“From clicks to affection: How online convenience cultivates brand love through impulsive buying in apparel retail”

AUTHORS	Chandni M.C. Reshmi V. Suresh Ali Saleh Alshebami Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih Mahmaod Alrawad

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Chandni M. C. (India), **Reshmi V. Suresh** (India), **Ali Saleh Alshebami** (Saudi Arabia), **Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih** (Saudi Arabia), **Mahmaod Alrawad** (Saudi Arabia)

FROM CLICKS TO AFFECTION: HOW ONLINE CONVENIENCE CULTIVATES BRAND LOVE THROUGH IMPULSIVE BUYING IN APPAREL RETAIL

Abstract

Given the paramount importance of brand love (BL) in the contemporary marketplace, this study analyzes the influence of online convenience (OC) on brand love among apparel customers. It further investigates the mediating role of impulsive buying behavior (IBB) in the relationship between OC and BL by considering its contextual relevance. OC is conceptualized as multi-dimensional construct comprising seven distinct facets: access convenience (AC), search convenience (SC), evaluation convenience (EC), transaction convenience (TC), relationship convenience (RC), possession convenience (PC), and post-possession convenience (PPC). This framework positions OC as a critical factor influencing customers' psychology. Primary data were collected through an online survey administered to 410 Nike apparel customers in Bangalore, India. The proposed research model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. The results reveal that evaluation, transaction, possession, and post-possession convenience have significant positive influences on BL. The study also demonstrates that IBB plays a statistically significant mediating role in the relationship between most dimensions of OC and BL, except for possession and post-possession convenience. The research highlights the necessity of offering better OC to customers to boost BL. Furthermore, this research emphasizes that firms can utilize the potential of the IBB concept as a competitive strategy to accelerate the evolution of BL.

Keywords brand love, online convenience, impulsive buying behavior, apparel customers

JEL Classification M31, D12, D91, L81

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Chandni M. C., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Bengaluru Campus, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), India.

Reshmi V. Suresh, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Professional Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), India.

Ali Saleh Alshebami, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Management, Applied College, King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa, 31982, Saudi Arabia. (Corresponding author)
aalshebami@kfu.edu.sa

Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Ph.D., Full Professor, Management Department, College of Business Administration, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia.

Mahmaod Alrawad, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Quantitative Methods, College of Business Administration, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia.

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INTRODUCTION

In an era of "cut-throat" competition, branding has evolved into a significant asset that shapes the identity of marketers and attracts top talents and strategic partnerships (Choi et al., 2024; Chou & Chen, 2025; Rauschnabel et al., 2024). This in turn enhances marketing effectiveness and results in significant business growth and expansion. Additionally, strong brands establish long-lasting trust and credibility among customers (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024). In a consumerist culture, individuals mark their daily existence through the experience rendered through consumption, using brand images as a meaningful mode of self-expression and for conveying their identity to the outside world. BL represents a multifaceted construct that captures the complex, intertwined psychological and emotional journey of a customer. This journey encompasses multiple stages of customer interactions, engagement, trust building, and the creation of a strong emotional rapport (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024; Mostafa & Sobhy Temerak, 2024). Rooted in brand consciousness, consumers' progress through exciting experiences of brand knowledge, brand trust, and brand attachment before

reaching the state of BL (Mostafa & Sobhy Temerak, 2024). Understanding this progression is highly significant for marketers as it helps them create effective marketing strategies, enhanced customer relationships, and a significant competitive edge (Aboulnasr & Tran, 2019). BL manifests a longstanding "passionate emotional attachment" between a brand and a customer. BL has garnered considerable attention within both academic and industrial circles due to its power to dictate a brand trajectory (Aboulnasr & Tran, 2019; Choi et al., 2024; Rodrigues et al., 2024; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

The dramatic rise of Direct to Consumer (D2C) brands as a game changer has created an exponential rise in the direct digital retail sales, from 2-3 % of the market 5 years ago to a notable 10-15 % today. D2C brands are capitalizing on their websites, software applications and social networking channels to build an immediate association with customers. This paradigm shift has contributed remarkably to the expansion of India's Rs. 5.86 lakh crore digital retail industry. By 2027, the Indian D2C market is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 40 percent, reaching an estimated value of $60 billion. Thus, the Indian online retail industry is set to flourish beyond boundaries. Within this evolving context, it becomes imperative for marketers to develop in-depth understanding of Indian online consumers' behavior, and its interconnections with OC and BL (IBEF, 2025). In the digitally driven consumer market, it is argued that OC serves as a virtual salesperson guiding customers through various digital touchpoints during the purchase process (Jabbour Al Maalouf et al., 2025; Duarte et al., 2018; Jabbour Al Maalouf et al., 2025; Lina et al., 2022). Although previous studies have established the influence of OC on various aspects of customer purchase intentions, its specific impact on BL remains underexplored. This creates a potential hindrance to the marketers in understanding and optimising the capacity of OC dimensions for BL creation. Therefore, the primary research problem of this study is to address this gap in the literature by analyzing the influence of OC on BL, specifically examining factors such as AC, SC, EC, TC, EC, PC, and PPC. Additionally, whether IBB has an intervening role in the BL creation process is also not empirically proven. Therefore, this study aims to come up with a comprehensive model by incorporating aforementioned variables specifically aimed at BL creation in Indian online retail context, with an explicit focus on the apparel industry.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, BL has become a core focus of marketing literature and practice, resonating its robust potential to foster sustained emotional bonds and desirable consumer perceptions toward brands (Batra et al., 2012; Mostafa & Sobhy Temerak, 2024). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) conceptualize BL as a combination of passion, attachment, supportive evaluation, and affectionate declarations towards a brand. The formation of BL is a gradual process. It is also influenced by factors such as high brand quality, self-expressive and hedonic benefits, product-related features (uniqueness, high price, quality), and brand stimuli including packaging, product, logo, and communications (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024; Mostafa & Sobhy Temerak, 2024; Choi et al., 2024). BL exerts a reinforcing influence on brand loyalty. Still, the relationship between BL and brand image is subject to variation as brand image can exhibit a direct impact on brand loyalty without the mediation of BL (Choi et al., 2024; Rodrigues et al., 2024). In this increasingly competitive global marketplace, BL has evolved into a key catalyst for consumer-brand relationships. It integrates elements of loyalty, satisfaction and advocacy. BL supports the long-term vision of marketers with its unique capacity to create resilience against negative information and co-creation of lifetime value (Choi et al., 2024; Junaid et al., 2020). The proliferation of social media and digital platforms has further intensified this phenomenon. It has transformed brands from static identities into interactive personalities that engage with customers (Palusuk et al., 2019).

This research is grounded in the Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT). RMT emphasizes the importance of establishing long-term customer-stakeholder associations, moving beyond traditional single point transactions to foster loyalty

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and facilitate mutual value creation (Gummesson, 2002). RMT provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how OC serves as a relational tool that elevates customer brand interactions and ultimately cultivates deep emotional bonds and BL (Aslam et al., 2020; Gummesson, 2002). The theoretical foundation offered by RMT is particularly relevant to consumer behavior studies. User-generated content influences the responses of the customers and triggers actions such as information sharing, impulsive purchases, future purchase intentions, and active brand engagement (Aslam et al., 2020). RMT postulates that a well-balanced mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and the customer leads to long-term value. In digital commerce, RMT explains how cohesively streamlined online experiences get converted into impulsive purchases and later into deep emotional connections. In alignment with the RMT perspective, the present study examines the influencing factors of OC as a stimulus that contributes to BL creation among customers (Berry, 1995; Shaw & Jones, 2005).

OC refers to the perceived ease and efficiency experienced by customers across various aspects of the online shopping journey. These include access, search, evaluation, transaction, delivery, possession, service recovery, and post purchase communication (Lina et al., 2022; Palacios & Jun, 2020). The possession, transaction and evaluation dimensions of online convenience have substantial impact on the customers' digital shopping intentions (Duarte et al., 2018). The study posits that the ground-breaking service solutions from website managers and marketers have enhanced customer expectations to a greater level. This has made the real-time tracking of customers' perceptions and outlook regarding OC a prerequisite for its continuous improvement. OC is operationalized in this study as a multi-layered construct encompassing seven dimensions such as AC, SC, EC, TC, EC, PC, and PPC (Lina et al., 2022). Each dimension is outlined further.

The speed and convenience with which a customer approaches a store are referred to as AC (Almarashdeh et al., 2020; Shankar et al., 2025). In an online context, store location is immaterial and website accessibility is considered the most significant aspect. Features such as ease of website navigation, flexible purchasing channels, reliable delivery or social media accessibility boost customer value perception. They also strengthen emotional connection with brands. These experiences can transform affective commitment to BL, which eventually drives loyalty and advocacy.

SC refers to how easily and quickly customers identify and select products to purchase (Almarashdeh et al., 2020; Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011). Search inconvenience remains a key impediment to convenient and efficient online shopping. The critical issues that cause search inconvenience often stem from download pace, web page design, search operation and item classification. With the advent of the internet, a huge revolution has been witnessed in disseminating detailed information to customers through paid advertisements, website optimization and social media handles. All of these have opened up vast doors of choice in front of a customer, saving them from crowds, time wastage and physical visit to stores (Lina et al., 2022). SC is now treated as a significant antecedent of BL as it synchronizes with brand trust and brand care.

In recent times, the staggering choice of products and the accessibility of information at the fingertips have increased the sensitivity of customers to EC. The availability of unlimited, but simple product descriptions, the visual extravaganza of captivating text, video, and images on the company's webpage enhance evaluation convenience (Jiang et al., 2011). The peer evaluation system further reduces the time and efforts of customers to choose their desired products. Hence, the EC is considered as an integral factor that influences consumer trust and the tendency to adopt smart retailing technologies.

The ease of making transactions is referred to as TC, which is found to be one of the important factors for inducing customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Palacios & Jun, 2020). Time efficiency and simplicity of the transaction process enhance the customers experience and boost their repurchase intentions as well.

The individualized attention provided to clients by the online retailers ensures online business longevity and it explains the concept of RC. The use of decision aids by online merchants, such

as shopping bots, suggestion agents, and human assistance, plays a major role in easing purchasing choices and improving customer experience (Lina et al., 2022). Customers tend to appreciate and remain loyal to the brands that reduce time, mental load and physical efforts, leading to emotional connection and loyalty. Proactive assistance coupled with tailored solutions create a feeling of 'being valued' among customers, which enhances emotional connection.

PC indicates the comfort level enjoyed by consumers in acquiring, storing, and using a product after purchase. As an aspect of service convenience (Duarte et al., 2018), PC is commonly linked to reduced time consumption, ease of operation and availability of products. Such refined experiences converge into BL, a profound emotional bond in which customers manifest passion, adherence, and advocacy for a brand.

PPC encompasses the convenience and facilitation customers experience after purchasing a product or service. It extends beyond the transaction and possession stage, and involves aspects such as product usage, maintenance, customer support, returns, upgrades, and overall after-sales service. PPC denotes customers' perceived time and efforts expenditure when they recontact the company after acquiring goods (Lina et al., 2022). This concept is critical in shaping BL, as positive post-possession experiences for customers bolster their satisfaction, trust, and emotional connection.

While BL plays a crucial role in the current digital marketing era, the motives behind customer purchases require an equal analysis and scrutiny (Iyer et al., 2019; Kimiagari & Asadi Malafe, 2021; Rook & Fisher, 1995). It is particularly essential to discern whether the online purchase decisions are genuine and need-oriented, or an unplanned and momentary one backed by the impressive visual appeal of products (Li et al., 2024). The unplanned purchase decisions made by customers are termed "impulsive buying behavior" (IBB). The IBB is one of the widely researched areas in marketing due to its significant impact on the sales and profit margins of companies. IBB is an emotional outcome rather than a rational consequence (Goel et al., 2022; Liapati et al., 2015). It is triggered by attractive promotions, limited-time discounts, or an inviting spending ambience. Although IBB offers instant gratification, it can lead to regret and financial challenges if not controlled (Gupta et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024; Nyrhinen et al., 2023). Conversely, IBB which is triggered by a frictionless online experience, leads to a positive psychological impact in the customer which directly benefits the brand ecosystem, incrementally enhancing the emotional alignment and gradually culminating in BL.

The above reviewed literature has examined the theoretical foundations of RMT and prior studies across three key constructs: BL, OC (with its seven constituent dimensions), and IBB. While each of these constructs has been individually investigated within the consumer behavior domain, several critical gaps remain unaddressed. First, the specific impact of OC on BL remains underexplored. Moreover, E-commerce platforms provide more online purchase convenience in terms of access, search, evaluation, transaction, possession, and post-possession aspects (Li et al., 2024). However, the extent to which OC reinforces the IBB of customers through its captivating features remains unclear (Japutra et al., 2022; Kathuria & Bakshi, 2024). Additionally, its impact on BL creation also needs further investigation. In short, it can be inferred that the actual impact of impulsive purchase decision on BL creation is not sufficiently explored in prior research (Gupta et al., 2024; Rook & Fisher, 1995). Therefore, it is pertinent to fill this gap by investigating the mediating effect of IBB on the relationship between OC and BL. Addressing these gaps is vital for gaining a comprehensive understanding of Indian online customers and retail industry.

This study aims to examine the direct influence of each of the seven dimensions of OC on BL, the direct influence of IBB on BL, and the mediating role of IBB in the relationships between each convenience dimension and BL among Indian apparel customers.

Building on the above insights, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Access convenience positively influences brand love.

H2: Search convenience has a significant positive influence on brand love.

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Source: Authors' own.

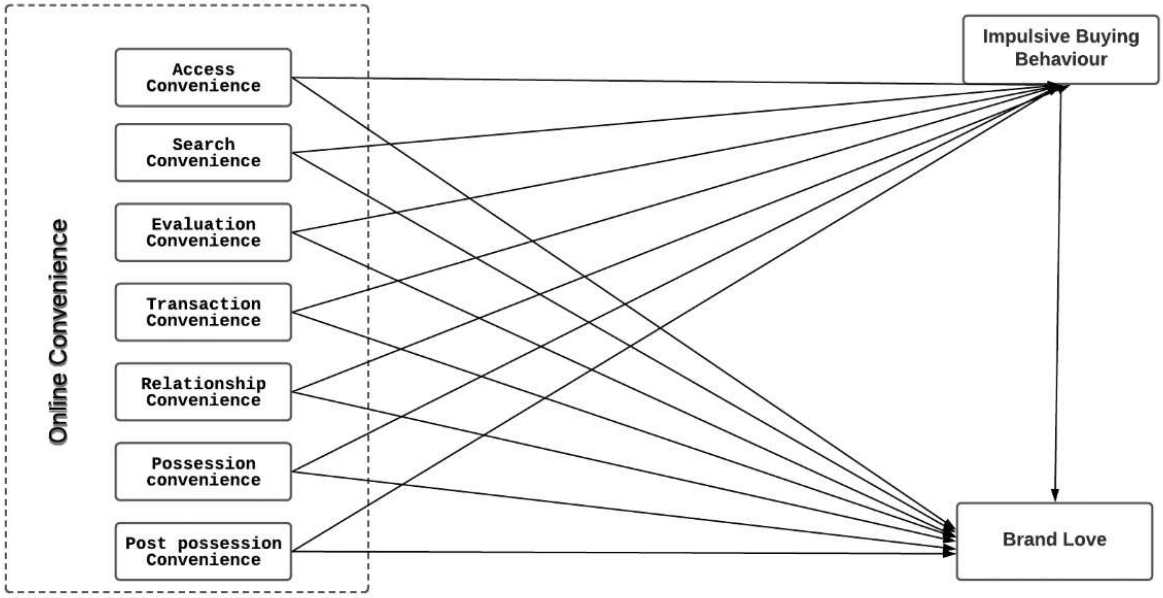

Figure 1. Research model

H3: Evaluation convenience positively influences brand love.

H4: Transaction convenience positively influences brand love.

H5: Relationship convenience positively influences brand love.

H6: Possession convenience positively influences brand love.

H7: Post-possession convenience positively influences brand love.

H8: Impulsive buying behavior positively influences brand love.

H9: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between access convenience and brand love.

H10: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between search convenience and brand love.

H11: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between evaluation convenience and brand love.

H12: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between transaction convenience and brand love.

H13: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between relationship convenience and brand love.

H14: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between possession convenience and brand love.

H15: Impulsive buying behavior mediates the relationship between post-possession convenience and brand love.

In alignment with the earlier discussions and proposed hypotheses, the conceptual model of the study has been developed and is illustrated in Figure 1. In this model, the seven dimensions of OC are presented as the independent variables, while BL serves as the dependent variable. The IBB acts as the mediating variable.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative paradigm and employed a deductive approach to explore the pivotal role played by seven dimensions

of OC (access, search, evaluation, transaction, relationship, possession, and post-possession) in the BL creation process in detail. Specifically, this approach was employed to examine whether the OC dimensions are significant predictors of IBB and whether IBB has an intervening role in BL creation. The target population comprised apparel customers of 'Nike' brand. Primary data were collected from 410 sample respondents who were identified using the judgmental sampling method. This approach was adopted for several reasons. Due to privacy constraints, customer information was not accessible from Nike brand stores. Therefore, judgmental sampling method was considered suitable to identify the prescribed number of sample respondents. Furthermore, the population was infinite, and a specific sampling frame was unavailable. Since the targeted sample respondents are a specific group of customers of a renowned apparel brand (Nike), the judgmental sampling method was found to be contextually appropriate for this study. The underlying judging criteria were the prior purchase experience of the Nike customers. More specifically, customers who had repeatedly purchased apparel items within the last two years were included in this study.

A self-administered online questionnaire was used for primary data collection. A pilot study with 100 customers was conducted to verify the internal consistency of the measures before administering the final questionnaire. The final data collection was conducted between February and June 2025 in Bangalore, one of the emerging tech cities in India. Given the specificity of the target group, obtaining the minimum required sample size posed practical challenges.

The final sample size consisted of 410 Nike apparel customers. Of these respondents, 53.70% were male and 46.30% were female. Regarding the respondents' age, the majority of the respondents (44.15%) were in the 20-40 age group. With regards to the occupational status of respondents, the majority (41.22%) were professionals. In terms of product preference, clothing was found to be the most preferred apparel category of the majority of the respondents (37.56%). Besides, the income-related classification revealed that the majority were in the Rs. 50,001 – Rs. 75,000 income range. The detailed profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profile

Source: Primary data.

Variable	Category	n= 410	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	220	53.70
	Female	190	46.30
Age	Below 20 years old	78	19.02
	20- 40 years old	181	44.15
	41-60 years old	118	28.78
	Above 60 years old	33	08.05
Career status	Students	29	07.07
	Professionals	169	41.22
	Business	106	25.85
	Government employees	76	18.54
	Unemployed	30	07.32
Apparel preference	Clothing	154	37.56
	Shoes and socks	127	30.98
	Bags	53	12.93
	Other accessories	76	18.54
Income range	Rs. 25,000 or below	35	08.54
	Rs. 25,001- Rs. 50,000	118	28.78
	Rs. 50,001- Rs. 75,000	151	36.83
	Above Rs. 75,000	106	25.85

Data cleaning, descriptive statistics of the demographic profile of respondents, and evaluation of the Common Method Bias (CMB) were carried out using SPSS 25 (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The hypotheses testing and research model evaluation were conducted using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0 software. The SEM analysis was employed following the approach proposed by Hair et al. (2017, 2011, 2019). PLS-SEM is recognized as a non-parametric statistical technique, and it is widely used for empirical research. It is also employed for the investigation of complex models, including mediation and moderation, as well as for predictive analyses. The PLS-SEM application is well-known for its capacity to handle datasets with non-normal data and small sample sizes. Besides, it imposes fewer restrictions on data collection assumptions and can derive strong predictive results from the path analysis. Compared to CB-SEM, the PLS-SEM is more appropriate for higher-order constructs and formative-reflective models.

The measures were adapted from previous literature with minor contextual modifications. BL was operationalized as a reflective construct and was measured using the instrument consisting of 10-items adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006).

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OC was operationalized as a seven-dimensional construct, and all its dimensions were measured using reflective items adapted from Lina et al. (2022). The IBB variable was measured as a reflective construct with 10 items adapted from Rook and Fisher (1995). All the items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 stands for 'strongly disagree' and 5 stands for 'strongly agree'. The complete list of measurement items is provided in Appendix A.

3. RESULTS

As the present study followed a cross-sectional design, the CMB was analyzed in detail using two statistical tests (Hair et al., 2011, 2013; Podsakoff et al., 2003). The Harman's single-factor test was carried out, and the variance explained by the single factor amounted to 34.64%, which is less than the threshold of 50% (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019). Furthermore, the extensive collinearity test revealed that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015) (see Table 2). Based on these results, it can be confirmed that the model is free from CMB.

The measurement model assessment is the initial stage of PLS-SEM analysis. It involves an examination of the reliability and validity estimates of the model (Hair et al., 2011, 2013; Hair Jr. et al., 2014). As part of the measurement model analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results were taken into consideration to examine the construct validity (Table 2). The construct validity comprises convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity was reviewed based on factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2017; Hair Jr. et al., 2014). The CFA results revealed that all the factor loadings were above the recommended threshold of 0.5, except one indicator of

Table 2. Reliability, convergent validity, and multicollinearity

Source: Primary data analysis in SmartPLS.

Construct and items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Collinearity (VIF)
Access Convenience					
AC1	0.880	0.888	0.888	0.818	2.120
AC2	0.918				3.090
AC3	0.914				3.070
Search Convenience					
SC1	0.898	0.897	0.899	0.829	2.574
SC2	0.915				2.850
SC3	0.917				2.813
Evaluation Convenience					
EC1	0.920	0.898	0.898	0.830	3.056
EC2	0.890				2.370
EC3	0.923				3.150
Transaction Convenience					
TC1	0.866	0.867	0.867	0.790	2.036
TC2	0.886				2.305
TC3	0.914				2.805
Relationship Convenience					
RC1	0.910	0.884	0.888	0.811	2.610
RC2	0.905				2.507
RC3	0.886				2.385
Possession Convenience					
PC1	0.883	0.879	0.880	0.805	2.223
PC2	0.910				2.610
PC3	0.898				2.509
Post-possession Convenience					
PPC1	0.918	0.885	0.889	0.814	2.878
PPC2	0.914				2.784
PPC3	0.874				2.184

Table 2 (cont.). Reliability, convergent validity, and multicollinearity

Construct and items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Collinearity (VIF)
Impulsive Buying Behavior					
IB1	0.723	0.893	0.895	0.540	1.728
IB2	0.709				1.683
IB3	0.772				2.028
IB4	0.769				2.015
IB5	0.694				1.740
IB6	0.722				1.804
IB7	0.753				1.976
IB8	0.761				1.900
IB9	0.703				1.745
Brand Love					
BL1	0.760	0.889	0.905	0.510	2.249
BL2	0.812				2.776
BL3	0.813				2.569
BL4	0.766				2.146
BL5	0.486				1.408
BL6	0.649				1.837
BL7	0.780				2.407
BL8	0.711				1.863
BL9	0.767				2.352
BL10	0.500				1.473

BL. That is BL5 has factor loading of 0.486, which is slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50. Consistent with PLS-SEM guidelines, indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 may be retained when construct reliability and validity remain acceptable and when theoretical considerations support their inclusion. Therefore, the item BL5 has been retained.

It was also noted that all the CR values were above 0.7; and the AVE values were above 0.50 (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). Hence, the convergent validity of the model was established. To cross-check the multicollinearity issues, the outer model VIFs were considered at the measurement model stage. It was found that the model is free from multicollinearity issues, as all VIF values were below the threshold limit of 3.3 (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Further, the discriminant validity was assessed using three approaches: Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT ratio, and cross-loadings (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr. et al., 2014). This discriminant validity analysis helped to ensure that all the variables used in the model were distinct from each other, and that it was meaningful to keep all the variables separately in the model. Otherwise, it is not contextually relevant to keep similar variables in the same model. The Fornell-Larcker criterion values (Table 3) showed that all

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Source: Primary data analysis in SmartPLS.

	AC	BL	EC	IBB	PC	PPC	RC	SC	TC
AC	0.904								
BL	0.704	0.714							
EC	0.816	0.636	0.911						
IBB	0.668	0.616	0.687	0.735					
PC	0.774	0.637	0.788	0.676	0.897				
PPC	0.807	0.662	0.856	0.685	0.847	0.902			
RC	0.804	0.712	0.835	0.687	0.815	0.618	0.901		
SC	0.760	0.693	0.821	0.664	0.811	0.627	0.790	0.910	
TC	0.799	0.710	0.816	0.683	0.818	0.616	0.850	0.777	0.889

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Table 4. Discriminant validity test using HTMT criterion

Source: Primary data analysis in SmartPLS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Access Convenience	–								
2. Brand Love	0.888								
3. Evaluation Convenience	0.813	0.714							
4. Impulsive Buying Behavior	0.558	0.600	0.874						
5. Possession Convenience	0.873	0.743	0.886	0.861					
6. Post-possession Convenience	0.609	0.562	0.758	0.877	0.658				
7. Relationship Convenience	0.504	0.303	0.335	0.878	0.522	0.222			
8. Search Convenience	0.849	0.877	0.314	0.847	0.512	0.225	0.883		
9. Transaction Convenience	0.810	0.548	0.225	0.883	0.638	0.330	0.369	0.880	–

Note: HTMT < 0.90.

the square roots of AVE values were above the inter-construct correlation values. Additionally, the cross-loadings were less than the acceptable limit of 0.7. The results obtained for HTMT ratios confirmed that all values were below the threshold of 0.90 (Table 4) (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). Therefore, the discriminant validity of the present measurement model was verified and established.

Following the measurement model analysis, the next phase of analysis was the structural model and path analysis. The bootstrapping method was adopted to derive the accurate model validity estimates and perform hypothesis testing. As part of path analysis, the estimates such as regression coefficients or beta coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and the explained variance (R-square values) were derived.

Source: Primary data analysis.

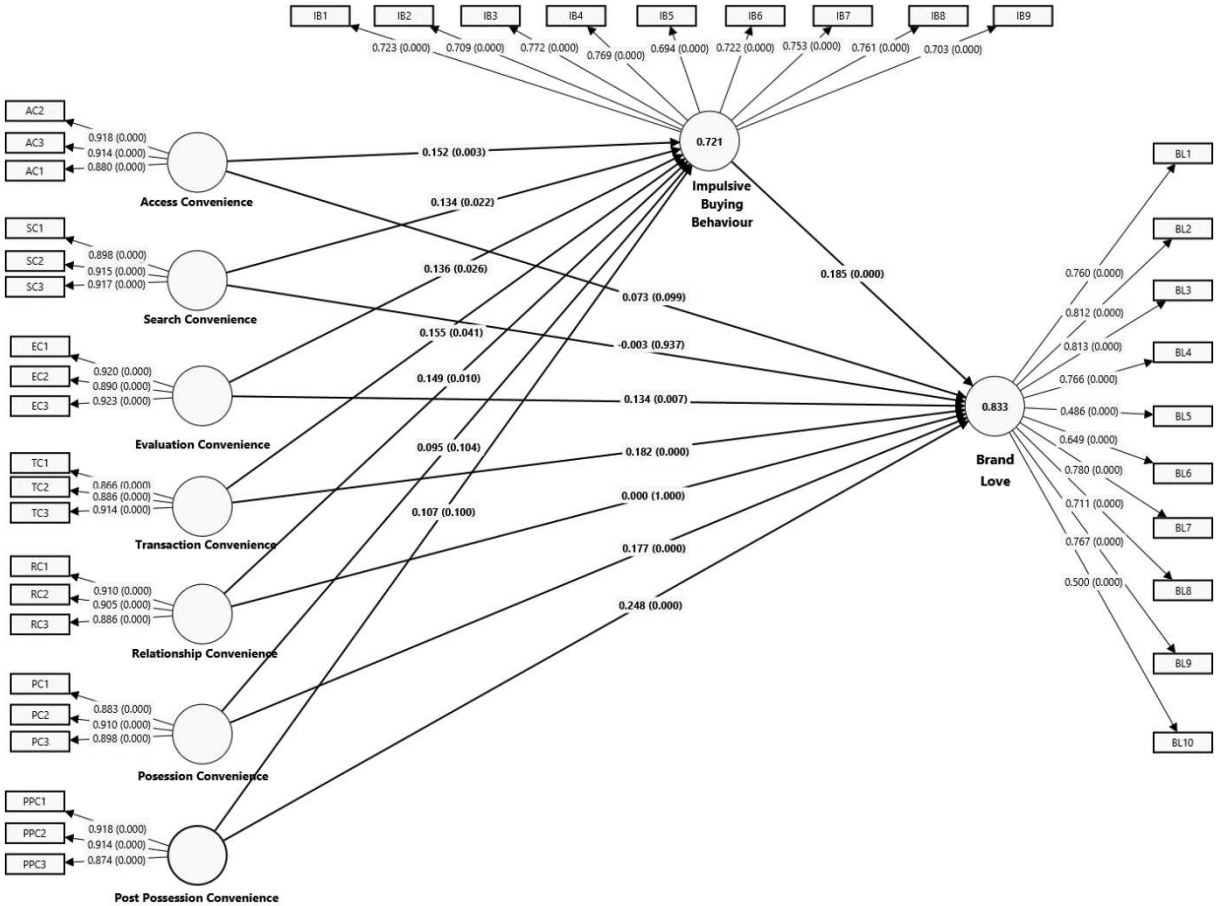

Figure 2. Structural model results

First, the hypothesis testing was conducted utilizing path coefficients and p-values. The study proposed eight direct hypotheses and seven mediation hypotheses. The analysis revealed that five direct hypotheses were accepted: *H3*, *H4*, *H6*, *H7*, and *H8*. Three direct hypotheses, *H1*, *H2*, and *H5*, were rejected. *H1-H7* examined the direct influence of dimensions of OC on BL, and *H8* assessed the direct influence of IBB on BL. In addition to the direct hypotheses, we had also seven mediation hypotheses, which proposed the mediating role of IBB on the relationship between each of the dimensions of OC and BL. The results showed that five mediation hypotheses were accepted (*H9*, *H10*, *H11*, *H12*, *H13*) and two were rejected (*H14*, *H15*). A comprehensive summary of hypotheses testing results is presented in Figure 2 and Table 5. Following the hypotheses testing, we proceeded to verify the explained variance or R^2. The R^2 can be classified into three levels namely, significant, moderate, and weak. When the value is less than 0.02, it is weak. If R^2 value is less than 0.13, it is considered moderate, while above 0.26 is deemed significant. The analysis results of the present model yielded R^2 value of 0.721 for IBB and 0.833 for BL. This denotes that about 72.10 per cent variance in IBB is explained by the seven dimensions of OC (AC, SC, EC, TC, RC, PC, and PPC). Besides, all these seven dimensions of OC together with IBB make a combined explained variance of 83.3 percent of BL. Both R^2 values are above 0.26. Therefore, it can be inferred that these values are 'significant' and a substantial amount of variance in endogenous variables is explained by exogenous variables. Although the model explained a substantial proportion of variance in Impulsive Buying Behavior (R^2 = 0.721) and Brand Love (R^2 = 0.833), the predictor constructs represent theoretically distinct dimensions of online convenience, and the low VIF values (< 3.3) suggest that the high explanatory power is not attributable to problematic multicollinearity or excessive construct overlap.

Next, the F_2 values were screened to examine the 'effect size'. This metric determines how much impact will be created on the R_2 value of an endogenous construct if a specific predictor variable is removed (Hair et al., 2013). The F_2 value related to IBB revealed that AC has the highest effect size of 5.7%, which is a 'strong' level. This indicates that the removal of AC can lead to the highest impact on the IBB. Similarly, for BL, the highest effect size is with PPC (6.3%). This 'strong' effect size implies that the removal of PPC can lead to the highest impact on BL. In the next stage, the predictive relevance of the model was checked with the help of Q_2 value, which was derived through blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2017). This value denotes the predictive power of the model concerning its endogenous constructs. The value of the Q_2 should be greater than zero to establish the predictive relevance of the model. The results revealed that the

Table 5. Hypotheses testing results

Source: Primary data analysis in SmartPLS.

Hypotheses	Association	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision	Q^2 predict	R^2
H1	AC→BL	0.073	1.652	0.099	Rejected		
H2	SC→BL	-0.003	0.079	0.937	Rejected		
H3	EC→BL	0.134	2.680	0.007	Accepted		
H4	TC→BL	0.182	3.999	<0.001	Accepted		
H5	RC→BL	0.000	0.000	1.000	Rejected		
H6	PC→BL	0.177	4.115	<0.001	Accepted		
H7	PPC→BL	0.248	5.479	<0.001	Accepted		
H8	IBB→BL	0.185	5.212	<0.001	Accepted	IBB = 0.706 BL = 0.814	BB = 0.721 BL= 0.833
Mediation analysis							
H9	AC→IBB→BL	0.028	2.585	0.010	Full mediation		
H10	SC→IBB→BL	0.025	2.128	0.033	Full mediation		
H11	EC→IBB→BL	0.025	2.034	0.042	Partial mediation		
H12	TC→IBB→BL	0.029	1.945	0.052	Partial mediation		
H13	RC→IBB→BL	0.027	2.136	0.033	Full mediation		
H14	PC→IBB→BL	0.018	1.494	0.135	No mediation		
H15	PPC→IBB→BL	0.020	1.506	0.132	No mediation		

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present model has Q_2 of 0.706 for IBB and 0.814 for BL. Therefore, the predictive relevance of the model was also supported.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the influence of seven dimensions of OC, namely, AC, SC, EC, TC, RC, PC, and PPC, on BL. The IBB was conceptualized as a mediating variable, and its intervening effect in the relationship between each dimension of OC and BL was also investigated. Based on SEM analysis results, the hypotheses were tested, and the model relevance was validated. The hypothesis testing results were interesting and are explained below in detail.

The first hypothesis (*H1*) tested the influence of access convenience on BL (AC→BL), and the results were intriguing ($\beta = 0.073$, $p > 0.05$). Contrary to our hypothesis, this result indicates that AC is not a significant predictor of BL, nor is it positively related to BL. This is quite surprising, and it diverges from the work of Loureiro et al. (2017), who asserted that convenience in accessing a product or service positively contributes to BL creation. However, the rejection of *H1* in our study suggests the presence of potential mediating variables in the relationship between AC and BL. As we have examined IBB as a mediator, the corresponding findings are discussed in the subsequent section addressing mediation hypotheses.

The second hypothesis (*H2*) examined the influence of search convenience on BL (SC→ BL). The results were interesting ($\beta = -0.003$, $p > 0.05$). This path coefficient was statistically insignificant, therefore, *H2* was rejected. This finding is contrary to the study of Nilowardono (2022), who reported that web-search related convenience experienced by customers during online purchasing positively contributes to long-term brand association and repurchase intention. Similar to *H1*, the relationship between SC and BL also implies the presence of some potential mediators that can explain this linkage more adequately. In the mediation analysis section, the role of IBB as a mediator is explained in detail.

The third hypothesis (*H3*) investigated the influence of EC on the BL (EC→BL) creation. The results revealed statistically significant path coefficients ($\beta = 0.134$, $p < 0.05$); hence, *H3* was accepted. This finding indicated that the convenience apparel customers experience during online purchase enhances customers' ability to evaluate the quality of the products and make informed decisions. Specifically, this is achieved through comprehensive product specifications, detailed texts and graphics, and information that facilitates product differentiation. This evaluative clarity, in turn, can lead to BL creation. This result aligns with the finding of Unal and Aydın (2013).

The fourth hypothesis (*H4*) tested the influence of TC on BL (TC→BL). Based on the results ($\beta = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$), *H4* was accepted, which is in line with Anggara et al. (2023). Therefore, it is evident that when apparel companies ensure TC for online customers, through flexible payment methods, easy completion of transaction and reduced transaction time, they cultivate better customer-brand relationship. Ultimately, a strong BL is created in the long run.

The fifth hypothesis (*H5*), which assessed the influence of RC on BL (RC→BL), yielded surprising results. *H5* was rejected due to statistically insignificant results ($\beta = 0.000$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that RC is not a direct predictor of BL. Although a direct influence is logically plausible, the statistical evidence suggests the presence of an intervening variable in the relationship between RC and BL. This *H5* rejection contradicts the findings of studies like Mustafa et al. (2022).

The hypotheses *H6* (PC→BL), *H7* (PPC→BL), and *H8* (IBB→BL) were accepted based on statistically significant path values. PC ($\beta = 0.177$), PPC ($\beta = 0.248$), and IBB ($\beta = 0.185$) demonstrated that these three variables have a direct and positive influence on the creation of BL.

The acceptance of *H6* and *H7* aligns with the studies of Ahmad and Mohsin Butt (2012) and Ismail (2022).

Following the examination of direct hypotheses, the mediating hypotheses testing was conducted with IBB as the mediator and all seven dimensions of OC as independent variables. BL was the dependent variable. The results for *H9* (AC→IBB→BL), *H10* (SC→IBB→BL), and *H13* (RC→IBB→BL) demonstrated statistically significant full mediation

effects and were therefore accepted. The specific indirect effect of IBB on the relationship between AC and BL was 0.028 with $p < 0.05$. The result for the specific indirect effect of IBB on the relationship between SC and BL was 0.025 ($p < 0.05$), and in the case of RC→IBB→BL, the indirect effect was 0.027 with $p < 0.05$. In essence, AC, SC, RC influence the BL creation only through IBB. That is, when customers experience ease in accessing product information, efficiency in navigating and searching websites, and a favorable relational experience with the brand during online purchasing, their impulsive buying tendencies are activated. BL then builds up gradually.

The evaluation of *H11* (EC→IBB→BL) and *H12* (TC→IBB→BL) indicated partial mediation relations in both instances. Specifically, the indirect effect for *H11* was 0.025, and for *H12* was 0.029, with p-values below 0.05. These results demonstrate that the direct relationships of EC and TC with BL remain statistically significant even in the presence of IBB. In other words, the EC and TC relate to BL directly and through the IBB channel. This means that EC and TC can stimulate the sudden purchasing temptations of customers, thereby driving IBB and subsequently BL. At the same time, these independent variables, EC and TC, also show a direct impact on BL creation. Consequently, these variables are contextually relevant for marketers. These findings align with the research of Liapati et al. (2016).

Finally, the testing of *H14* (PC→IBB→BL) and *H15* (PPC→IBB→BL) revealed no mediation role for IBB in the relationship between PC, PPC, and BL. As all the indirect effect values were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the PC and PPC are not positive predictors of IBB. Instead, they are directly linked to the BL creation. This finding contradicts the earlier studies of Sarkar (2014) and Tifferet and Herstein (2012).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study is to analyze the influence of OC on BL among apparel customers, with IBB acting as a mediator. The data analysis results and the findings of this study revealed that AC, SC and RC are not strong enough to create BL among the online customers; however, they can stimulate IBB, which eventually fosters BL. In contrast, EC and TC exhibited a strong positive association with IBB and BL. This demonstrated that the ease in product evaluation and transaction process can lead to BL without the mediation support of IBB. Concurrently, EC and TC have a positive partial mediation effect on IBB. PC and PPC did not have a positive association with IBB, but they were strongly connected with BL. From the results obtained, it is concluded that IBB did not have a mediating impact between PC and BL, or between PPC and BL. These findings explain the strong impact created by prompt and timely delivery of products as well as the effect of simple return and exchange policies on customer perception of the brand.

The novelty of this research lies in three primary contributions. First, it bridges a notable empirical gap by validating the direct link between OC and BL, a relationship largely overlooked in existing scholarship. Second, it identifies IBB as a pivotal mediating mechanism, revealing how different convenience dimensions follow unique psychological pathways to transform digital interactions into emotional bonds. Finally, the study extends the S-O-R paradigm by operationalizing OC as a multidimensional digital stimulus and BL as an enduring affective response. In doing so, it creates a theoretical bridge between service convenience and brand relationship literature, specifically within the evolving digital consumer landscape. Reflecting on the broader implications, this study provides commendable contributions to the SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) by offering remarkable strategies on enhancing OC, BL and IBB among the online customers. Practically, marketers should adopt a differentiated strategy for OC dimensions based on their distinct pathways to BL. AC, SC, and RC do not directly generate BL but trigger IBB, which subsequently fosters emotional attachment. Therefore, investments in website navigation and personalized engagement should be justified by their potential to induce impulsivity. EC and TC operate through dual pathways. They directly build BL and also contribute indirectly via impulsivity. This necessitates rich product information and frictionless payment systems. PC and PPC exert strong direct

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effects on BL independent of impulsivity, making timely delivery and hassle-free returns non-negotiable priorities. Resource allocation must reflect these differential mechanisms to maximize both short-term conversions and long-term BL. While this study offers significant insights and contributions, it is subject to limitations. This study is cross-sectional and aggregates across generational respondents. Future research should examine how OC perceptions and BL formation differ between Gen Z and Millennials. Additionally, rapid technological evolution may induce "technophobia", which cross-sectional data cannot capture. Longitudinal studies are needed to track shifting OC perceptions over time. Finally, this study focuses on IBB's positive mediating role. Future research should investigate its negative consequences such as post-purchase regret, financial strain, and brand avoidance. This will provide a balanced perspective on impulsivity's impact on long-term brand equity and consumer well-being.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Data curation: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Ali Saleh Alshebami, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Formal analysis: Reshmi V. Suresh, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Investigation: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Methodology: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Ali Saleh Alshebami, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Project administration: Ali Saleh Alshebami, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Resources: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih.
Software: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Ali Saleh Alshebami, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Supervision: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh, Ali Saleh Alshebami, Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Mahmaod Alrawad.
Validation: Ali Saleh Alshebami.
Visualization: Reshmi V. Suresh.
Writing – original draft: Chandni M. C., Reshmi V. Suresh.
Writing – review & editing: Ali Saleh Alshebami.

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APPENDIX A

Online convenience – 7 dimensions (Lina et al., 2022)	
Access Convenience	
AC1	Could shop anytime I wanted from Nike
AC2	Could order products from Nike wherever I am
AC3	The Nike website is always accessible
Search Convenience	
SC1	It was easy to navigate the website of Nike
SC2	The website provided useful information
SC3	It was easy to get the information I needed to make my purchase decision
Evaluation Convenience	
EC1	Nike website provides detailed product specifications
EC2	Nike uses both text and graphics in the product information
EC3	Nike website provide sufficient information to identify different products
Transaction Convenience	
TC1	Nike provide flexible payment methods
TC2	My purchase was completed easily
TC3	It did not take a long time to complete the purchase process
Relationship Convenience	
RC1	Nike gave me personalized attention
RC2	Nike website had a message area for customer questions and comments
RC3	I received a personal "thank you" note via email or other media after placing an order in Nike
Possession Convenience	
PC1	I got exactly what I wanted
PC2	My order was delivered in a timely fashion
PC3	Received all items I ordered from Nike
Post-possession Convenience	
PPC1	It was easy to take care of returns and exchanges with the Nike
PPC2	Nike takes care of product exchanges and returns promptly
PPC3	Nike quickly resolves any after-purchase problems I experience
Impulsive Buying Behavior (Rook & Fisher, 1995)	
IB1	I often buy things spontaneously
IB2	"Just do it" describes the way I buy things
IB3	I often buy things without thinking
IB4	"I see it, I buy it" describes my shopping behavior
IB5	"Buy now, think about it later" describes my shopping behavior
IB6	Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the-moment
IB7	I buy things according to how I feel at the moment
IB8	I carefully plan most of my purchases
IB9	Sometimes I am a bit reckless about what I buy
Brand Love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	
BL1	Nike is a wonderful brand
BL2	Nike brand makes me feel good
BL3	Nike brand is totally awesome
BL4	I have neutral feelings about Nike brand (–)
BL5	Nike brand makes me very happy
BL6	I love Nike brand!
BL7	I have no particular feelings about Nike brand (–)
BL8	Nike brand is a pure delight
BL9	I am passionate about Nike brand
BL10	I'm very attached to Nike brand

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