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**EMOTIONAL BRAND ATTACHMENT AND BRAND LOYALTY: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES FROM SRI LANKAN SMART PHONE INDUSTRY**

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**ABSTRACT**

With the advancement of information communication technology, mobile phone has become an essential part of human life. Rapid advancement of technology backed by innovations has driven mobile phone industry to a new era where consumers seek for much sophistication in products. Smart Phones are mobile phones which are equipped with advanced technology which comprises of functions such as media players, digital cameras and Global Positioning System (GPS). With the sophistication and functions offered by smart phones the demand in the market has been increased. Sri Lanka, as a developing country, has a remarkable track record in mobile phone industry. Number of mobile subscriptions in Sri Lanka is more than 20 million which exceeds the population of country and the mobile penetration is higher than the level of regional and world averages. Many smart phone brands are available in Sri Lankan market including world famous brands such as Samsung, Apple, Nokia and Sony. Further it is evident that young consumers are emotionally bonded with some preferred brands. Moreover they prefer to stay loyal to a one brand and would like to purchase new versions of the same product. Hence, the aim of this study was to identify the role of emotional brand attachment in building customer loyalty with reference to Sri Lankan smart phone market. Pleasure, Arousal and Dominance of the brand were concerned to measure emotional brand attachment. The study was descriptive in nature and the unit of analysis was individual smart phone users in Sri Lanka. Convenience sampling technique was employed to obtain data from 250 young smart phone users. The reliability of measurement scales were tested using Cronbach’s alpha. Factor analysis was performed and convergent, discriminant validities were established. Structural Equation Modelling was used for data analysis. Findings of the study depicted that pleasure, dominance and arousal have a significant impact on brand loyalty. Findings of this study can be used in crafting effective branding and promotional strategies by brand managers. Since Sri Lanka is in the growth stage of the smart phone market, insights of this study can be effectively used to enhance the emotional attachment of young consumers toward smart phone brands and thereby increase brand loyalty.

**Keywords:** Brand Loyalty, Emotional Attachment, Smart Phone