Factors Influencing Electronic Brand Love and E-Loyalty

Reza Salehzadeh

Assistant Prof., Department of Management, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: r.salehzadeh99@yahoo.com

Arash Adelpanah

M.A., Department of Management, Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani University, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: mresearcher11@gmail.com

Seyed Mehdi Mirmehdi *

*Corresponding Author, Assistant Prof., Department of Management, Malayer University, Malayer, Iran. E-mail: mirmehdi2@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the effect of consumer traits, service quality, perception-based factors, customer satisfaction, and e-trust on electronic brand love and e-loyalty. In this study, a cross-sectional survey is conducted based on the questionnaire method to collect data from a sample of 300 customers of the Digikala Website in Isfahan, Iran. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to test the research hypotheses. According to the results, the service quality, consumer traits, and perception-based factors significantly affected customer satisfaction. Also, e-brand love had a significant impact on e-trust and e-loyalty; e-trust significantly affected e-brand love and e-loyalty, and e-brand love had a significant impact on e-loyalty. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this research stands among the first to evaluate the factors affecting electronic brand love and loyalty. The evaluation of brand love on loyalty demonstrated that the greater the amount of love and fascination with a brand, the higher the positive effect on consumer loyalty. Overall, managers are recommended to do their best to eliminate misunderstandings and create an interest in consumers, ultimately leading to greater customer loyalty. Managers should pay more attention to brand experience dimensions, such as sensory marketing. In this regard, creating a brand community by e-retailers is very helpful.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty; Brand Love; E-trust; Customer Satisfaction; Service Quality.

Introduction

Various factors are involved in the success of the electronic business. In recent years, there has been growing attention to Internet applications in business (Afshan, 2015; Gupta & Dubey, 2016). In this regard, brand love is among the most important factors affecting the success of online businesses due to the expansion of competition and the existence of different brands in the services and products in the market. A fundamental requirement in an online business is to create trusted transaction processes in which e-retailors create an environment where a prospective consumer can safely make any possible transaction. Therefore, despite the expansion of E-commerce, this concept is still a relatively new topic for many people. With increasing awareness of trust, new ways will be created to encourage consumers to use E-commerce continuously (Wang et al., 2016; Oliveira et al., 2017). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) introduced trust as the tendency of consumers to rely on the brand's ability to adhere to its specified obligations. In particular, trust reduces uncertainty in an environment where consumers are vulnerable due to their assurance of relying on a trusted brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Researchers have identified different dimensions for this structure by reviewing the theoretical literature. For instance, Oliveira et al. (2017) considered three dimensions of competence, honesty, and benevolence for customer trust (Oliveira et al., 2017). Despite the importance of trust in the success of E-commerce, there is still a general lack of confidence in E-commerce and online shopping. People have problems when facing E-commerce and have some concerns in this regard, mainly due to cyberspace's nature and features (e.g., invisibility and unlimitedness).

Therefore, evaluating the antecedents and implications of trust in E-commerce is essential for the growth and success of such a business and its owners. Customer satisfaction is one of the most important antecedents for the two constructs of brand love and loyalty. Research has shown that customer satisfaction indirectly affects customer loyalty through trust in customer loyalty (Zarepour and Legzian, 2016) and brand love (Roy et al., 2013). These results confirm that customer satisfaction is an antecedent for brand loyalty, trust, and love. Among several factors involved in customer satisfaction, some of the most important ones are presented in the current research. Reviewing the related literature revealed the presence of different approaches to customer satisfaction and trust in online shopping. These methods can be generally divided into three broad categories: consumer traits, perception-based factors, and the quality of website services. However, only one or some of them have been assessed by recent studies (Afshan, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2017).

Researchers have employed different indices in classifying consumer traits, perception-based factors, and the quality of website services. In terms of consumer traits, being receptive to experiences (Afshan, 2013; Chen, 2011), risk-taking (Sheikhi et al., 2013), and attitudes toward online shopping (Oliver et al., 2017) have been pointed out by researchers. In previous studies on factors influencing e-loyalty, the construct of brand love has been ignored. Hung

(2019) emphasized the need to consider brand love in the online and e-shopping context. Given the importance of the topic, the present study aims to fill the gaps in the literature. To this end, we examined E-loyalty in the emerging market context. According to the Economist, Digikala is Iran's most valuable startup and an online platform-based retailer that acts as a reseller and allows other companies to sell their products through its marketplace. Digikala is currently the dominant e-brand in the Iranian online market and is considered one of the largest online retailers in the Middle East (Bagheri et al., 2020). This research aims to evaluate the effect of consumer traits, service quality, perception-based factors, customer satisfaction, and e-trust on electronic brand love and website loyalty.

Literature Review

In this research, the key variables are "loyalty", "brand love", "service quality", "satisfaction", and "trust". However, there are differences among these variables, traditionally, and in the digital environment. In the following, these variables are compared. With the advent of e-commerce, the concept of "Loyalty" expanded to "e-Loyalty". In some respects, loyalty differs from e-Loyalty (Chou, 2015). In addition, e-Loyalty is a commitment to revisit one website and not switch to another. In the online environment, loyalty is somewhat complicated, and the customer switches the website rapidly. As a result, e-loyalty is not established simply (Horppu et al., 2008; Shankar, et al., 2003). In this regard, "brand love" is an emotional connection with a brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) consisting of three dimensions: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Furthermore, e-Brand love deals with digital brands, and the brands allow more interaction and shows higher potential for engagement. Therefore, the level of intimacy in "e-Brand love" is likely to be higher (Coelho, Bairrada, and Peres, 2019). The traditional services' quality is related to the overall perception of service excellence, while e-Service quality emphasizes how efficiently the website features facilitate search and purchase. Service quality is measured by factors such as reliability, assurance, and empathy. Besides, elements such as information quality and serviceability, security, and privacy significantly affect e-Service quality (Bressolles, Durrieu, and Senecal, 2014). Satisfaction is a psychological status that the customers experiences as the comparison they make with previous expectations (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003).

Moreover, e-satisfaction is established based on the shopping experience in the e-commerce environment. Customer satisfaction is achieved through cognitive and emotional evaluation; however, the more emotional aspect is embedded in e-satisfaction (Chen, Rodgers, and He, 2008). Additionally, trust is one of the most fundamental elements involved in e-commerce. Since there is more uncertainty in the online environment (Chou, Chen, and Lin, 2015),), customers require higher trust in e-shopping than in non-online shopping. Accordingly, e-Trust emphasizes factors such as information security and payment methods, particularly in the initial purchases (Yousafzai, Pallister, and Foxall, 2003).

Customer Loyalty (e-loyalty)

Customer loyalty indicates the willingness to purchase a product or service. This concept is associated with forming a psychological link and having favorable attitudes toward them or their provider (Yeo et al., 2015; Ismail and Yunan, 2016). A company can create long-term profitable corporate relationships by developing customer loyalty with customers (Pejman et al., 2013). Customer loyalty is essential for the survival and continuity of business operations (Chen Hu, 2010). In this regard, electronic loyalty (e-loyalty) is considered the optimal and positive attitude of a customer toward an online business, which leads to purchasing behavior (Kim et al., 2009, Qaemi, 2012). The concept of loyalty is expanded to the online environment literature under the category of website loyalty, and it has been proved that loyal customers are more likely to repeat purchases (Forgas-Coll et al., 2013; Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003). In addition to making repetitive purchases and revisits of the website, loyal customers tend to take behavioral outcomes such as word-of-mouth and bring new customers to the e-retailer, which reduces customer acquisition costs and improves profitability (Ahmad et al., 2017; Ghali, 2021). According to Ghali (2021), loyalty in online retailers is more important than in traditional retail. The reason is that business risk is reduced by repeating purchases from these sites and maintaining a stable relationship with the customer in the competition and loyal customers of the website.

Brand Love (e-brand love)

Brand love expresses the degree of affection and enthusiasm that a customer has toward a particular brand (Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Love is a relationship and not just a special feeling. In other words, emotions are completely different from other relationships. For instance, emotions represent short-term emotional experiences, whereas relationships can last longer and include various emotions. A particular feeling experienced by people about a subject partly depends on whether they respond to their request (Rauschnabel and Ahuvia, 2014). Many researchers have initiated their research on brand love with theories such as interpersonal love, evaluating them in the context of consumer behavior (Heinrich et al., 2012). In the past decade, marketing research has evaluated and validated the concept of love since such emotions may come from a consumer point of view that includes love for a position or brand. Given the interrelationship model and the notion that consumers can attribute human traits to brands, the scientific community has emphasized the importance of the concept of love and attachment (Albert et al., 2008). Emotional dependence on brands differentiates the tendency and preferences of individuals to brands they love (Maxian et al., 2013). A relatively new concept in this context is the E-brand love. In this regard, Vernuccio et al. (2015) addressed building relationships between the customer and the brand and creating brand love while emphasizing social identity. Huang (2019) studied brand love in the e-retail environment based on psychological mechanisms. Loureiro et al. (2017) investigated online brand engagement and explained that customers show their brand love through

engagement activities such as liking. In another study, Rodrigues and Brandão (2021) examined the co-creation process of brand love based on the shopping experience, including the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual aspects.

Research model and hypothesis development

The concept of loyalty is one of the most important topics in marketing literature. Loyalty has also been considered in the online context (Faraoni et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Ghali 2021), where e-loyalty and website loyalty are among the critical research constructs. Reviewing the relevant review shows that various models and variables have been used to analyze e-loyalty and website loyalty. Table 1 provides the studied constructs in these models with a review of the subject literature. E-satisfaction is one of the popular constructs in this research (Rodríguez et al., 2020; Casaló et al., 2008; Casaló et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2009; Jaiswal et al., 2010; Gera, 2011; Limbu et al., 2011; Forgas-Coll et al., 2013; Nsairi & Khadraoui, 2013; Sanz-Blas et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Li et al., 2015; Ghali, 2021; López-Miguens and Vázquez, 2017; Chocarro et al., 2017; Ahmad et al., 2017) affecting website loyalty. Customers more satisfied with the website show higher levels of loyalty and visit the website frequently (Forgas-Coll et al., 2013; Purani et al., 2019). Another important construct in this field is e-trust. E-trust plays a significant role in developing website loyalty, such that various studies have considered it an influential factor in loyalty directly and indirectly (Flavián et al., 2006; O'cass & Carlson, 2012; Forgas-Coll et al., 2013; Sanz-Blas et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Li et al., 2015; Ahmad et al., 2017; López-Miguens and Vázquez, 2017; Faraoni et al., 2019; Ghali, 2021).

E-service quality is also among the variables highlighted in the analysis of website loyalty models. E-service quality could improve the perceived value of the website (Gera, 2011; O'cass & Carlson, 2012; Chen et al., 2015; Jeon & Jeong, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Eryiğit & Fan, 2021). According to Alonso-Almeida et al. (2014), e-quality improves the perceived value and electronic loyalty. One of the variables emphasized in the present research model is brand love. Brand love has emerged in the marketing literature over the years and has been conceptualized by marketing researchers (Batra et al., 2012; Bagozzi et al., 2017; Roy et al., 2013). Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) consider brand love as one of the prerequisites of customer loyalty. However, studies have not addressed website loyalty analytical models. The two constructs of Perception-based factors and customer traits are ignored in the website loyalty analytical models. Therefore, the present study has considered them among the constructs of the studied model. Table 1 provides a summary of past research in this field.

Table1. Summary of past research

Authors	Dependent variable	Studied constructs	Country
Flavián et al., (2006)	Website loyalty	Perceived website usability, user trust, user satisfaction	Spain
Casaló et al., (2008)	Website loyalty	Perceived usability, Satisfaction, Reputation, Familiarity	Spain
Chang & Chen (2009)	Website loyalty	Convenience, Interactivity, Customization, Character, Perceived security, Switching costs, Customer satisfaction	Taiwan
Kim et al., (2009)	e-loyalty	E-trust, E-satisfaction, Fulfillment /Reliability, Responsiveness, Website Design, Security /Privacy	USA
Wang et al., (2009)	Website loyalty	Consumer trust, Perceived information quality, Perceived value of firm-supported online	Taiwan
Jaiswal et al., (2010)	Website loyalty	Ease of use, Web expertise, Customer service, Web community, Privacy, Security, Merchandising, Fulfillment/reliability, Information quality, Experiential quality, satisfaction, Flow	India
Gera (2011)	e-loyalty	e-service Quality, e- satisfaction, Perceived Value	India
Limbu et al., (2011)	Website loyalty	Satisfaction, Security, Fulfillment, Nondeception, Privacy	USA
O'cass & Carlson (2012)	Website loyalty	Website-service Innovativeness, e-Service Quality, Trust, Word of Mouth Behaviour	Australia
Forgas-Coll et al., (2013)	Website loyalty	e-satisfaction, Web quality, e-trust	Spain
Nsairi & Khadraoui (2013)	Website loyalty	Environment Website, Perceived value, Satisfaction, Website navigational goal, Computer anxiety	France
Alonso-Almeida et al., (2014)	e-loyalty	Perceived Value, e-Quality, Functional Quality, Hedonic Quality	Spain
Sanz-Blas et al., (2014)	Website loyalty	Trust, Satisfaction, Commitment	Mexico
Chen et al., (2015)	e-Loyalty	Information Quality, System Quality, Service Quality, Trust, Customer Satisfaction	Taiwan
et al., (2015) Li	e-Loyalty	E-Satisfaction, E-Trust, Value Perception, Website design, Reliability, Customer Support, Security/Privacy	Turkey
Ahmad et al., (2017)	e-loyalty	Hedonism, Trust, Satisfaction, eTailQ	India
Chocarro et al., (2017)	e-loyalty	Satisfaction, Risks, Advantages, Disadvantages	Spain
Jeon & Jeong(2017)	e-loyalty	Functionality, Customer experiential aspects, Reputation, Perceived service quality, Overall customer satisfaction, Return intention	USA
López-Miguens and Vázquez (2017)	e-loyalty	E-satisfaction, E-trust, Website quality, Switching barriers	Spain
Cui et al., (2018)	e-loyalty	Website image, trust, Perceived security, Consumer innovativeness	China
Faraoni et al., (2019)	E-loyalty	E-trust, E-relationship satisfaction, E-Affective Commitment, Security/ Privacy, E-Perceived Relationship Investment, Website Design	Italy
Purani et al., (2019)	e-loyalty	Ease of Use, Usefulness, Compatibility, Innovativeness, Subjective Norm	India
Rodríguez et al., (2020)	e-Loyalty	E-Satisfaction, E-service quality	Spain
Ghali (2021)	e-Loyalty	E-satisfaction, E-trust, Security/privacy, Responsiveness,Website design, Convenience	Saudi Arabia
Eryiğit & Fan (2021)	e-Loyalty	Perceived risk, e-service quality, online shopping convenience	China and Turkey

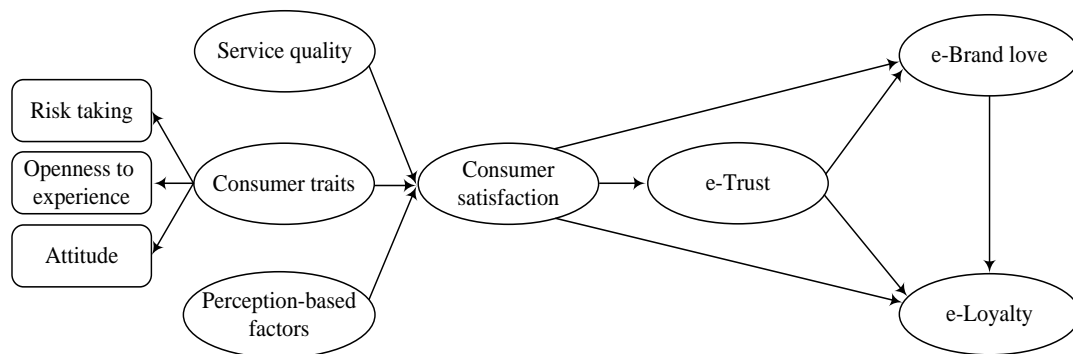The conceptual model of the research is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research conceptual model

Consumer traits and e-Satisfaction

Regarding consumer traits, researchers have mentioned openness to experiences, risk-taking, and attitudes toward online shopping (Afshan, 2013; Chen, 2011; Sheikhi et al., 2013; Oliver et al., 2017). During online shopping, customers experience a level of risk due to the fear of this type of shopping, where the purchasing intentions of consumers are changed despite the provision of high-quality facilities by the desired websites (Morad and Raman, 2015). Openness to and acceptance of experience express individuals' passive and creative approach, whereas resistance to a new experience suggests a conservative view (Priyadarshini et al., 2017). Individuals with high levels of openness to experience can experience the world around them differently. In addition, these people might have higher levels of traits such as the scope of view, rumination, and level of knowledge compared to normal people. Hence, they feel they should review and expand their experiences (Antinori et al., 2017). While consumer traits are limited to factors such as age and income in several studies, this research aimed to consider psychological components and indicators. Therefore, factors such as openness to experience, risk-taking, and attitude of customers to online shopping were discussed in the present study. The attitude of buyers is generally a function of their tendency to multiple properties and benefits. These features and benefits vary depending on their relative importance. However, they all contribute to shaping the buyer's attitude. Therefore, attitude reflects the buyers' evaluations of the features and benefits and provides a basis for their satisfaction. Accordingly, they play a role in the evaluation and selection of buyers. On the other hand, the level of perceived risk is a negative factor on the buyer's part in an online shopping environment. This factor depends on active sellers and marketers in online businesses to provide the necessary assurance for financial exchanges and related transactions with customers. As a trait in customers, risk-taking facilitates their interaction in an online environment and contributes to their positive attitude toward being in such a space. Therefore, it can be considered a prerequisite for customer satisfaction (Ha and Perks, 2005). According to the issues discussed, the first hypothesis can be expressed as follows:

Hypothesis (1): Consumer traits have a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of Digikala Website users.

Perception-based Factors and e-Satisfaction

In this research, we assessed the perception-based factors in online shopping in the form of privacy and security of buyers. Privacy is defined as the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to separate themselves (physical privacy) and their information from other individuals (personal information privacy) (Iwaya, 2016). The type of customer perception covers a wide range of components, each with some form of effect on customer satisfaction. Given the discussion of purchasing products from online stores in the current research, we mainly emphasized issues such as privacy and security. Security and privacy are among the important factors that customers seriously consider in the online environment (Mustafa, 2011). It can be affirmed that security, privacy, and related topics play critical roles in building trust in online interactions. Research in the area of security and privacy suggests that continued interactions and transactions of customers in the online environment mainly depend on the protection of personal information in a safe way (Helal Uddin and Chang, 2014). According to the explanations presented, the relationship between perception-based factors and satisfaction is hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis (2): Perception-based factors positively and significantly affect the satisfaction of Digikala Website users.

Service Quality and e-Satisfaction

Service quality is defined as the overall assessment of service by customers (Eshghi et al., 2008). In this respect, it can be argued that the Internet has essentially changed customer-related concepts through issues such as speed, price, convenience, product information, and services. This technology has allowed marketers to exploit new techniques to create value for and build customer relationships (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).

To maintain competition, companies must understand the importance of quality of services and their impact on customer satisfaction. (Angelova and Zekiri, 2011). Some researchers believe that service quality influences consumer satisfaction more than the product itself and its price. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of services in the development of attitudinal loyalty, which is a prerequisite for customer retention and is in some way derived from the satisfaction of consumers. Accordingly, the quality of services affects customer satisfaction considerably and somehow explains it (Yousuf, 2017). According to the explanations presented, the hypothesis related to the relationship between service quality and satisfaction can be presented as follows:

Hypothesis (3): The quality of services has a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of Digikala Website users.

E-satisfaction and e-trust

Because trust establishes an important link between a customer and a brand, it is recognized as a key determinant of brand loyalty. A noteworthy point in this regard is the difficulty of creating customer satisfaction before earning their trust. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a form of interaction between trust and customer satisfaction. Researchers argue that a consumer who trusts a brand is somewhat satisfied with it and is more willing to commit to it. Moreover, research has indicated a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and brand trust. In other words, satisfaction is a prerequisite for and determinant of brand trust (Ercis et al., 2012). Lam and Shanker (2014) eliminated the importance of customer satisfaction in creating brand trust and loyalty in the mobile industry. Forgas-Coll et al. (2013) considered customer satisfaction a prerequisite for trust and showed that e-satisfaction results in e-loyalty and e-trust. Based on the discussed issues, it could be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis (4): E-satisfaction positively and significantly affects the e-trust of Digikala Website users.

E-Satisfaction and e-brand love

Satisfaction explains the customer's brand identity finding, which can be considered a foreground for brand love (Roy et al., 2012). In terms of the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand love, several previous studies have acknowledged that consumer satisfaction will ultimately lead to brand love. Meanwhile, some emphasize that brand love can end in customer satisfaction (Albert et al., 2013). In this respect, researchers such as Bulik (2012) concluded that customer satisfaction positively and significantly impacts brand love (Ahmed Sallam, 2015). According to the documentation provided, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

Hypothesis (5): Satisfaction positively and significantly affects the e-brand love of Digikala Website users.

E-Satisfaction, and e-loyalty

The term customer satisfaction was first introduced by Cardozo (1965), who expressed that customer consumption behavior will be re-created and will not change with increasing satisfaction with other products and services. In fact, customer satisfaction is defined based on their behavior during the consumption process (Morgan et al., 2005). The findings of experimental and field studies show that satisfaction is an antecedent of brand loyalty, the intention to re-purchase the product, and the brand's behavior toward its customers (Russell-

Bennett et al., 2007). Brand loyalty can be improved by increased customer satisfaction and be associated with the re-purchase of similar products and services of the same brand. The re-purchase, consumption, or use of a product or service are somehow involved in creating two phases related to loyalty, namely loyalty to purchasing and loyalty based on attitude and behavior (Bennet et al., 2005). In this respect, researchers marked that customer satisfaction can significantly guarantee the repeat of purchases. In turn, the high level of satisfaction can create a kind of emotional appeal to the brand, which goes far beyond just a rational preference while maintaining loyalty to the brand (Ahmed et al., 2014). Based on the discussed issues, the following hypothesis can be suggested:

Hypothesis (6): Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Digikala Website users.

E-trust and e-brand love

Werbel and Henriques (2009) define trust as the tendency to make oneself vulnerable to another despite the uncertainty regarding motivation and prospective measures. As a result, this definition emphasizes that risk-taking, vulnerability, and unreliability are the main components of a trust-based relationship. Mayer & Gavin (2005) introduced factors such as ability, benevolence, honesty, and integrity as prerequisites for trust (Heinz and Rotman, 2015).). Studies in this area have indicated that trust in a website positively affects the willingness to purchase from an online store. In addition, the consumers' confidence in the e-vendor affects their future intentions and attitudes toward the e-retailer (Panula, 2017). According to Esch et al. (2006), trust explains the consumers' experience based on emotions toward a particular brand or seller. Subsequently, it leads to reliance on brand performance and having faith in the commitments declared (Albert & Merunka, 2013). As an emotional experience, the traits and characteristics of brand trust depend on customers' expectations regarding the brand's honesty, reliability, and credibility, created by the experience of consumer and brand confrontation. In this context, trust creates emotional attachment in consumers toward the brand, recognized as a driving factor for this concept (Langner et al., 2015). Accordingly, strong trust in a brand has been associated with desirable accomplishments, such as positive attitudes, sustainable commitment, and loyalty, as determining factors for creating brand love (Hüsken, 2017). According to these points, the following hypothesis can be presented:

Hypothesis (7): E-trust positively and significantly affects the e-brand love of Digikala Website users.

E-trust and e-loyalty

Recently, several studies have been conducted on loyalty to online stores or retailers. E-trust is an indicator that reduces the anxiety and fear of online shopping where there is no physical presence of the service provider (Valvi & West, 2013). Trust reflects the level of the customers' confidence in the quality and credibility of the service provider or product and has been considered a major feature in creating, forming, and maintaining relationships in various types of transactions (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). In this regard, previous studies have demonstrated trust's significant impact on loyalty in offline and online environments. Overall, research has shown that trust, rather than price, is the most important factor for customers to decide on the purchase process in cyberspace. Most recent studies have emphasized that consumers' attitude toward trust is the key determinant of the effectiveness of online sales and consumer loyalty in online shopping (Azam et al., 2013). The development of e-loyalty depends on a prerequisite, such as e-trust. In other words, while trust is a factor for loyalty, customer dissatisfaction cannot necessarily explain the behavior of lack of loyalty (Azam, 2015). According to the mentioned issues, the hypothesis below can be presented:

Hypothesis (8): E-trust has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Digikala Website users.

E-brand love and e-loyalty

As empirically verified in multiple studies, customer satisfaction is one of the main drivers and determinants of brand trust. Researchers have debated that the relationship between consumer and brand is based on five levels, the most powerful of which is brand loyalty. Studies on the typology of the customer-brand relationship have shown that the lowest relationship level merely reflects the brand's interest and forms the highest level of loyalty. Nonetheless, rare studies have been conducted on the relationship between brand love and loyalty. Limited research in this area, such as the research by Batra et al. (2012), has shown that love for a brand is the foreground for brand loyalty. For instance, Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) reported a positive and significant relationship between brand love and brand loyalty (Fetscherin et al., 2014). Brand love contains emotional aspects such as liking and commitment. Therefore, brand love brings a sense of brand loyalty (Huang, 2017). The presence of brand love leads to behaviors such as brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (Coelho et al., 2019). Bıçakcıoğlu et al. (2018) examined the requirements and outputs of brand love and showed its influence on brand loyalty. According to the presented documentation, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis (9): e-brand love has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Digikala Website users.

Methodology

The statistical population of this research included the customers of Digikala in Isfahan, Iran. The Isfahan city was divided into five areas (north, south, east, west, and center), and data were collected using a convenience sampling method and through face to face survey. However, convenience sampling is a non-probability method and is appropriate when there is a large dispersion among respondents to the questionnaire. According to Morgan, Gliner, and Harmon (2006), the sampling method provides various advantages such as low cost and time savings. Given the accessibility to the customer in each region, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire to collect the required data. In structural equation modeling (SEM) studies, the $5q \leq n \leq 15q$ formula is usually used for calculating the sample size. In this equation, "q" is the number of questions, and "n" is the sample size.

Since the number of questions in this study was 40, 320 questionnaires were distributed. Of these questionnaires, 300 were provided with correct information and used in data analysis. The overall response rate was estimated at 93.75%. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. In the first section, the purpose of the research was explained. In the second section, the research items were incorporated. All items were adapted from existing literature and based on validated scales. Also, they were measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from extremely disagree (= 1) to extremely agree (= 5). The content validity of the questionnaire was verified by several sessions and confirmed by academic experts in the field of E-commerce, branding, and consumer behavior. The factor analysis was used to assess the construct validity. As shown in Table 2, all items in factor loadings have large and significant loadings, indicating evidence of good construct validity.

Also, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) showed acceptable values. As shown in Table 3, discriminant validity results are satisfactory (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Besides, Harman's single-factor test was used to examine the potential common method variance (CMV). The result explained a maximum variance of 42.39% on a single factor, which is below the limit of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, CMV bias was not a critical concern in this study. The SPSS 20 and AMOS 20 software packages were used for data analysis.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	α	AVE	CR
Website-loyalty (Lopes Migoenes et al., 2017)	1: I often visit Digikala Website	0.53	0.789	0.554	0.879
	2: Digikala is my main and favorite website for online purchasing	0.83			
	3: I visit Digikala Website more than other websites	0.68			
	4: I will continue purchasing from Digikala Website in the future	0.83			
	5: I am willing to expand my cooperation with Digikala Website	0.76			
	6: I recommend Digikala to my friends, family, and colleagues	0.79			
E-trust (Oliveira et al., 2017)	7: I Believe that Digikala is able to manage online sales transactions	0.82	0.934	0.668	0.933
	8: I believe that Digikala has the necessary competence to perform business on the Internet	0.81			
	9: I believe that Digikala will not impose additional costs on me for online shopping	0.89			
	10: I believe that Digikala is honest with its customers	0.71			
	11: I believe that Digikala will fulfill its obligations	0.79			
	12: I believe that Digikala pays attention to the benefits of its customers	0.83			
	13: In case of asking for help, Digikala will do whatever it takes to help me	0.86			
Customer satisfaction (Lopes Migoenes et al., 2017)	14: I am satisfied with the services of Digikala	0.61	0.899	0.686	0.914
	15: I feel happy after using Digikala Website	0.92			
	16: Using Digikala for online shopping is a wise choice	0.78			
	17: I am pleased with the new offers of Digikala	0.88			
	18: I am happy with my purchase from Digikala	0.91			
Brand love (Thomson et al., 2005)	19: Digikala is a remarkable brand	0.87	0.942	0.812	0.945
	20: The brand of Digikala gives me a good feeling	0.84			
	21: I love the brand of Digikala	0.97			
	22: I feel enthusiastic in using the services of Digikala brand	0.92			
Perceived quality (Lopes Migoenes et al., 2017)	23: The amount of time I spend on shopping from Digikala is reasonable	0.76	0.941	0.817	0.946
	24: The amount of effort I put into purchasing from Digikala is worthwhile	0.95			
	25: My shopping experience from Digikala has been excellent	0.98			
	26: I feel I have received valuable services by purchasing from Digikala Website	0.91			
Perception-based factors (Oliveira et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016)	27: I know people who have had good experiences with purchasing from Digikala	0.97	0.965	0.853	0.958
	28: Most of my friends and acquaintances believe that Digikala is a reliable website	0.98			
	29: Reports on Digikala I have seen in newspapers or social media have been positive	0.88			
	30: The criticisms that I have read about Digikala on other websites have been positive	0.86			
Consumer traits					
Risk taking (Oliveira et	31: I have always liked using new techniques to perform tasks	0.60	0.892	0.604	0.936

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	α	AVE	CR
al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016)	32: I use new ideas in performing my tasks	0.91			
	33: I always seek diversity and excitement in life	0.84			
Openness to experience (Oliveira et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016)	34: I am always curious about various topics	0.83			
	35: I consider myself an intelligent and thoughtful person	0.70			
	36: I have an active imagination	0.81			
	37: I always like to experience various work activities	0.94			
Attitude toward online shopping (Oliveira et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016)	38: I like to use the Internet for shopping	0.93			
	39: It is rational to use the Internet for shopping in the modern world	0.51			
	40: Using the internet for shopping is a good idea	0.55			

Table 3. The results of discriminant validity

Latent variables	Website-loyalty	E-trust	Customer satisfaction	Brand love	Perceived quality	Perception-based factors	Consumer traits
Website-loyalty	0.74						
E-trust	0.36	0.82					
Customer satisfaction	0.33	0.79	0.83				
Brand love	0.55	0.31	0.76	0.90			
Perceived quality	0.68	0.71	0.52	0.58	0.90		
Perception-based factors	0.62	0.67	0.49	0.56	0.69	0.92	
Consumer traits	0.49	0.53	0.32	0.47	0.54	0.51	0.78

Note: Square roots of average variance extracted (AVEs) shown on diagonal

Results

Fit indexes of measurement models are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Fit Indexes of Measurement Models

Fit index / Name of model	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Service quality	1.31	0.99	0.97	1	0.03
Consumer traits	2.03	0.96	0.92	0.97	0.05
Perception-based factors	0.06	1	0.99	1	0.001
Customer satisfaction	2.08	0.99	0.95	0.99	0.06
E-trust	3	0.97	0.91	0.99	0.09
E-brand love	1.64	0.99	0.97	0.99	0.04
E-loyalty	2.99	0.98	0.93	0.98	0.08
Acceptable amount	<3	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.1

After analyzing the fitness of measurement models, the research hypotheses were tested using the FEM method. Figure 2 shows the specified relationships among research variables. As can be inferred from Table5, the overall model fit was acceptable.
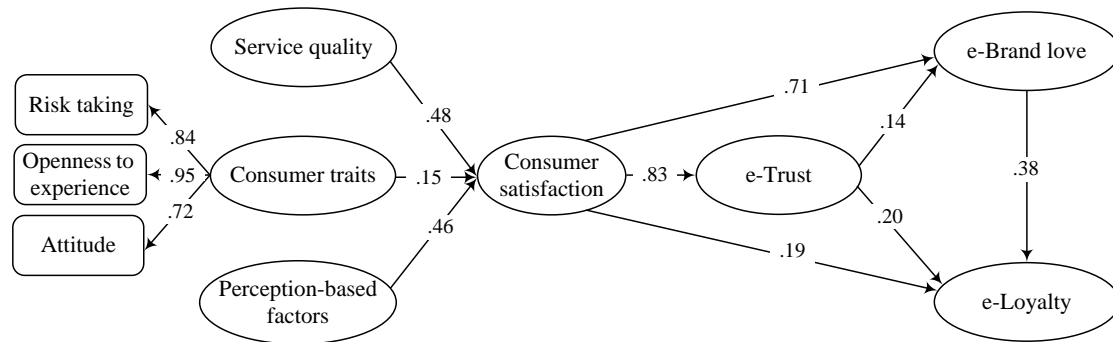

Figure 2. Structural model results

Table 5. Total fit indices of the final model

Fit index / Name of model	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Final model	2.67	0.93	0.91	0.96	0.09
Acceptable amount	<3	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.1

The results of hypotheses testing, along with the beta coefficients, are presented in Table 6. As can be seen, all hypotheses were supported.

Table 6. Test Results of Hypotheses

Path	β	t-value	P	Result
H1: Consumer traits ➡ satisfaction	0.15	3.37	0.001	Supported
H2: Perception-based factors ➡ satisfaction	0.46	10.86	0.001	Supported
H3: Service quality ➡ satisfaction	0.48	11.39	0.001	Supported
H4: Satisfaction ➡ e-trust	0.83	26.23	0.02	Supported
H5: Satisfaction ➡ e-brand love	0.71	3.02	0.002	Supported
H6: Satisfaction ➡ loyalty	0.19	2.16	0.031	Supported
H7: E-trust ➡ e-brand love	0.14	2.43	0.015	Supported
H8: E-trust ➡ loyalty	0.20	2.78	0.005	Supported
H9: E-brand love ➡ loyalty	0.38	5.19	0.001	Supported

Discussion and Conclusion

Studies have shown that brand love and loyalty are key factors for companies, organizations, and producers. These components are recognized as the essential elements to obtaining market share and reaching organizational excellence. Despite much research on brand love and loyalty, various aspects of these concepts still require further evaluation. Trust is one of the phenomena that has been neglected and has been even overlooked in our country. While

researchers have conducted studies on trust, this concept was assessed in the present research in terms of its electronic aspect (cyberspace) and its impact on e-brand love and loyalty. In addition, customer satisfaction in previous studies has often been related to physical services and the behavior of sellers. In the present research, electronic exposure to customers and its dimensions were also evaluated.

The present research aimed to assess the effect and role of customer satisfaction (service quality, consumer traits, perception-based factors) and e-trust on e-brand love and loyalty. The results showed the positive effect of consumer traits on satisfaction, the perception-based factors on satisfaction, quality of service on satisfaction, satisfaction on e-trust, satisfaction on brand love, satisfaction on loyalty, e-trust on brand love, e-trust on loyalty, and brand love on loyalty. Several studies have been conducted on loyalty, indicating this issue's importance for researchers and managers. Among the variables considerably affecting this phenomenon are customer satisfaction, emotional bonding, trust, reduced selection based on habit and background of the company (Qavami and Olaei, 2006), customer loyalty to the brand names of tangible products (Lin, 2012), development of long-term profit relationships (Pejman et al., 2013), the tendency to a positive and continuous relationship (Palmatier et al., 2006), tendencies to re-purchase, word-of-mouth communication, and recommendation and introduction of organizations (Nadiri et al., 2008), re-purchasing behaviors of customers (Russell-Bennett et al., 2007), positive attitude of a person toward the company (Macintosh and Lawrence, 1997), and positive perceptual value (Kumar & Shah, 2004). Meanwhile, the present study evaluated other parameters that have not been covered in a model and assessed the main topic of the study from the electronic viewpoint.

Brand love literature is also one of the most important issues that have been viewed in both management and research aspects. According to Meyer et al. (1995), benevolence is the lack of willingness of the trusted party to be involved in opportunistic behaviors. Integrity is the honesty of a trusted party in his promises, whereas competence is the ability of a trusted party to act on what is expected by the trustee (Pavlou and Fygenson, 2006; Liu et al., 2017; McNeight et al., 2017). Many other variables are also important in this regard. It seems that the effects of trust have not been directly and simultaneously evaluated in previous studies. However, the present research assessed the effects of trust on variables of brand love and loyalty directly and simultaneously and evaluated the main topics of the research (electronic viewpoint to trust). Numerous studies have been conducted on the concept of satisfaction and its dimensions and factors.

Various variables have been analyzed to evaluate the satisfaction phenomenon, including the customer's feelings, product value, sense of equality and fairness, and security. However, concerning the characteristic of the present research, three variables of service quality, consumer traits, and perception-based factors were assessed since these three dimensions mainly evaluate customer satisfaction in cyberspace. Besides, electronic satisfaction is

defined as a collective entity based on the total satisfaction of the purchase and the experience gained from using products and services. Electronic satisfaction is customer satisfaction resulting from website design, website information, and purchase ease and security. In addition, this concept is defined as a perceived enjoyable fulfillment that derives from an E-commerce company's experience of customer exchange. Moreover, electronic satisfaction is a level of customer satisfaction that arises from support for the presentation and delivery of ordered products and services (Lee and Turban, 2001; Qaemi, 2012). Based on these points, the present research offered a new and special look at the dimensions of customer satisfaction in cyberspace.

Service quality has been extensively discussed since the 20th century. However, its idea is still useful in the era of globalization and a world without borders to help modern organizations differentiate and gain a competitive advantage. Furthermore, quality is one of the key organizational innovations of the 20th century, which helps focus on customer attention through targeted data methods (Al-Sayyed et al., 2015). While several researchers have provided a list of determinants of quality of service, the most frequently recognized factors in this area are based on the study by Parasouraman. This scholar defined five dimensions for the quality of services, including tangibility, reliability, accountability, assurance, and empathy (Santhiyavalli, 2011).

The notion specifically addressed in the present research was the quality of service provided by the website, which was a new initiative in engaging with other dimensions of the research model. Consumer traits can be explained in four dimensions of individual, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics. This study evaluated three dimensions: risk-taking, openness to experience, and attitude toward online shopping. Risk-taking refers to perceiving a level of risk caused by fear of this type of purchase during online shopping, where the purchasing tendency of customers will change even if the desired website offers high facilities (Morad & Raman, 2015). Accordingly, online retailers and marketers should manage and control Internet risk for a better competitive advantage. Researchers such as Kumar and Bajaj (2016) have emphasized that many customers try to avoid negative aspects when dealing with the perceived risk associated with online shopping. Therefore, the growth of knowledge among e-retailers and marketers can help identify types of risk in online activities and make decisions about them (Hong et al., 2017).

On the other hand, openness to experience represents a flexible and inclusive cognitive approach. People with such qualities are more creative, curious, and simultaneously motivated (Kauffman et al., 2016) to discover the world and engage with particular available facilities (DeYoung, 2014). Individuals with high levels of openness to experience can experience the world around them differently. In addition, indicators such as the scope of view, deep thoughts, and level of awareness are higher in these individuals than in normal people. This trait causes people to review and expand their experiences (Antinyouri et al., 2017). In terms

of the attitude toward online shopping, Forsythe et al. (2003) reported that online shopping has grown considerably in recent years. Online shopping is a form of E-commerce that allows consumers to interact with their web-based browsers and other software to buy products and services from a seller directly. Electronic shopping is also called the online store, e-shop, online shopping, web store, online purchasing, and virtual store. Regarding the mentioned points, each of the above dimensions has multiple sub-categories. However, previous works have simply explored general or one-dimensional aspects.

Privacy is one of the key issues in E-commerce. It has been argued that privacy concerns are among the reasons for not entering cyberspace or receiving false information online. Overall, it can be affirmed that a small number of customers can claim and believe that they have high control over the disclosure of personal information or their use and sale by various businesses. Consumer concerns and media pressure have turned the topic of privacy into a severe problem for E-commerce. Some people consider privacy a fundamental right, whereas others may consider it a commodity as consumer goods (Gupta and Dubey, 2016). In addition to this concept, security concerns are one of the major reasons that have prevented website users from online shopping. Security has always been identified among the most important barriers to E-commerce due to the inherent nature of the Web and its openness. Security represents a concern in which the discourse of consumer-related data and its use by third parties (e.g., hackers and identity thieves) is highlighted (Ayneah, 2016). Considering the importance of the above items, it seems that this topic has not been fully covered in previous studies. Besides, mixing this variable with the previously stated variables has created a new combination. Finally, evaluation of this issue in cyberspace has been associated with the recognition of new features.

Theoretical and managerial implications

Previous studies have provided several predictive models of e-loyalty such as E-satisfaction, e-trust, and e-service quality (Kim et al., 2009; Gera, 2011; Forgas-Coll et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015). Also, brand love has emerged in recent years in the marketing literature (Batra et al., 2012; Bagozzi et al., 2017; Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Roy et al., 2013) as an ignored concept in the website loyalty models. Hung (2019) stressed the need for paying more attention to the formation of e-Brand love in e-retailers. In this study, in addition to repetitive and authoritative constructs in the website loyalty literature, the concept of e-Brand love was emphasized in the loyalty analysis model. The results showed that e-Brand love is one of the factors affecting website loyalty. The findings of this research also can help practitioners. One of the most important issues in creating satisfaction is the safety of using the website. In this connection, managers are recommended to use high-security software to ensure that any privacy violations. Website quality also is an essential factor in electronic satisfaction. User-friendliness, structure, layout, proper design, and up-to-date information improve the perceived quality of electronic services (López-Miguens and Vázquez, 2017). Considering

that satisfaction is the most important and first part of the customer attraction process, managers and activists in the field of E-commerce are recommended to implement the necessary policies regarding customer satisfaction (e.g., attractiveness and complaints handling) to take positive steps toward customer satisfaction and ultimately trust. According to Rodríguez et al. (2020), e-retailers should consider accessibility and better search facilities to create and maintain customer satisfaction and provide a system to monitor customer problems, respond quickly to them, and follow customer security to build customer trust. Also, we suggest presenting the evidence on the trust of previous customers in the website in a specific section of it to make potential customers familiar with actual clients. This interaction will be associated with customer satisfaction by positively affecting their social perception. Providing appropriate information and the existence of website security policies will improve website perception. Using satisfied customers as a third party to recommend to potential customers improves trust (Cui et al., 2018). The results of the impact of trust on brand love and loyalty indicated that increasing and promoting trust raises and sustains the phenomena of brand love and loyalty. Therefore, managers and specialists of e-markets are suggested to provide documents and sufficient and clear reasons. Also, they are recommended to obtain permission from legal authorities (e.g., electronic trust symbol) to eliminate misunderstandings and gray areas for customers and make efforts to gain customer trust. Managers and practitioners of e-markets have fewer opportunities for face-to-face encounters. Therefore, it seems crucial to refrain from exaggeration, overstatement, breach of promise, and false claims in the provision of services. Otherwise, the perception of such issues by the customer will leave irreparable damage, thereby leading to the loss of trust and lack of entering the circles of brand love and loyalty by the customer. Loyalty is significant in e-retailers because it prevents customers from switching. Therefore, it is necessary to consider resource allocation and use loyalty mechanisms (López-Miguens and Vázquez, 2017). The evaluation of brand love on loyalty demonstrated that the greater the amount of love and fascination with a brand, the higher the positive effect on consumer loyalty. Overall, managers are recommended to do their best to eliminate misunderstandings and create an interest in consumers, ultimately leading to greater customer loyalty. Managers should pay more attention to brand experience dimensions, such as sensory marketing (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2018). In this regard, creating a brand community by e-retailers is very helpful. Coelho et al. (2019) argue that brand community leads to lasting relationships, brand love, and brand loyalty.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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