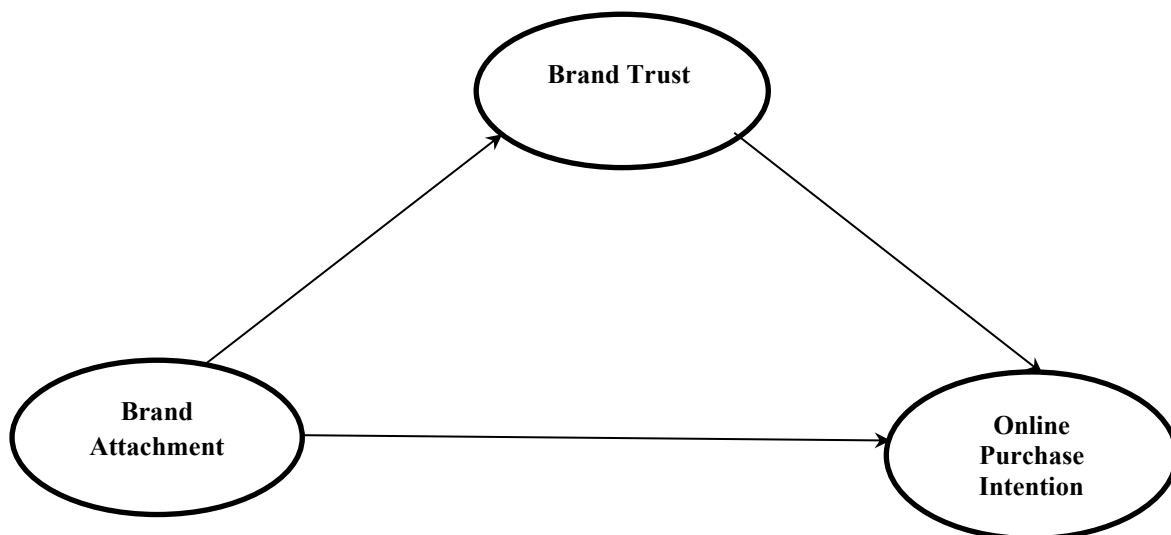
H3: *Brand Trust positively impacts the Online Purchase Intention of customers.*

4.4. Mediating role of brand trust between brand attachment and online purchase intentions

Purchase intention is a critical component of behavioral science. The term purchase intention refers to the willingness of the consumers to pay for a specific product/service. Brand trust is treated as a critical dimension to define the attitude of an individual consumer in a consumer-brand relationship (Kim et al., 2019), and purchase intention is the attitudinal dimension used to measure and predict consumer behavior in marketing. Consumers believe that a particular brand can meet their necessities and desires (Tong et al., 2018). Based on the previous research the relationship between PI and BA when grouped with BT, revealed that the consumers who experience a sense of attachment with the brand gain trust over the same. Also, they will have the desire to get associated with the particular brand. The desire to get associated with the brand will, in turn, increase the purchase intention towards branded products. This study explores the mediating role of BT in influencing OPI through BA.

H4: *Brand Trust positively mediates the relationship between Brand Attachment and Online Purchase Intention.*

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the study



5. Research Methodology

5.1. Measurement development

The present study used a variety of measurement scales to examine the relationship and impact of some major constructs in marketing. In the current study, we have taken brand attachment as an independent variable which is measured through a seven-item scale adopted from the study of Aureliano-Silva et al., (2018); another mediating variable brand trust was measured

through a six-item scale of brand trust taken by **Chen-Yu et al. (2016)** and a four-item scale of online purchase intention was adopted from **Awa et al. (2023)**. We have developed an online questionnaire in the English language to evaluate and analyze the constructs employed in the study. To assess the various constructs employed, we utilized a five-point Likert scale, spanning from "*Strongly Disagree*" (1) to "*Strongly Agree*" (5).

5.2. Data and Sampling

According to a survey report based on historic period trends from 2019-2023, it has been forecasted that for the upcoming years 2025-2029, the market size of Indian fashion online retail would be projected for USD 36.01 billion (*India Online Fashion Retail Market Analysis - Size and Forecast 2025-2029*, 2025). It gave us a scope to conduct the study in India's NCR. The market is expanding significantly due to factors including urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and the growing diversity of the metropolitan population, which is why it was chosen. It falls within the jurisdiction of four State Governments, namely the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (*NCR Planning Board, Annual Report 2021-22*). Further, using a structured questionnaire, the regions Gurugram, Noida, and Delhi were chosen to conduct the study.

The reason for selecting these cities was a survey conducted by Amazon, which determined that Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida are the top-performing cities in the fashion and beauty category, with 81% of consumers intending to shop online throughout the festival season (*'Delhi is One of the Top-Performing Cities in Fashion and Beauty Category, 2023'*; *Gurugram: Over 41% Prefer Online Shopping, 2020*). Data was gathered for a period of three months, ranging from March 2024 to May 2024. A total of 303 participants who were frequently involved in online purchasing apparel in these significant areas of NCR, India, were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The details of the sampled respondents are presented in **Table 2**. About 59% and 40% of the respondents were male and female. Most samples ranged from 18-25 years, i.e. 67 percent of the whole sample unit. A detailed summary of the other categorical variables is given in **Table 3**. To investigate the relationship and impact of consumers' brand attachment and their trust in the brand on online purchase intentions, the study utilized a quantitative research approach to explore both direct, mediating, and indirect effects that brand attachment and brand trust have on consumers' intentions to make online purchases of the consumers in the context of the apparel industry.

Table 2. Respondents' Profile

Measures	Items	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	180	59.41
	Female	120	39.60
	Others	3	0.99
	Total	303	100
Age (Years)	18 – 25	203	66.99
	26 – 35	65	21.45
	35 – 45	24	7.93
	Above 45	11	3.63
	Total	303	100
Education	Matriculation	16	5.28
	Intermediate	31	10.23
	Graduation	135	44.55
	Post-Graduation	111	36.64
	Above Post-Graduation	10	3.30
	Total	303	100
Frequency of online purchase	Once in a month	89	29.37
	Once in 2 months	67	22.11
	Once in 3 months	62	20.46
	Once in 4 months	85	28.06
	Total	303	100

Source: Based on primary data collected

Table 3. Evaluation of model through Reliability and Validity test (N =303)

Constructs	Items	Loading factor (LF.)	Mean	SD	Cronbach alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE	VIF
Brand Attachment	BA1	0.769	3.274	1.146	0.935	0.936	0.948	0.722	1.000
	BA2	0.844	3.221	1.166					
	BA3	0.875	3.396	1.178					
	BA4	0.863	3.36	1.207					
	BA5	0.848	3.343	1.057					
	BA6	0.878	3.116	1.22					
	BA7	0.865	3.251	1.209					
Brand Trust	BT1	0.880	3.743	1.235	0.929	0.931	0.945	0.740	1.862
	BT2	0.892	3.851	1.054					
	BT3	0.803	3.69	1.032					
	BT4	0.850	3.647	1.11					
	BT5	0.863	3.894	1.066					
	BT6	0.871	3.838	1.11					

Online Purchase Intention	OPI1	0.896	3.795	1.095	0.926	0.927	0.948	0.819	1.862
	OPI2	0.921	3.871	1.011					
	OPI3	0.912	3.845	1.099					
	OPI4	0.890	3.868	1.032					

Source: Calculated in PLS-SEM

Note: “*SD = Standard Deviation; CA = Cronbach’s alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted and VIF = Variance Inflation Factor*”

The outcome of statistical analysis has conveyed that the factor value of all items were substantial i.e. above 0.6 (Hair et al., 2014). Additionally, there were no collinearity issues found, since the variance inflation factor is ‘less than five’ ($VIF < 5$), as shown in **Table 6** respectively. Additionally, the scores of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are higher than 0.7. Additionally, the AVE values that ranged from 0.720 to 0.821 exceeded the 0.50 criterion. (Hair et al., 2019). These findings unequivocally establish the trustworthiness and effectiveness of the measurement model utilized in the study.

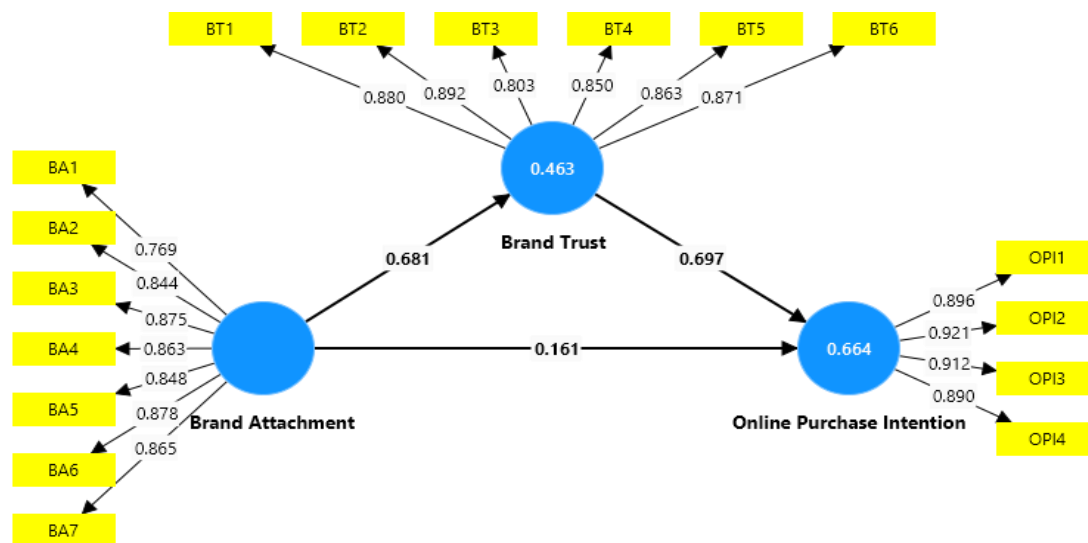
6. Data Analysis

6.1. Statistical Analysis

Smart-PLS 4 was utilized for the statistical calculation to examine the proposed model (Ringle et al., 2024). It was found appropriate to use the PLS-SEM tool as it includes techniques like pls algorithm, and bootstrapping for assessing the reliability and validity of the model. This method provides a robust means to estimate standard errors and confidence intervals as well as for testing the proposed hypotheses. In the measurement model of the study, the factor loading values were found to be higher than 0.7, therefore, significant at 95%, which reveals the convergent validity of items shown in **Fig. 2**. Cronbach’s alpha’s value was considered crucial for testing CR (Composite Reliability), which was larger than 0.70 thus, reliable. The AVE values of all items were more than 0.50 at the construct level, which shows the achieved discriminant validity among the constructs of the study (Henseler et al., 2015). Further, all VIF values for the model stood below 3.5, which illustrates that collinearity has not affected the outcomes of the study’s structural model (Hair et al., 2019).

6.2. Structural Model Evaluation

For the measurement of the structural model, the study displays path coefficients and coefficients of determination (R^2). The p-values of the inner model are shown in **Fig.3**.

Figure .2. Measurement Model Statistics

In Smart PLS, the bootstrapping method was adopted to perform statistical analysis, which is essential for assessing and determining the relevance of the paths in study's proposed model. This method makes it possible to estimate the precision of the sample estimates, providing a robust method to infer the stability and the reliability of model's parameters with sample (n=303) for p-values, standard errors, and t-values. The structural model displays the graph of path coefficients and their magnitudes; **Fig. 3** shows the path relationship among the variables. The value of R^2 for brand trust (BT) is 0.399; the adjusted value of R^2 is 0.463, and for purchase intention (PI), the value of R^2 is 0.664.

6.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is the level to which a specific test is unrelated to other tests measuring different types of variables in the research. It was tested using the Fornell and Larcker criterion, and the HTMT approach and cross-loadings. The results are demonstrated in **Table 5**, **Table 6**, and **Table 7** respectively.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity using Fornell and Larcker criterion.

Constructs	BA	BT	OPI
BA	0.850	-	-
BT	0.681	0.860	-
OPI	0.635	0.807	0.905

Source: Calculations from PLS

Note: "BA=Brand Attachment, BT=Brand Trust, and OPI=Online Purchase Intention"

Fornell and Larcker Criterion, explain that the square root of the AVE (average variance extracted) from a variable/construct must be higher than their correlation. All the figures lying in a diagonal are larger than the figures below them, which illustrates that discriminant validity is confirmed. Using the Fornell and Larcker Criterion on the level of construct, discriminant validity can be achieved if the AVE's square root is higher than the highest correlation value between the latent variable and other dimensions of the study (Hair et al., 2014). The outcome presented in Table 5 describes that the 'outer loading' values of all indicators were larger on their latent variable than cross-loadings on another latent construct. Accordingly, it claims that the discriminant validity in the study has been fully achieved.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity using HTMT approach.

Key Variables	BA	BT	OPI
BA	-		
BT	0.728	-	
OPI	0.681	0.868	-

Source: Calculations from PLS

Note: "BA=Brand Attachment, BT=Brand Trust, and OPI=Online Purchase Intention"

The latest criterion for evaluating discriminant validity is the HTMT approach presented in Table 5. The values obtained by heterotrait-monotrait ratios are less than 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2009, 2015) which indicates that the discriminant validity is attained.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity through Cross Loadings

Constructs	Items	Brand Attachment	Brand Trust	Online Purchase Intention
Brand Attachment	BA1	0.769	0.567	0.553
	BA2	0.844	0.553	0.523
	BA3	0.875	0.613	0.572
	BA4	0.863	0.564	0.521
	BA5	0.848	0.600	0.573
	BA6	0.878	0.577	0.509
	BA7	0.865	0.565	0.517
Brand Trust	BT1	0.585	0.880	0.728
	BT2	0.634	0.892	0.719
	BT3	0.536	0.803	0.630
	BT4	0.593	0.850	0.671
	BT5	0.583	0.863	0.704
	BT6	0.577	0.871	0.706
	OPI1	0.558	0.731	0.896
	OPI2	0.564	0.766	0.921

Online Purchase	OPI3	0.605	0.734	0.912
Intention	OPI4	0.572	0.687	0.890

Source: Calculations from PLS

The outcome presented above in **Table 5** also marked that the ‘outer model loading’ of every indicator is higher on its “respective latent variable” than the cross-loading on another latent variable. These results also ensured that the discriminant validity was verified.

7. Results

7.1. Common Method Bias

Common method biases occur owing to an error in response rather than any statistical error. As a threat, CMB can undermine the reliability and validity of a test (**Jordan & Troth, 2020**). Hence, it is important to detect CMB which happens when both dependent and independent variables are determined in the same survey questionnaire simultaneously, as they create deviations in the result. According to **Kock (2017)**, there are two prominent methods available for controlling survey-based CMB i.e. statistical and procedural controls. Firstly, by providing clear instructions about the anonymity of responses ensuring active participation of respondents in an online survey; and by presenting the questions after testing content validity. In the context of statistical control, authors should utilize VIF calculations to assess CMB and make it confirm that all values are not more than 3.3.

On this, **Kock (2017)** explained if all calculated VIF values are lesser than 3.3, then it eliminates CMB. Moreover, to effectively address the potential for CMB (Common Method Bias), we employed the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and the collinearity approach using Smart-PLS 4. The analysis revealed no significant issues of collinearity within the mentioned variables. As a result of employing these rigorous techniques, our goal was to reduce the influence of common method bias in our research.

Figure 3. The Structural Model

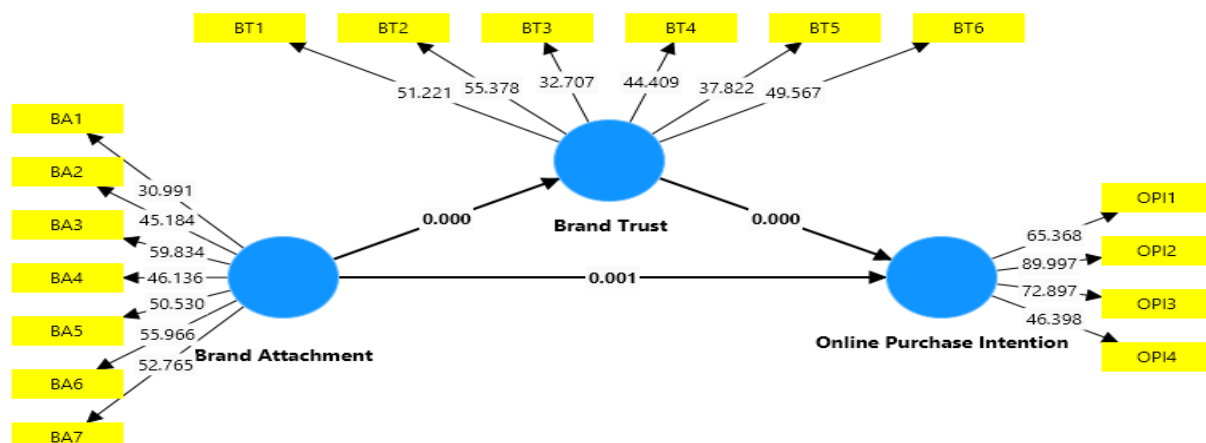


Table 7. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path	p-value	Supported
H1	Brand Attachment-> Brand Trust	0.000	●
H2	Brand Attachment->Online Purchase Intention	0.001	●
H3	Brand Trust -> Online Purchase Intention	0.000	●

Source: Calculations from PLS

From the results, the VIF and the p-values show that there were 3 hypotheses tested and all of the paths are significant. Hence all, H1, H2, and H3 are supported by having p-values = 0.00.

Table 8. The predictive power and predictive relevance of latent variables

Latent	Q ² predict	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Brand Trust	0.458	0.463	0.461
Online Purchase Intention	0.398	0.664	0.662

Source: Calculations from PLS

Results shown in **Table 8** above, verified that the structural model of the study has a satisfactory level of predictive relevance Q² for BT is 0.458 with predictive power R² > 0.463. For OPI; Q² is 0.398 and R² is 0.664 assuring that the PLS structural model's predictive relevance is pivotal. Specifically, the R² value of 0.463 and 0.664 indicates that the model explains 46.3% and 66.4% of the variation in BT and OPI.

Table 9. Results of path coefficients, mean, and deviation

	Path Coefficients	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	P-values
BA -> BT	0.681	0.682	0.037	0.000
BA -> OPI	0.161	0.161	0.049	0.001
BT -> OPI	0.697	0.698	0.050	0.000

Source: Calculations from PLS

Specific Indirect Effects

BA -> BT -> OPI	0.475
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Source: Calculations from PLS

8. Study Implications

8.1. Theoretical Implications

The study establishes a significant contribution toward online purchase intention in the apparel industry. Research demises that the decision of consumers to purchase in the online apparel

sector is influenced by the trust in that brand as well as brand attachment (**Jain & Sundström 2021**). These insights of the study result not only deepen our understanding of the consumer-brand relationship domain but also offer practical guidance for marketers seeking to enhance consumer attachment and trust in the brands to drive sales in this digital age. Using Virtual or Augmented Reality technologies on the e-platform has the potential to establish and reinforce trust by offering an accurate presentation of the products being purchased.

8.2. Practical Implications

The research paper provides the conceptual model, that would help marketers and e-retailers to understand the connection among various constructs: Brand Attachment, Brand Trust, and, Online Purchase Intention regarding the apparel industry. The results revealed how significantly brand trust mediates the relationship of BA and OPI, which helps marketing professionals and managers know the importance of reinforcing BT in building and maintaining consumers' trust in the brands, online retailers can significantly influence consumers' willingness to purchase, leading to higher confidence in the brands and sustained business in the online apparel market. They should emphasize providing tailoring services to consumers offline near them who made purchases online. It would help in establishing an emotional connection between consumers and the brand. Moreover, the apparel platform's navigability, its aesthetics, and graphical features should be attractive for enhancing attachment in customers. The brands should provide seamless and interactive shopping experiences to their consumer through customization initiatives like virtual fitting rooms, with the help of AI, timely interactions with consumers, and taking their feedback to meet their demands. The integrity and reliability of e-tailers may be increased by their honest attempts to deliver excellent customer service and address specific concerns, such as order cancellation, delivery problems, and item returns and replacements quickly.

9. Conclusion

The results of the proposed study link the mediated role of brand trust with the relationship between brand attachment and online purchase intention (**Chaihanchai et al., 2024**), and it also yields a significant variance. The results of this study stated are more actively engaged in shopping online rather than females. Marketers and industrialists should focus on developing strategies to strengthen brand attachment among female consumers too, by creating personalized experiences over the e-platform, engaging them, and fostering a sense of community that can rationally impact consumer loyalty. Brand trust is also seen as a pivotal dimension among all creating a sense of reduced perceived risk in online purchases. Therefore,

implementing such practices may enhance trust levels in the brands which will be fruitful for marketers in customer retention, and customer loyalty. Emerging technologies like AI-driven personalization can enhance brand attachment and trust, benefiting online retailers by enhancing customer experiences, and leading to improved brand image and loyalty. Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality can build and enhance trust by offering a more accurate representation of the products to consumers' reducing uncertainty and perceived risk about the fit and style of the products. This will enhance the effectiveness of marketing innovative trends and campaigns to comprehend consumer behavior better.

10. Limitations and Future Scope

Regardless of its positive contribution to the explained relationship, the study has limitations too. First of all, this study was limited to one geographical region i.e. NCR, India, therefore its generalizability can be tested over various geographies. This study focuses on consumer-brand relationships highlighting the need for further research with different moderating and mediating factors like customer experiences, brand legacy, and brand love. Secondly, OPI is studied as an outcome of the brand trust variable, however, brand trust and brand attachment can be studied as dependent variables including brand efficacy, also. It will help the marketing industrialists clarify the different constructs and focus on the most effective ones for purchase decision-making. Moreover, studies are needed to compare results across different product categories, including sportswear, automobiles, and jewelry, to ensure accurate results.

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