

Experience as a moderator of involvement and satisfaction on brand loyalty in a business-to-business setting 02-314R

Rebekah Bennett^{a,*}, Charmine E.J. Härtel^{b,1}, Janet R. McColl-Kennedy^{a,2}

^aUQ Business School, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland 4072, Australia

^bCentre for Business Research, Deakin University, Malvern, Victoria 3144, Australia

Received 28 November 2003; received in revised form 18 May 2004; accepted 26 August 2004

Available online 10 November 2004

Abstract

This paper examines the relative influence of two key antecedents of brand loyalty—satisfaction and involvement and the moderating role of experience, using a sample of business buyers. The central argument of this paper is that the strength of the effect of these variables on attitudinal brand loyalty will vary with the level of customer experience with purchasing the service. Building on previous research which examined low-risk, customer product settings [Kim, J., Lim, J.S., & Bhargava, M. (1998). The role of affect in attitude formation: A classical conditioning approach. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 26 (2): pp. 143–152; Shiv, B., & Fedorikhin, A. (1999). Heart and mind in conflict: The interplay of affect and cognition in consumer decision-making. *Journal of Consumer Research* 26: 278], this study shows that for a high-risk setting, involvement with the service category will be more dominant in its influence on brand loyalty than satisfaction with the preferred brand. Furthermore, it was found that experience moderated the influence of involvement and satisfaction on attitudinal brand loyalty for a high-risk business-to-business service. This study provides new insights into the theory and practice of buyer behavior and business-to-business brands.

Crown Copyright © 2004 Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Brand loyalty; Attitudinal brand loyalty; Involvement; Satisfaction; Experience

1. Introduction

Most business research is primarily in the goods arena particularly manufactured goods, with little focus on services (Dawes, Dowling, & Patterson, 1993; Patterson, Johnson, & Spreng, 1997). Consequently, much of the research to date has a manufacturing basis resulting in business-to-business services being poorly defined and under researched (Javalgi & Moberg, 1997; Johnston & Lewin, 1997; Patterson et al., 1997). There is also a dearth of research into business brands even though

organizations such as Accenture, Yellow Pages, IBM, and Hewlett Packard generate billions of dollars from their business-to-business brands (Lyons, 1998). Given that the activity on branding in the business-to-business sector and services in general is increasing (Rosenbroijer, 2001), it is timely to investigate customer responses to business brands.

Given the lack of empirical studies in business services loyalty (Patterson et al., 1997; Quelch & Ash, 1981), this research follows the guidelines offered by industrial marketing researchers, Wind and Webster (1972) who suggest modifying generalized models of consumer research for the business-to-business sector. There is evidence that brand equity—a consumer branding concept—is applicable to the business sector (Bendixen, Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004; Gordon, Calantone, & di Benedetto, 1993; Hutton, 1997) and brand awareness preference in business markets (Yoon & Kijewski, 1995). Thus, it is likely that the brand loyalty

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +617 3365 8283; fax: +617 3365 6788.

E-mail addresses: r.bennett@business.uq.edu.au (R. Bennett), hartel@deakin.edu.au (C.E.J. Härtel), j.mccoll-kennedy@business.uq.edu.au (J.R. McColl-Kennedy).

¹ Tel.: +61 3 9244 5537; fax: +61 3 9244 5544.

² Tel.: +61 7 3365 6673; fax: +61 7 3365 6788.

concept is also relevant to the business sector. This research is one of the first to examine brand loyalty concept in the business sector.

Considerable attention has been given to brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty in particular (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and increasingly the interplay of affect and cognition in attitudinal brand loyalty is being investigated (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999; Härtel, McColl-Kennedy, & McDonald, 1998; Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999). Despite the recognition that there is a need to build brands in a business-to-business context (Bendixon et al., 2004; Gordon et al., 1993; Hutton, 1997), no study has investigated the antecedents of attitudinal brand loyalty in a business services setting.

It is posited that satisfaction with the preferred brand (Giese & Cote, 2000) and involvement with the service category are important determinants of attitudinal brand loyalty. This paper addresses an important gap in the business literature by examining the relative influence of these two antecedents of brand loyalty. The central argument of this paper is that the strength of the effect of these variables on attitudinal brand loyalty will vary according to the level of customer experience with purchasing the service. Building on previous research which examined low-risk, customer product settings (Kim, Lim, & Bhargava, 1998; Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999), this study shows that for high-risk settings, such as is generally the case for business services, involvement with the service category will be more dominant in its influence on brand loyalty than satisfaction with the preferred brand.

This paper commences with a discussion of the conceptual framework including literature on brand loyalty, satisfaction, involvement, and the role of previous experience leading to hypotheses development. The results of the study of 267 businesses are presented. This paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and their managerial implications as well as limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Conceptual framework

A key perspective in this research is that business-to-business and consumer markets are not entirely separate. They share some characteristics. This supports Fern and Brown's (1984) claim that the differences between the consumer and business sectors may not be as distinct as to warrant completely separate research. Hunt's (1991) criteria for classification also support this view. Indeed, Sheth (1978) views the two sectors as the end points on a continuum, rather than mutually exclusive categories. This perspective encourages consumer constructs to be tested in business-to-business settings. Thus, given the practical evidence of the success of brand-building efforts in the business sector, an investigation of brand loyalty is appropriate.

2.1. Attitudinal brand loyalty

It is generally accepted that brand loyalty is a two-dimensional construct (Day, 1969), comprising attitudinal brand loyalty and behavioral brand loyalty (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). Attitudinal brand loyalty consists of brand attitudes, attitudes toward intention to repurchase and brand commitment (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002; Mellens, Dekimpe, & Steenkamp, 1996). In contrast, behavioral brand loyalty is defined as the customer's tendency to repurchase a brand revealed through behavior which can be measured and which impacts directly on brand sales (Hammond, East, & Ehrneberg, 1996).

The debate regarding the definition of brand loyalty and its subsequent measurement has occupied academic thought for over 30 years (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1997; Ehrenberg, 1997; Jacoby, 1975; Tarpey, 1974). However, it is becoming apparent that the definitions of brand loyalty and related customer behavior varies across market and product types (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). Although some business-to-business goods and services are inexpensive and relatively low risk such as purchasing minor stationery items including pens, pencils, staples, paper (goods) and copier repair; delivery of office supplies and outsourcing custodial, security or cafeteria services (services), many business-to-business goods and services are high transaction value and driven by an accountable purchasing process. In these instances, it is likely that careful consideration is given to the selection of a brand and it is unlikely to be an impulse purchase with little or no decision-making. In addition, services are generally viewed to be higher risk than goods due to the lack of pre-purchase information available. This is particularly so with professional services such as engineering, accounting, executive recruiting, and advertising. Brand loyalty for these business-services is likely to include attitudinal loyalty and, if a business customer believes the brand to be appropriate and is committed to purchase (attitudinal loyalty), it is expected that they are more likely to repurchase (behavioral loyalty).

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) defined attitudes as evaluative judgments based on socially constructed beliefs. Researchers have since moved away from viewing attitudes solely as the result of cognitive processes toward a view that attitudes are comprised of both affective and cognitive components (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Dube, Cervellon, & Jingyuan, 2003; Kim et al., 1998; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Indeed, the current two-dimensional view of attitudes is a progression from the traditional tri-partite view of attitudes; that being cognitive, affective, and conative.

Only in the last few years have the separate contributions of affect and cognition been considered in the area of brand loyalty (Caldow, 1998; Dick & Basu, 1994; Gremler & Brown, 1998; Kim et al., 1998). The study reported here develops this area by examining the interrelationships between satisfaction (affective variable) and involvement (cognitive) as key antecedents of attitudinal brand loyalty.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات