

**ECONOMIC ANNALS-XXI**

ISSN 1728-6239 (Online)

ISSN 1728-6220 (Print)

<https://doi.org/10.21003/ea><http://ea21journal.world>

Volume 211 Issue (9-10)'2024

Citation information: Rajendran, R. P. (2024). The mediating role of emotional brand attachment: exploring the coffee-like scent application in building the store brand loyalty and store loyalty. *Economic Annals-XXI*, 211(9-10), 46-51. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21003/ea.V211-07>

**Ragu Prasad Rajendran**

PhD (Marketing),

Assistant Professor (Selection Grade),

School of Management,

Presidency University

Itgalpura, Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka, 560064, India

[ragu.prasadh@presidencyuniversity.in](mailto:ragu.prasadh@presidencyuniversity.in)ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8257-0984>

## The mediating role of emotional brand attachment: exploring the coffee-like scent application in building the store brand loyalty and store loyalty

**Abstract.** The primary objective of this paper is to propose a conceptual model to explore the relationship between coffee-like scent, emotional brand attachment (EBA), store brand loyalty, and, store loyalty. Relevant literature was reviewed to establish the relationships between coffee-like scent, EBA, store brand loyalty, and store loyalty. This study proposes a conceptual framework and propositions that seek to explain the relationship among the variables. The statistical population of the research is the customers of stores who inhaled the coffee-like scent, 25 cases were surveyed during 2023-2024. The developed conceptual model indicates that the coffee-like scent positively affects EBA and influences store loyalty. This study, leveraging the S-O-R model and the appraisal theory, demonstrates how firms can use coffee-like scent to enhance store loyalty. By influencing EBA, firms can positively impact marketing-related variables, such as store loyalty, without requiring customers to consume coffee. This research is among the first to draw upon established scent and caffeine literature to develop a conceptual framework to analyse the effect of coffee-like scent on key marketing variables like store loyalty, with EBA as the mediator.

**Keywords:** Coffee-Like Scent; Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA); Store Brand Loyalty; Consumer; Shop

**JEL Classification:** E24; E41; E64; I18; J28; J31

**Acknowledgements and Funding:** The author received no direct funding for this research and there is no conflict of interests with the stores under study or business connection with them.

**Contribution:** The author contributed personally to this work.

**Data Availability Statement:** The dataset is available from the author upon request.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.21003/ea.V211-07>

### 1. Introduction

Contemporary consumers face plenty of offers and choices. Because of abundant advertisements, consumers feel they need clarification. Subsequently, consumers' interest wanes and companies want to differentiate their product brand from others. Consumers do not make decisions rationally and use their senses to buy. Consumers like pleasant experiences. The scent, one such experience, becomes part of the air we breathe. Scent affects human emotions and influences consumer behaviour.

Coffee shops and caffeinated beverages are widely available, and consumers immediately shop while or after consuming caffeinated beverages (Bae & Jeon, 2022). Retailers also provide foods/beverages that contain caffeine (Szocs et al., 2023). Retail stores allow consumers to purchase caffeinated drinks, tea or coffee (Yulisetiari et al., 2024). People experience coffee-like scents daily in the workplace, retail and service environments, and coffee shops. People spend hours socializing, working, or relaxing in a coffee-scented atmosphere (Lee 2022; Homyamyen et al., 2024). Marketers needed to understand the effect of coffee's ambient scent

on marketing-related outcomes. The effect of coffee's ambient scent on marketing-related variables has received sparse attention in the literature. This study is the first to propose a model to examine the effect of coffee's ambient scent on store loyalty.

## 2. Brief Literature Review and Theoretical Background of the Study

### *Coffee-Like Scent*

Since coffee-scented environments are prevalent, it is imperative to understand the influence of coffee scent on behaviour. Most people worldwide consume tea or coffee daily. Caffeine increases alertness and energy and decreases mental tiredness (Glade, 2010). In tasks requiring sustained vigilance, caffeine boosts performance. Caffeine also helps make correct decisions and reduces errors in reasoning problems (Glade, 2010). Although consumers consume coffee and beverages containing caffeine during shopping, research on how this activity influences consumers' behaviour is sparse. Previous research established the relationship between caffeine intake and consumer spending (Biswas et al., 2022).

### *Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA)*

Emotions help to create a connection between customers and a particular product or service. Customers gradually form an emotional connection with a firm. Feelings play a significant role in influencing consumers' decisions. Marketing managers want to establish an emotional connection between their customers and brands (Thomson et al., 2005; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). Just as they do with people, customers develop emotional bonds with brands (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024). More excellent emotional connections lead to greater loyalty and commitment (Thomson et al., 2005). Customers' long-term relationship with service providers leads to emotional attachment. (Sharif & Sidi Lemine, 2024). Customer emotions influence customer judgment, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Yangailo, 2024).

### *Brand Passion, Self-Brand Connection, and Brand Affection*

Brands significantly influence consumers' lives and people's consumption behaviour. Consumers develop a strong following for some brands. Brand trust, identification, and commitment are some of the constructs often studied in many branding studies. Brand passion is a recently proposed construct. Consumer enthusiasm and belonging to a brand community are the features that represent brand passion (Gilal et al., 2023, Wang et al., 2021). Brand-self connection refers to consumers' feelings when they join the brand (Dey & Sahoo 2024). Affection occurs when customers develop positive feelings toward a brand (Marhalinda et al., 2024).

### *Store Brand Loyalty and Store Loyalty*

Previous research has found that store brands increase customer loyalty toward retailers (Alić & Mujkic, 2023). Earlier studies found a positive relationship between store brand loyalty and store loyalty (Saljoughi et al., 2024). Developing a global brand strategy drives the positive relationship between store brand purchases and store loyalty. In this scenario, customers purchase most of the retailer's product categories. When household members prefer a retailer's brand, this leads to behavioural loyalty towards the retailer (Lang et al., 2023).

This research contributes to the knowledge of caffeine scent by analysing the specific factors paramount in building better store brand loyalty. Specifically, this study intends to develop a conceptual model that links coffee-like scent, EBA, and store loyalty so that marketing practitioners can effectively use coffee-like scent to build store loyalty, with EBA as the mediator.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This paper intends to study the effect of coffee-like scent on store loyalty. It aims to present literature reviews on coffee-like scents and to analyse the factors influencing marketing-related outcomes, such as store loyalty. As store loyalty becomes increasingly more important to firms focusing on good marketing strategies, the present paper seeks to better understand the role of coffee-like scent as a marketing strategy. The paper concludes that coffee-like scent positively influences EBA dimensions, influencing store brand loyalty and loyalty.

This research is applied in terms of its purpose and with a correlational deductive hypothesis-building approach and in terms of the method of information collection, in theoretical library

and field discussions using a questionnaire, in which the relationships between coffee-like scent, brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, store brand loyalty, and store loyalty are examined. The statistical population of the research is the customers of 25 stores that have used coffee-like scent in the store. SPSS software was used to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses, and the collected information was subjected to reliability analysis based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was obtained with a coefficient above 0.8 for all variables.

#### 4. Results

This research aims to propose a conceptual model to analyze the effect of the coffee-like scent on store loyalty. The logic of the developed conceptual model is based on the SOR model and the appraisal theory because of their theoretical importance. The stimulus is the coffee-like scent, affecting the consumers' emotional responses, resulting in store loyalty. According to the appraisal theory, customers appraise events, which leads to emotions and the activation of different sentiments. The coffee-like scent drives consumers' emotional responses in the proposed conceptual model (Figure 1).

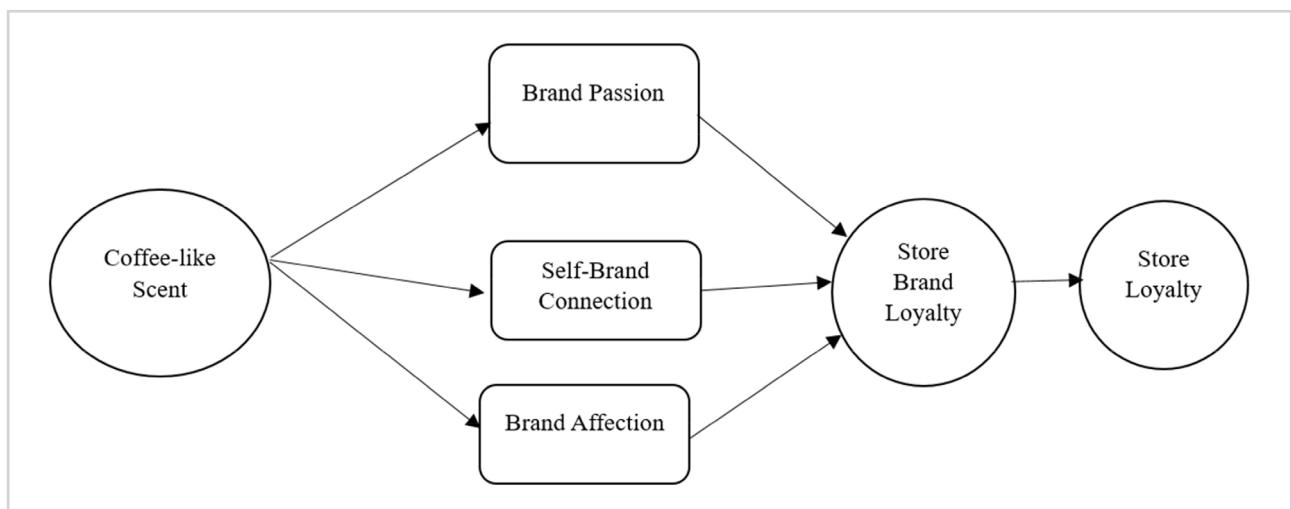


Figure 1:  
**Proposed Conceptual Model**  
Source: Made by the author

**P1:** The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect brand passion positively.

**P2:** The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect self-brand connection positively.

**P3:** The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect brand affection positively.

Emotional attachment builds brand loyalty (Kalra et al., 2024). Prior research suggests that brand passion, self-brand connection, and brand affection are the three critical dimensions of EBA. These critical dimensions affect marketing-related variables, such as store brand loyalty. Even though previous studies have focused on understanding emotions, much is still lacking. Affective elements of the brand, such as passion and warm feelings, are associated with Brand attachment (Guru et al., 2024). The bonding with the brand is tight for a long time because of brand passion (Das et al., 2019). Customers with brand passion engage emotionally with the brand and will feel like they are not in touch with it when unavailable (Albert et al., 2013).

**P4:** Brand passion mediates coffee-like scent & store brand loyalty.

With self-brand connections, consumers build long-lasting loyalty toward a brand because of favourable attitudes. As customers encounter experiences, they build self-connections with brands. Impressive, exceptional, and memorable experiences drive customers' brand loyalty.

**P5:** Self-brand connection mediates coffee-like scent & store brand loyalty.

Love, Friendliness, and Peacefulness are associated with an affectionate brand. Brand affection stands for customers' warm and pleasant feelings toward a brand (Thomson et al., 2005). When individuals have brand affection, they build long-lasting relationships with the brand. Prior research studies suggest a positive relationship between affectionate bonds with brands and the loyalty of customers.

**P6:** Brand affection mediates coffee-like scent & store brand loyalty.

Research shows a positive relationship between store brands and customer loyalty as stores try to differentiate themselves from other retailers (Dikčius et al., 2023). Prior research studies also suggest that store brand loyalty and store loyalty are positively related (Collins & Maglaras, 2024).

**P7:** Store brand loyalty has a positive effect on Store loyalty.

Suppose marketers better understand the relationship between coffee-like scent and store loyalty. In that case, it will help practitioners and academics woo customers by better comprehending the antecedents of store loyalty. A better understanding will help marketers reinforce consumer loyalty in a competitive environment. Following the S-O-R paradigm, a coffee-like scent drives EBA, positively affecting store brand loyalty and store loyalty. Based on the information collected in the correlation table, all latent variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:  
**Correlation of latent variables**

Variable	Brand Passion	Self-Brand Connection	Brand Affection	Store Brand Loyalty	Store Loyalty	Coffee-Like Scent
Brand Passion	1	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Brand Connection	0.845	1	-	-	-	-
Brand Affection	0.654	0.661	1	-	-	-
Store Brand Loyalty	0.811	0.891	0.643	1	-	-
Store Loyalty	0.767	0.781	0.612	0.781	1	-

Source: Made by the author

After conducting the confirmatory factor analysis test, the research proposals were also tested using the structural equation model at a significance level of 0.001 to test the conceptual model of the research and to investigate the existence or absence of a causal relationship between the variables. Table 2 shows the results of the structural equation test of the research proposals. The first proposal stated that the presence of a coffee-like scent will affect brand passion positively. The results show that the coefficient of influence of these two variables is 0.42. On the other hand, the significance of this coefficient was also confirmed. Therefore, it can be concluded that increasing coffee-like scent will increase brand passion. The second proposition was that the presence of a coffee-like scent will affect self-brand connection positively. According to the statistical analysis, the significance of this relationship is confirmed.

Table 2:  
**Results from structural equation testing**

	Proposition	Path	Result
P1	The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect brand passion positively	0.42	approve
P2	The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect self-brand connection positively	0.35	approve
P3	The presence of a coffee-like scent will affect brand affection positively	0.76	approve
P4	Brand passion mediates the relationship between coffee-like scent and store brand loyalty	0.94	approve
P5	Self-brand connection mediates the relationship between coffee-like scent and store brand loyalty	0.29	approve
P6	Brand affection mediates the relationship between coffee-like scent and store brand loyalty	0.96	approve
P7	Store brand loyalty has a positive effect on Store loyalty	0.56	Approve

Source: Made by the author

## 5. Conclusion

Significant changes are happening in consumers' buying habits. Consumers expect innovative experiential consumption as they look for value additions in the products they shop and consume. Sensory marketing reinforces the bond between the consumer and the product. Sensory cues significantly affect consumer emotions, which influence consumers' purchasing behavior. This research analyses the effect of coffee's ambient scent on store loyalty. This research concludes that coffee-like scent positively affects EBA dimensions, affecting store loyalty.

Firms that intend to use coffee-like scents to improve their competency in the marketplace are at a great advantage. However, few studies explain how to use coffee-like scents to improve store loyalty. This study develops a conceptual framework to analyse the factors influencing store loyalty. The results identified the three critical dimensions of EBA, positively affecting store loyalty. Regarding scent marketing, scholars have stressed the need to study its impact on marketing-related outcomes. Caffeine scent has become all-pervasive, and marketers invest vast amounts of money in providing pleasant scent experiences. However, coffee-like scent has gained sparse attention in the marketing literature, and marketers need to understand the factors that influence store loyalty. A high level of store loyalty can significantly reduce costs and boost revenue. This



paper discusses how firms can reap economic and customer behaviour benefits through higher store loyalty.

Though coffee-like scent is shown in this study as a significant factor affecting store loyalty, other constructs influence store loyalty. Researchers can use these constructs as mediators or moderators. Consumers making prudent judgments because of caffeine consumption and being more attentive to advertisement are critical future avenues of research.

## References

- Ahmadi, A., & Ataei, A. (2024). Emotional attachment: a bridge between brand reputation and brand advocacy. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 16(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJBA-11-2021-0579>
- Albert, N., Merunka, D., & Valette-Florence, P. (2013). Brand passion: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(7), 904-909. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.12.009>
- Alić, A., & Mujkic, A. (2023). Cognitive drivers of brand love and store brand loyalty: lessons for retailers in a developing country setting. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 33(2), 134-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2022.2056905>
- Bae, J.-H., & Jeon, H.-M. (2022). Exploring the relationships among brand experience, perceived product quality, hedonic value, utilitarian value, and brand loyalty in unmanned coffee shops during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability*, 14(18), 11713. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141811713>
- Biswas, D., Hartmann, P., Eisend, M., Szocs, C., Jochims, B., Apaolaza, V., Hermann, E., López, C. M., & Borges, A. (2022). Caffeine's Effects on Consumer Spending. *Journal of Marketing*, 87(2), 149-167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429221109247>
- Collins, A. M., & Maglaras, G. (2024). Smart shopper feelings in the case of store brands: the role of human capital and implications for store loyalty. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research*, 34(1), 52-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2023.2200965>
- Das, G., Agarwal, J., Malhotra, K., & Varshneya, G. (2019). Does brand experience translate into brand commitment? A mediated-moderation model of brand passion and perceived brand ethicality. *Journal of Business Research*, 95, 479-490. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.05.026>
- Dey, S., & Sahoo, B., (2024). Machine Learning And Ai Based Human Resource Management In Kgi: An Algorithm Based Crossover. *Journal of Engineering, Management and Information Technology*, 2(2), 69-76. <https://doi.org/10.61552/JEMIT.2024.02.003>
- Dikčius, V., Adomavičiūtė-Sakalauskė, K., Kiršė, S., & Zimaitis, I. (2023). The impact of cultural dimensions on online store loyalty. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 24(3), 576-593. <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2023.19879>
- Ghorbanzadeh, D., & Rahehagh, A. (2021). Emotional brand attachment and brand love: the emotional bridges in the process of transition from satisfaction to loyalty. *Rajagiri Management Journal*, 15(1), 16-38. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RAMJ-05-2020-0024>
- Gilal, F. G., Paul, J., Thomas, A., Zarantonello, L., & Gilal, R. G. (2023). Brand passion: A systematic review and future research agenda. *Journal of Brand Management*, 30(6), 490-515. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-023-00324-x>
- Glade, M. J. (2010). Caffeine-Not just a stimulant. *Nutrition*, 26(10), 932-938. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nut.2010.08.004>
- Guru, R. R. D., Paulssen, M., & Japutra, A. (2024). Role of brand attachment and satisfaction in driving customer behaviors for durables: a longitudinal study. *European Journal of Marketing*, 58(1), 217-254. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-01-2022-0028>
- Homyamyen, P., Kulachai, W., Benchakhan, K., & Wannarak, J. (2024). Decoding Digital Loyalty: How Service Quality, Platform Performance, And Menu Diversity Shape Trust, Satisfaction, And Retention In Online Platforms? *Journal of Engineering, Management and Information Technology*, 2(4), 215-226. <https://doi.org/10.61552/JEMIT.2024.04.007>
- Kalra, G., Jhamb, D., & Mittal, A. (2024). Emotional Brand Attachment, Brand Tribalism, and Co-creation in Luxury Hotels: Insights from Emerging Economies. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 17(1), 89-97. <https://doi.org/10.2174/0118743501301683240516055354>
- Lang, L. D., Behl, A., Guzmán, F., Pereira, V., & Del Giudice, M. (2023). The role of advertising, distribution intensity and store image in achieving global brand loyalty in an emerging market. *International Marketing Review*, 40(1), 127-154. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1108/IMR-06-2021-0200>
- Lee, H.-J. (2022). A study on the effect of customer habits on revisit intention focusing on franchise coffee shops. *Information*, 13(2), 86-94. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info13020086>
- Marhalinda, M., Herminda, H., & Muksin, A. (2024). Work Motivation Is Not Able To Mediate Variables That Have An Indirect Effect On Employee Performance. *Procedia Environmental Science, Engineering and Management*, 11(2), 215-221. [https://www.procedia-esem.eu/pdf/issues/2024/no2/21\\_Marhalinda\\_24.pdf](https://www.procedia-esem.eu/pdf/issues/2024/no2/21_Marhalinda_24.pdf)
- Saljoughi, R., Bagheri, M., Shokouh, Z., & Kharazmi, M. (2024). Impact Of Digital Marketing Transformation Trends On Industrial Customers' Purchasing Behavior. *Procedia Environmental Science, Engineering and Management*, 11(1), 91-106. [http://www.procedia-esem.eu/pdf/issues/2024/no1/11\\_Saljoughi\\_24.pdf](http://www.procedia-esem.eu/pdf/issues/2024/no1/11_Saljoughi_24.pdf)
- Sharif, K., & Sidi Lemine, M. (2024). Customer service quality, emotional brand attachment and customer citizenship behaviors: Findings from an emerging higher education market. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 34(1), 18-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2021.1949659>
- Szocs, C., Kim, Y., Lim, M., Mera, C. A., & Biswas, D. (2023). The store of the future: Engaging customers through sensory elements, personalized atmospherics, and interpersonal interaction. *Journal of Retailing*, 99(4), 605-620. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2023.11.005>

22. Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., & Whan Park, C. (2005). The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1), 77-91. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1501\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1501_10)
23. Wang, T., Thai, D.-H. T., Ly, Ph. T. M., & Chi T. Ph. (2021). Turning social endorsement into brand passion. *Journal of Business Research*, 126, 429-439. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.01.011>
24. Yangailo, T. (2024). The Moderating Effect of Important Innovations on the relationship between Quality Results and Productivity. *Journal of Innovations in Business and Industry*, 2(1), 29-38. <https://doi.org/10.61552/JIBI.2024.01.004>
25. Yulisetiari, D., Farid, M., Nanda, E., Prasetyaningtiyas, S., & Irawan, B. (2024). The Influence of Product Quality and Service Quality on Customer Loyalty through Consumer Satisfaction of KFC in Jember. *Journal of Innovations in Business and Industry*, 2(4), 207-216. <https://doi.org/10.61552/JIBI.2024.04.003>

*Received 15.08.2024*

*Received in revised form 29.08.2024*

*Accepted 30.08.2024*

*Available online 25.10.2024*