

Impact of Emotional Branding on Customer Purchasing Decisions for Nepalese Shoe Brand in Nepal

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Abstract

Emotional branding can be described as a marketing process that aims at establishing emotional ties between brands and consumers rather than focusing on the functional aspects of products. The process aims to create positive emotions such as trust, love, pride, and a sense of identity among consumers, which is essential in influencing consumer behavior. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in emotional branding as a factor that influences decision-making among customers.

The proposed research aims to investigate the concept of emotional branding in the Nepalese footwear market, where the focus of the existing branding practices is still on the price and quality of the product, without much consideration for the emotional aspect. The theoretical framework of the proposed research has identified the concept of emotional branding as a major construct that is impacted by five major dimensions: emotional bonding, brand storytelling, sensory experience, community and identity, and brand attachment.

Emotional branding is expected to have an impact on the purchasing decisions of customers by building trust, loyalty, and preference for certain brands. A quantitative research approach was used in this study, and the data was collected using a survey method, where 412 respondents were used in the study through structured questionnaires. The results of this study show that there is a positive relationship between emotional branding and the purchasing decisions of customers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nepalese footwear industry has grown significantly in recent years due to increasing purchasing power, changing fashion preferences, and greater exposure to international brands. Today's consumers seek not only quality and affordability but also brands that reflect their values, identity, and emotions. This change in consumer behavior has encouraged footwear brands to adopt emotional branding strategies to influence purchasing decisions.

Emotional branding is a marketing approach that focuses on building emotional connections between consumers and brands by appealing to feelings, experiences, and symbolic note rather than functional benefits alone (Stoeva, 2017; Jorge, 2018). Previous studies show that emotional branding positively influences consumer perception, loyalty, and purchasing behavior, especially when supported by digital platforms that enable interactive and personalized brand communication (Stoeva, 2017). Emotional triggers such as happiness, pride, nostalgia, and personal identity have been found to significantly affect consumer buying behavior (Bunga et al., 2024; Juárez-Varón & Mengual-Recuerda, 2023).

In Nepal, emotional branding in the footwear sector is still developing. While international brands use emotional storytelling and lifestyle-oriented marketing, many local brands have limited understanding of how emotional factors influence consumer behavior. Chitwan, as a growing and culturally diverse region, provides a suitable context to examine this issue. However, the lack of region-specific studies makes it challenging for local footwear brands to design effective branding strategies (Tilahun & Amentie, 2024; Jorge, 2018).

This study examines the impact of emotional branding on customer purchasing decisions for Nepalese shoe brands, focusing on key emotional branding components used in the questionnaire.

These components include emotional connection, brand storytelling and narrative, sensory experience, community and identity, and brand attachment, which collectively influence how consumers perceive brands and make purchasing decisions.

2. RELATED WORKS

Thomson et al. (2005) showed the concept of emotional attachment to brands by applying attachment theory from psychology. According to attachment theory, individuals form emotion-laden bonds with specific objects, characterized by feelings of affection, connection, and passion. Although consumers interact with many brands, strong emotional attachment is formed only with a limited number of brands that hold personal significance. The study suggests that emotional attachment strongly influences consumer behavior, particularly brand loyalty, resistance to switching, and willingness to make sacrifices such as paying premium prices. The literature further distinguishes emotional attachment from related constructions such as brand attitude, satisfaction, and involvement. While positive attitudes or satisfaction may exist toward many brands, emotional attachment develops gradually through repeated interactions and deeper emotional connections. Emotional attachment is primarily affective in nature and has stronger predictive power for long-term brand commitment. The study also emphasizes the importance of measuring emotional attachment using a reliable and valid scale, which provides a strong foundation for examining emotional bonding in consumer behavior research.

Stoeva (2017) explored emotional branding as a strategic approach to creating strong emotional connections between brands and consumers. The study highlights that emotional branding significantly influences purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and brand awareness. In the



digital era, emotional branding has become more impactful due to the widespread use of digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and brand websites, which enable interactive and personalized communication. The research employed both primary and secondary data, including survey methods, to examine the influence of emotional branding on consumer behavior. A case study by Nike demonstrated how emotional storytelling, community building, and emotional motivators can transform consumer desires into perceived needs and influence purchasing behavior. The findings confirm that emotional branding, when combined with digital strategies, strengthens consumer-brand relationships and enhances long-term engagement.

Research carried out by Jorge (2018) explore the growing importance of emotional marketing in understanding consumer behavior, particularly in low-involvement purchase categories. The study argues that traditional consumer behavior models fail to fully explain emotionally driven purchasing decisions. Emotional marketing plays a crucial role in shaping brand image, personality, and consumer preference by creating emotional associations through advertising. The study highlights that emotions significantly influence purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and price sensitivity. Consumers increasingly seek emotional satisfaction, experiences, and personal meaning in their purchases. The research identifies a clear gap in understanding the role of emotional marketing in low-involvement products, emphasizing the need for further investigation into emotional branding strategies across different product categories.

Kim and Sullivan (2019) explored emotional branding within the fashion industry, emphasizing that emotional branding goes beyond functional marketing by focusing on emotional experiences, storytelling, and symbolic meanings. In fashion-related products, emotional branding is especially important because personal identity, aesthetics,

and self-expression strongly influence consumer behavior. The study highlights that positive emotional experiences increase customer satisfaction, trust, and long-term loyalty. Reliability of emotional branding constructs was ensured through the use of Cronbach's Alpha, strengthening the empirical validity of emotional branding research.

The study conducted by Wu (2022) analyzed the factors influencing consumer purchase intentions in the footwear industry. The study emphasized that consumer perceptions of product attributes, brand image, quality, comfort, and pricing play a crucial role in purchase decisions. It also highlighted the growing influence of digital marketing communications, including online promotions and innovative tools such as virtual try-ons, in shaping consumer engagement and trust. The findings suggest that footwear purchasing behavior is influenced by a combination of emotional, functional, and digital factors.

Juarez-Varon et al. (2023) investigated how retail stimuli influence emotions and decision-making in fashion footwear. The study explains that consumer behavior is shaped by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. Sensory experiences such as visual design, store atmosphere, and product presentation create emotional memory markers that influence future purchasing behavior. Using neuromarketing techniques, the study demonstrated that emotional and sensory stimuli play a critical role in consumer engagement and purchase decisions

Bunga et al. (2024) explored the impact of emotional branding and experiential marketing on purchasing decisions. The study found that emotional branding had a statistically significant influence on purchasing decisions, whereas experiential marketing alone did not show a significant effect without strong emotional branding support. The findings indicate that emotional branding is a



more powerful driver of consumer behavior than experiential strategies alone. The study reinforces the idea that emotional connections are essential for influencing purchasing decisions in competitive markets.

Kaushik et al. (2024) reviewed the influence of emotional marketing on consumer decision-making, focusing on emotional appeals such as happiness, nostalgia, empathy, and fear. The study concluded that emotional marketing often has a stronger influence on consumer choices than rational factors like price and product features. It also highlighted the role of storytelling and social media in strengthening emotional connections, while emphasizing ethical considerations in emotional marketing practices.

Research carried out by Tilahun and Amentie (2024) factors affecting consumer behavior toward domestic footwear products. The study identified price, quality, design, brand name, and social status as major factors influencing purchasing decisions. The findings revealed that consumer attitudes toward domestic footwear vary significantly, indicating the need for deeper understanding of emotional and social influences. The study emphasizes the importance of evidence-based research to guide effective marketing strategies in domestic footwear markets.

Shaukat and Farid (2023) demonstrated that emotional branding raises favorable consumer perceptions, which in turn mediate the effect on purchase intention. Their empirical model shows both direct and indirect paths: emotional branding improves perceived brand warmth and trust (perceptual mediators), and these improved perceptions significantly raise purchase intent. The study therefore emphasizes measurement of both affective responses and consumer perceptions when testing emotional branding effects. This support includes items on trust, pride, and perceived brand meaning within your Emotional Connection and

Purchasing Decision constructs.

Research carried out by KL et al.(2023) reviewed synthesizes theoretical and empirical work on emotional branding, identifying common antecedents (e.g., storytelling, sensory cues, brand authenticity) and outcomes (e.g., attachment, loyalty, word-of-mouth). It organizes constructions used across studies and highlights measurement approaches (Likert scales, multidimensional constructs) and common reliability thresholds. The review underscores that emotional branding is multidimensional and that combining narrative, sensory, and social identity measures produces a robust operationalization. Use of this review justifies your multi-component questionnaire design Emotional Connection, Brand Storytelling, Sensory Experience, Community & Identity, and Brand Attachment and supports using Cronbach's Alpha for reliability testing.

Wang (2014) applies the Theory of Planned Behavior to shoe purchase intentions and integrates product attributes (comfort, design, price) with attitudinal and normative factors. The study finds that both perceived behavioral control (ease/cost) and attitudinal beliefs (including emotional preferences) significantly predict purchase intention. Wang's findings highlight the interplay between functional attributes and affective drivers in footwear purchase decisions, suggesting that emotional branding cannot be examined in isolation from product-related perceptions. This justifies your inclusion of Sensory Experience (comfort, material, presentation) alongside purely emotional constructs when predicting Purchasing Decision.

3. METHODS

3.1 Study Design, Sample, and Population

This study used a quantitative research design to explore the impact of emotional branding on customer purchasing decisions in Nepal's shoe market. The target population included consumers



of shoe products in Nepal. A sample of 412 respondents was selected using a convenience sampling method, chosen for their accessibility and willingness to participate.

3.2 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The survey was distributed via Google Forms and shared through social media platforms such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Instagram, enabling widespread participation. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent demographics and variable distributions, while inferential analysis assessed the relationships between emotional branding and purchasing decisions.

3.3 Theoretical Background

The study is based on Marc Gobe’s emotional branding theory (Lafferty, 2001), which suggests that emotional connections between consumers and brands influence purchasing decisions. Emotional branding focuses on creating brand experiences that evoke emotions like trust, happiness, and belonging, shaping consumer preferences and loyalty.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

| Construct | Number of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Emotional Connection | 6 | 0.728 |
| Brand Storytelling and Narrative | 6 | 0.717 |
| Sensory Experience | 6 | 0.706 |
| Community & Identity | 6 | 0.705 |
| Brand Attachment | 4 | 0.701 |

| Construct | Number of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Purchasing Decision | 6 | 0.731 |

It presents the reliability analysis of all study variables, including Emotional Connection, Brand Storytelling & Narrative, Sensory Experience, Community & Identity, Brand Attachment, and Purchasing Decision. Cronbach’s Alpha values for all constructs exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. Therefore, all measurement items used to assess emotional branding and purchasing decisions are considered reliable for further statistical analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

This section presents the results and analysis of the descriptive statistics of the variables under investigation in tabular formats.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Variable | Category | Frequency | % |
|------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|
| Age | 18–25 | 180 | 43.69 |
| | 26–35 | 150 | 36.41 |
| | 36–45 | 60 | 14.56 |
| | 46 and above | 22 | 5.34 |
| Gender | Female | 240 | 58.25 |
| | Male | 167 | 40.53 |
| | Prefer not to say | 5 | 1.21 |
| Education | Undergraduate | 288 | 69.90 |
| | Postgraduate | 82 | 19.90 |
| | Secondary | 21 | 5.10 |
| | Primary | 17 | 4.13 |
| | MPhil or above | 4 | 0.97 |
| Occupation | Student | 247 | 59.95 |
| | Employed | 82 | 19.90 |
| | Self-employed | 58 | 14.08 |
| | Unemployed | 25 | 6.07 |
| Location | Urban | 371 | 90.05 |
| | Rural | 41 | 9.95 |

| Variable | Category | Frequency | % |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------|-------|
| Purchase Frequency | Only when needed | 268 | 65.05 |
| | Once a year | 103 | 25.00 |
| | Every 3–6 months | 41 | 9.95 |

The demographic data indicate that most respondents were aged 18–25 years (43.69%), followed by 26–35 years (36.41%). Most respondents were female (58.25%) and undergraduate students (69.90%). In terms of occupation, students (59.95%) formed the largest group. A significant proportion of respondents resided in urban areas (90.05%). Regarding purchase frequency, most respondents bought footwear only when needed (65.05%), while 25.00% purchased once a year.

Table 3: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation

| Variable | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Emotional Connection | 3.75 | 1.15 |
| Brand Storytelling & Narrative | 3.70 | 1.16 |
| Sensory Experience | 3.73 | 1.14 |
| Community & Identity | 3.70 | 1.16 |
| Brand Attachment | 3.71 | 1.17 |
| Purchasing Decision | 3.72 | 1.17 |

The mean values above 3 indicate positive respondent perceptions toward emotional branding variables, while the standard deviation values suggest a moderate level of variability in responses.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Study Variables

| Variable | EC | BSN | SE | CI | BA | PD |
|----------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| EC | 1 | 0.70 | 0.70 | 0.72 | 0.66 | 0.70 |
| BSN | 0.70 | 1 | 0.71 | 0.72 | 0.66 | 0.71 |
| SE | 0.701 | 0.71 | 1 | 0.74 | 0.67 | 0.70 |
| CI | 0.72 | 0.72 | 0.74 | 1 | 0.69 | 0.71 |
| BA | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.67 | 0.69 | 1 | 0.67 |
| PD | 0.70 | 0.71 | 0.70 | 0.71 | 0.67 | 1 |

The correlation results indicate that all emotional branding components have a positive and strong

relationship with customer purchasing decisions. Brand Storytelling & Narrative and Community & Identity show the strongest correlations with purchasing decision ($r = 0.712$), followed by Sensory Experience ($r = 0.701$) and Emotional Connection ($r = 0.696$). These results suggest that emotional branding plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions for Nepalese shoe brands.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis

| Variables | Unstandardized Beta (B) | P-value |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------|
| Constant | 0.256 | 0.049 |
| EC | 0.181 | 0.000 |
| BSN | 0.225 | 0.000 |
| SE | 0.182 | 0.001 |
| CI | 0.183 | 0.001 |
| BA | 0.160 | 0.000 |

Table 5: Model Summary

| R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | F-value | P-value |
|-------|----------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| 0.804 | 0.646 | 0.642 | 148.10 | <0.01 |

The regression results show that emotional branding components have a significant impact on customer purchasing decisions. The model explains 64.6% ($R^2 = 0.646$) of the variance in purchasing decision, indicating a strong explanatory power. The overall model is statistically significant ($F = 148.10, p < 0.001$).

All independent variables Emotional Connection, Brand Storytelling & Narrative, Sensory Experience, Community & Identity, and Brand Attachment have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision, as their significance values are less than 0.05. Among the predictors, Brand Storytelling & Narrative ($\beta = 0.225$) has the strongest impact on purchasing decision, followed by Community & Identity ($\beta = 0.183$) and Sensory Experience ($\beta = 0.182$). These findings indicate that emotional branding plays a crucial role in influencing customer purchasing decisions for Nepalese shoe brands.



5. DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that emotional branding significantly influences customer purchasing decisions in the Nepalese footwear market. The regression analysis reveals that Brand Storytelling & Narrative is the most prominent predictor of purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers are strongly influenced by meaningful brand stories, values, and messages, a finding consistent with prior emotional branding literature emphasizing narrative-driven engagement. Community & Identity ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.001$) and Sensory Experience ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.001$) also exert substantial positive effects, suggesting that consumers prefer brands that foster a sense of belonging and deliver emotionally stimulating sensory cues such as comfort, design, and presentation. Emotional Connection ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.001$) and Brand Attachment ($\beta = 0.160$, $p < 0.001$), while slightly weaker predictors, remain statistically significant, indicating that trust, pride, and long-term emotional bonds continue to play an important role in shaping footwear purchase behavior. The model's strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.646$) highlights that emotional branding accounts for a considerable proportion of variance in purchasing decisions, underscoring its strategic relevance beyond traditional functional factors such as price and durability. Demographic results further contextualize these findings, as the sample was dominated by young consumers aged 18-35, predominantly female, undergraduate students, and urban residents, groups that are typically more exposed to branding narratives and emotionally driven consumption patterns. The prevalence of need-based purchasing behavior suggests that while footwear may be viewed as a practical product, emotional branding elements significantly enhance brand preference and decision-making when purchase occasions arise. Overall, these results align with existing emotional branding research and extend their applicability to the Nepalese footwear context, indicating that local shoe brands can strengthen market competitiveness by prioritizing emotionally resonant storytelling, identity-based branding, and sensory appeal rather

than relying solely on price or quality-oriented positioning

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that emotional branding plays a significant and influential role in shaping customer purchasing decisions in the Nepalese footwear industry. The empirical findings confirm that all dimensions of emotional branding emotional connection, brand storytelling and narrative, sensory experience, community and identity, and brand attachment have a positive and statistically significant impact on purchasing decisions. Among these factors, brand storytelling and community & identity emerged as the most influential predictors, highlighting the importance of meaningful brand narratives and a sense of belonging in consumer decision-making. The strong explanatory power of the regression model indicates that emotional branding accounts for a substantial proportion of variation in purchasing behavior, demonstrating that consumers consider emotional and symbolic values alongside functional attributes when purchasing footwear.

Demographic results further suggest that young, urban, and educated consumers are particularly responsive to emotionally driven branding strategies. Overall, the findings emphasize that Nepalese shoe brands can enhance customer preference, loyalty, and competitive advantage by adopting emotionally engaging branding approaches rather than relying solely on price and product quality. This study contributes to the limited empirical literature on emotional branding in Nepal and provides practical insights for marketers seeking to align branding strategies with evolving consumer expectations in the domestic footwear market.

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