STUDENTS ON THE JOB MARKET

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Dissertation Title:
Disentangling the Differential Effects of Various Brand Relationships on Customer Brand Loyalty and the Role of Institutional and Country-Level Differences

Abstract:
Customer brand loyalty is one of the most important concepts to consumer researchers and marketing practitioners. A considerable amount of research over the last 20 years documents that different types of consumer-brand relationships, such as those characterized by attachment, identification, brand love, self-brand connection and trust, are positive predictors of customer brand loyalty. However, there is little consensus on what types of brand relationships are superior predictors of loyalty and under what conditions each type performs relatively better. To advance understanding of how well different types of brand relationships drive customer brand loyalty and to help companies improve the effectiveness of their relationship-building investments, we conduct a meta-analysis of the link between three categories of consumer-brand relationships and customer brand loyalty. The analysis of 304 elasticities from 143 studies reported in 127 publications over 21 years (n = 179,395 across 35 countries) reveals that the aggregate brand relationship elasticity is .404. More importantly, our results demonstrate under what conditions various types of brand relationships increase loyalty. For example, while elasticities are generally highest for affect-based brand relationships and when customer brand loyalty is operationalized in attitudinal (vs. behavioral), absolute (vs. relative) or retrospective (vs. prospective) terms, identity-based brand relationship elasticities are higher for estimates using behavioral loyalty, retrospective loyalty or non-student consumers, and trust-based brand relationship elasticities are higher among American consumers. We also link individual brand relationship elasticities with a wide array of country-level and institutional factors, adopting an explanatory perspective on why certain consumer-brand relationships drive loyalty best in some country and institutional contexts but not others. Drawing on these findings, we advance implications for managers and scholars and provide avenues for future research.