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# Role of Emotional Branding in Consumer Buying Decision

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**Abstract--** This research paper examines emotional branding and aspects implications on the consumer purchase choice among the urban population in Bengaluru, which is a very competitive retail environment where functional differentiation is very hard to gain. The key goal was to examine the role of major emotional dimensions, brand storytelling, self-brand congruency, nostalgia, emotional trust, tech-savvy millennials and gen z groups. The primary data was collected using a structured likert-scale questionnaire adopting convenience sampling methods. The correlation of the independent branding variables with the dependent variable of buying decision was determined Pearson correlation and multiple regression using SPSS. The findings indicated a significant and positive relationship with a correlation of 50.6 percent that explains consumer behavior variability ( $R^2= 0.506$ ). Self-brand congruency was the strongest predictor, with an  $r=0.677$ , and emotional trust had the highest mean score of 4.04, serves as predictor of brand preference. Moreover, short-form video platforms such as Instagram and YouTube were identified as the most efficient means to engage the emotions of the respondents. The research concludes that the architect of the modern decision-making in urban areas is emotional resonance, as the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The businesses have to shift their focus off functional claims and into identity-based narratives, as well as transparent and high-trust storytelling as a way to achieve long-term loyalty.

**Keywords--** Emotional Branding, Consumer Buying Decision, Self-Brand Congruity, Brand Storytelling.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world of the global market, the shift towards emotional branding over functional marketing can be viewed as a paradigm shift is the way the companies interact with the clients. Branding is no longer just a mechanism of recognition, but rather a holistic phenomenon that determines the pace of shopping (Tali, Wani, and Ibrahim, 2021). The rationale behind this change lies in the realisation that, emotional processes are the silent masons of human decision-making, and offer a greater point of influence than mere rational thought alone (Alsharif, Salleh, and Baharun, 2021).

In its most basic form, emotional branding succeeds on the relationship between the personality of a brand and the inner story of the consumer.

According to Rizkautami and Tuti (2025), brand awareness and self-brand congruity are two elements that the author of this study proposes as a primary trigger when it comes to the process of purchasing the product, as consumers tend to be drawn to the brands that can be associated with their own traits. This emotional attachment is specifically seen in high involvement industries. As an example, in the fashion and luxury market, emotional influence is the underlying force that distinguishes a mere purchase and an identity-forming investment (Bishnoi and Singh, 2022).

The way these emotions get conveyed has changed dramatically in the digital experience platforms. Kaushik, Choudhary, and Choudhary (2024) point out that emotional marketing leaves a psychological footprint that remains even after the initial exposure. The mediating influence of emotional advertising, customizing its appeal to certain consumer decision-making styles, enhances this effect (Garg et al., 2023). Social media marketing is the liaison to this relationship in our digital age where brand recognition and emotional appeal are created by interactive storytelling (Hasan and Sohail, 2021; Ardiansyah, 2020). Moreover, the positive emotion bias inherent in the online reviews is also an external emotion validator and it influences people to purchase because it creates a feeling that is similar to others (Guo et al., 2020). Finally, long-term loyalty is the aim of emotional branding. Through emotional intelligence, brands are able to negotiate trust and fidelity and are therefore the brand of choice in highly competitive environments (Kankam and Charnor, 2023). Emotional advertising messages can be used to reinforce the brand-customer relationship whether it is the artisanal value of local products (Bunga, Obon, & Meylano, 2024) or the life experience of a coffee shop (Putra, Anzori, and Damarsiwi, 2024), making the brand an inseparable aspect of the consumer life (Vrtana and Krizanova, 2022).

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tali et al. (2021) conducted a literature review of the trends in global branding to determine the strength of branding in influencing purchase decisions. They found that branding is a psychological shortcut that can make a complex decision-making process easier to consumers.



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Their work makes branding one of the most important foundations of contemporary consumer psychology, proving the way brand perceptions determine the ultimate decisions in the market.

A qualitative study, based on secondary data was conducted by Bishnoi and Singh (2022) to analyze consumer behavior with luxury brands when influenced by emotions. Their study found that emotional appeals, viz, love and excitement are main motivators in the luxury fashion market. This research points to this consumer pattern change whereby consumers are no longer seeking functional needs but rather seek to satisfy higher emotional needs in luxury consumption.

The study by Rizkautami and Tuti (2025) employed the quantitative research and correlation analysis of the survey data to examine the impact of brand awareness and self-brand congruency on decisions. The results reveal that robust brand identity and self-congruency have a direct positive impact on trust and retention of long-term customer.

Kaushik et al. (2024) examined how emotional marketing affects decision-making by conducting conceptual review of the psychological processes. This paper highlights the importance of the essential need to apply emotional stimuli in order to have sustainable brand positioning and competitive advantage in crowded cities such as Bengaluru.

Garg et al. (2023) examined decision styles in mediating the role of emotional advertising using a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that emotional advertising is an effective bridging factor between the cognitive styles and purchase intentions.

Putra et al. (2024) used descriptive research based on primary data composed of regional consumers to evaluate the brand characteristics and emotional branding in coffee shops. The research is effective in associating particular brand characteristics to instant buying choices in the competitive service industries such as the food and beverage industry.

Bunga et al. (2024) reviewed the impacts of emotional and experience marketing on local food products through a quantitative approach in Sikka Regency. This study proves that tactile marketing is an effective tool to strengthen emotional brand attachment among community-based consumers and small scale industries.

Alsharif et al. (2021) examined how emotional processes affect the neurological decision-making process through a systematic review of the neuro-marketing and behavioral science. They discovered that feelings are generally the first thing that precedes the process of rational thinking, and act as the major filtering mechanism of all brand perceptions.

Their work gives the field of emotional branding a strong biological foundation as they have shown that the heart makes a decision first and then the mind justifies the purchase.

Kankam and Charnor (2023) used quantitative analysis and structured equation modeling to link between emotional intelligence, brand trust, and loyalty. The paper recognizes brand trust as a significant mediator between emotion and loyalty, and how psychological security is an agent of consistent and enduring purchasing behavior.

Niharika and Yadav (2023) created an emotional branding scale and assessed the mediating effect of celebrity endorsements by using a multi-stage analysis. Their study discovered that the effect of emotional appeal on purchase intention is partly mediated through the figure of celebrities. They were able to create a four-factor measure sensory, attachment, communication, and patriotism which presents a holistic approach to the measurement of emotional brand strength and the power of the celebrity.

Vrtana and Krizanova (2023) explored the effects of emotional advertising appeals on demographics based on an empirical study that emphasized differences in perception by age. Their results indicate that the younger generations, especially Gen Z and Millennials, are much more prone to irrational emotional demands than older populations.

To examine the role of marketing in local versus nonlocal brand choices, Hasan and Sohail (2021) conducted a comparative quantitative study based on the use of social media metrics. The results show the insight into how digital platforms can be used to generate emotional intimacy, enabling brands to create personalized relationships irrespective of their origin.

Guo et al. (2020) tested the effect of emotional content in online customer reviews through a laboratory experiment. They found out that online reviews with positive emotional influence have a significant effect on the chance to buy.

### III. RESEARCH GAP

Although literature available discusses emotional branding in the world and in specific locations such as Indonesia etc, there is a research gap on the Bengaluru metropolitan market. The existing literature does not consider localized cultural narratives as a unique factor in the purchasing behavior of Gen Z and Millennials who are tech-savvy in Bengaluru, leaving the geographic gap in the emotional appeal in high-competition and urban Indian consumer groups.



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### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.1 Statement Of The Problem

The retail environment in Bengaluru is very competitive and functional differentiation is becoming extremely challenging to brands. The research study is conducted in an attempt to understand how emotional branding can help bridge the gap between the needs of a consumer and long-term brand loyalty. The conventional marketing framework is not able to reflect the intricacies of the tech-obsessed, millennial generation that is dominant in the city, hence this study becomes significant to evaluate the psychological influence of brand storytelling and personality on purchase intentions. Insight into these emotional motivators will allow companies to build more emotionally successful campaigns, resulting in lower customer acquisition rates and increased brand equity. The study offers a business planning concept that will enable companies to go beyond price battles and develop long-term, understanding relationships with their prospective customers.

#### 3.2 Objectives

1. To learn about the most important emotional aspects (e.g., trust, nostalgia, belonging) affecting consumer purchasing decisions.
2. To determine whether emotional storytelling can be used effectively to develop brand resonance in millennial and Gen Z consumers.
3. To determine the relationship between emotional branding strategies and long-term customer loyalty in high competitive industries.

#### 3.3 Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive study design. This is the most appropriate type because it enables the profiling of consumer behaviors and attitudes in details without controlling the environment. It gives a systematic description of the Bengaluru market in the context of emotional drivers based on a systematic data collection and observation.

#### 3.4 Sources Of Data

Data was collected using a structured digital questionnaire. The data is collected through convenience sampling of 300 respondents of Bengaluru urban area by using a structured question.

Secondary data entails the use of the available published information in order to give theoretical underpinning. This entails data gathered by other parties to serve other purposes, including academic journals, market research reports, industry articles, and official corporate websites or government reports relating to the branding and consumer behavior environment in India.

#### 3.5 Sampling Plan

The individual urban consumers of Bengaluru and are active users of branded products were identified to make it statistically significant.

#### 3.6 Tools For Data Collection

To measure consumer perceptions and emotional brand attachment levels, a structured questionnaire was deployed with The consumer activity in terms of brand advertisements in the social media and in-store displays to complement self-reported information with actual behavioral information was collected Small, moderated groups were organized with several participants to enable qualitative understanding of the emotional stories that would appeal the most to the local customer in Bengaluru.

Collected data was tabulated, classified and compiled to conduct Regression analysis, long with Correlation, and Descriptive statistics

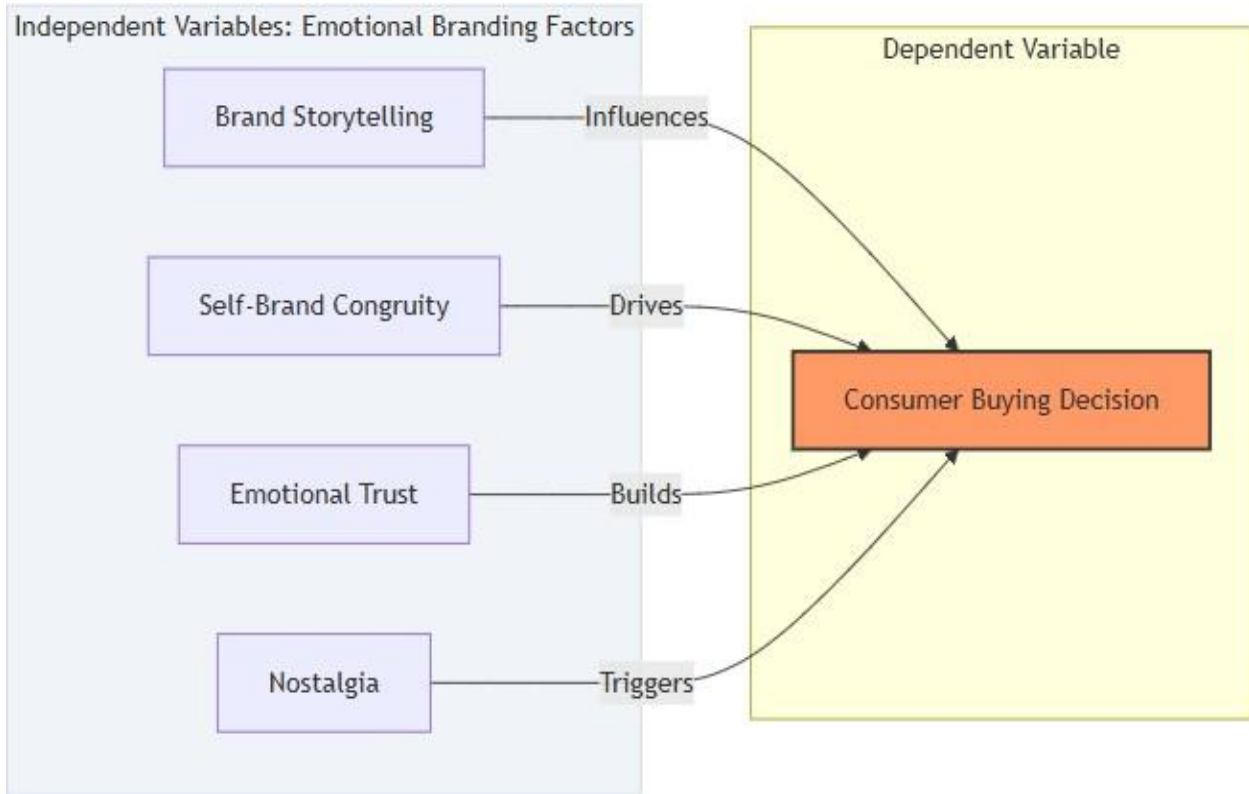
### IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### *Independent Variables (IV) –*

**Brand Storytelling** The use of stories and emotional curves in advertisement to building a profound psychological bond. **Self-Brand Congruity** The perceived fit between the personality of the brand and the self-identity of the consumer/desired image. **Emotional Trust** The degree of psychological safety and sincerity that a consumer has had of the promises of the brand. **Nostalgia** The strategic recall of pleasant memories of the past in order to create a feeling of familiarity and immediate liking.

#### *Dependent Variable (DV)*

The purchase intention of the city consumer in Bengaluru.



**Diagram 1 - the conceptual framework**

## V. RESULTS

### *Research Hypothesis*

Null Hypothesis: (H<sub>0</sub>): Emotional branding strategies (brand trust, nostalgia and storytelling) do not have a significant association with consumer buying decisions of the urban residents of Bengaluru.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* Emotional branding strategies (brand trust, nostalgia and storytelling) have significant positive relationship with consumer buying decision of urban residents in Bengaluru.

*Descriptive Statistics*

**Table 1 – descriptive statistics (calculated data)**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age Group	300	1	4	1.90	.875
Occupation	300	1	4	2.09	.912
Monthly Disposable Income	300	1	4	2.59	.948
Decision Factor	300	1	4	2.33	.979
Emotional Theme	300	1	4	2.41	1.101
Engaging Platform	300	1	4	2.21	1.212
Heart Touched Purchase Freq	300	1	4	2.34	1.014
Prefer Honest Trustworthy	300	1	5	4.04	.962
Nostalgia Influences Choice	300	1	5	3.61	1.093
Community Feeling Brand	300	1	5	3.53	1.122
Stories More Memorable	300	1	5	3.81	1.036
StayLoyal Cheaper Competitors	300	1	5	3.31	1.155
Brands Reflect Identity	300	1	5	3.62	1.010
Emotional Ads Over Technical	300	1	5	3.63	1.112
Recommend Emotionally Connected	300	1	5	3.96	.958
Valid N (listwise)	300				

The descriptive statistics of the respondents provides an in-depth account of consumer attitude towards emotional branding. The mean of the Likert-scale variables is the greatest with Prefer Honest Trustworthy (4.04) and suggests that the key emotional values that urban consumers are seeking are honesty and trust. This in closely trailed by Recommend Emotionally Connected (3.96) which substantiates the notion that emotional resonance is a powerful force behind brand advocacy and word-of-mouth marketing.

Additionally, an average score of 3.81 for Stories More Memorable confirms that brand relatively impactful much more memorable than a technical specification. Although, there is a positive inclination in Emotional Ads over Technical (3.63) and Brands Reflect Identity (3.62), the least Likert mean is in Stay Loyal Cheaper Competitors (3.31). This implies emotional branding brings a close relationship. The standard deviations are mostly in the range of 0.9 to 1.1, which suggests a stable opinion of the population sampled.

*Correlation*

**Table -2 correlation (calculated data)**

Correlations		Stories More Memorable	Brands Reflect Identity	Prefer Honest Trustworthy	Nostalgia Influences Choice	Decision Factor
Stories More Memorable	Pearson Correlation	1	.770**	.781**	.808**	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Brands Reflect Identity	Pearson Correlation	.770**	1	.789**	.799**	.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Prefer Honest Trustworthy	Pearson Correlation	.781**	.789**	1	.805**	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Nostalgia Influences Choice	Pearson Correlation	.808**	.799**	.805**	1	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Decision Factor	Pearson Correlation	.647**	.677**	.621**	.645**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300

	N	300	300	300	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Pearson Correlation analysis shows that all the variables of emotional branding strong, positive, and statistically with consumer buying decisions in Bengaluru, and the correlation is strong and positive (N = 300). The most correlated with purchase intent is Self-Brand Congruity (Brands Reflect Identity) with a correlation of 0.677 (p = .001), then Brand Storytelling (r = 0.647) and Nostalgia (r = 0.645).

Also, there is a strong association between Emotional Trust (Prefer Honest Trustworthy) and r = 0.621. The high value of the inter- correlation of all independent variables (between 0.770 and 0.808) indicates that these emotional triggers are synergistic and thus make up a powerful psychological motivator to urban consumers.



*Regression Analysis*

**Table – 3 regression analysis (calculated data)**

Variables Entered/Removed <sup>a</sup>			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Nostalgia Influences Choice, Brands Reflect Identity, Stories More Memorable, Prefer Honest Trustworthy <sup>b</sup>	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Decision Factor			
b. All requested variables entered.			

**Table -4 R-Square (calculated data)**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.711a	.506	.499	.693
a. Predictors: (Constant), Nostalgia Influences Choice, Brands Reflect Identity, Stories More Memorable, Prefer Honest Trustworthy				

**Table-5 Anova (calculated data)**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	144.779	4	36.195	75.432	.000b
	Residual	141.551	295	.480		
	Total	286.330	299			
a. Dependent Variable: Decision Factor						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Nostalgia Influences Choice, Brands Reflect Identity, Stories More Memorable, Prefer Honest Trustworthy						

**Table -6 coefficient (calculated data)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Coefficientsa		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.386	.177		-2.183	.030
	Stories More Memorable	.202	.073	.214	2.775	.006
	Brands Reflect Identity	.335	.074	.346	4.512	.000
	Prefer Honest Trustworthy	.068	.080	.067	.848	.397
	Nostalgia Influences Choice	.128	.075	.142	1.712	.088
a. Dependent Variable: Decision Factor						

The regression result reveals that high positive correlation between emotional branding factors and consumer decisions ( $R = 0.711$ ). The  $R^2 = 0.506$  shows that the model can explain the purchasing behavior variance of 50.6 percent. The overall statistical significance of the model is supported by the results of ANOVA ( $F = 75.432$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In particular, Self-Brand Congruity (0.346) and Brand Storytelling (0.214) are the most important predictors. This leads to the rejection of the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), confirming the existence of an effect of emotional branding on the city of Bengaluru consumers.

## VI. DISCUSSIONS

The demographic profile shows that the consumers in the Bengaluru area is mostly young and technologically inclined, as 79 percent of the overall participants fall under the Gen Z and Millennial groups. A major segment of this group- about 45%- is constituted by IT and corporate professionals and they represent 136 participants. The economic profile of the sample shows that there is a strong potential of identity-based spending. This cross of youth, professionalism and stable purchasing power forms a fertile ground where emotional branding strategies can be established. The findings of the present study are largely in line with previous literature, with minor deviations in certain variables.

In terms of engagement preferences, the research results conclude that personal feelings, emotional attachments are the most crucial decision-making factors when both functional features and prices are close between competing products. Short to very short videos on social media platforms prove to be the most impactful mechanisms to connect with profound stories that are persuasive. Regarding content themes, the strongest hook was aspiration which indicates a strong appeal to the brands that describe the lifestyle aspirations. Additionally, nostalgia is a strong weapon, which confirms that the positive childhood memories appeal stronger in attracting instant attention.

Behavioral Trends indicate that when an advertisement resonates with emotions purchase behavior it follows buying from the customers as revealed in 65% of respondents. The highest descriptive mean of 4.04 was recorded under values such as honesty and trustworthiness with 77% participants considering such values as essential in long term loyalty. Brand storytelling was also doing better than technical specifications with 67% people recalling narratives better having a mean score of 3.81. This change is also supported by the fact that 59.6% of the respondents had a stronger psychological response to emotionally-focused advertisements than to cold product information, which resulted in high brand advocacy with 75% of participants willing to suggest emotionally-related brands.



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Regression analysis provides statistical validation, with a fair  $R^2$  of 0.506 demonstrating that the four important emotional branding variables are significant predictors of consumer purchasing decisions, or more than half of the variation in consumer buying decisions. Self-brand congruency was found to be the most important psychological driver within these with the highest correlation coefficient of 0.677. Finally, the results confirms that in Bengaluru market, the capacity of the brand to reflect the self-image of the consumer, as well as emotional honesty is the only most important indicator of commercial success.

#### VII. CONCLUSION

This study has effectively illustrated that emotional branding as one of the key triggers in the consumer purchase decision. the study confirms the existence of statistically significant positive correlation between emotional triggers which are brand storytelling, self-brand congruity and emotional trust and final purchase decision.

The strongest of the examined variables was self-brand congruity, with a value of  $r = 0.677$ , indicating that the largely Gen Z and Millennial customers prefer to associate themselves with brands reflecting their personal identity or the desired self-image.

Brand trust mean score is high (4.04), which implies that consumers are influenced by the story and nostalgia, but they still expect authenticity and psychological safety in the brands that they attach themselves to. With the traditional functional differentiation ever more difficult to maintain, emotional branding offers a strategy needed to avoid price wars. To promote long-term loyalty businesses should focus on profound, empathetic relationships supported by the means of captivating short-form storytelling and identity-based brand promotion strategies.

#### VIII. FURTHER SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research may be extended in the future to investigate the effect of emotional branding in rural or semi-urban Indian markets to conduct an comparative study. A longitudinal study to monitor the long-term change of emotional attachment to lifetime customer loyalty in a span of years, can also they conduted Furthermore, the researchers of the future may also examine how the new technologies (including Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality) can be used to develop hyper-personalized emotional experiences. The comparative studies between various industry segments, including the high-involvement luxury products, would also enhance the insight on the variation of the emotional stimulator, across product categories.