

SUMMARY INFORMATION OF DISSERTATION

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Title of Dissertation:	The relationship between customers and brands: A study in community services network.
Major:	Business Administration
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Abstract:

Brand Customer relationships not only provide enormous potential economic benefits for enterprises, but also have great significance for customers, and stakeholders creating them. So the question for researchers as well as marketers is: What are brand relationships?, Are they similar to interpersonal relationships?, why they form?, how they evolve and what affect they have on customers and the markets?, and when and why they cease to exist?.

The objective of this research is to find out factors nurture relationships between customers and brands, factors represent quality or strength of the relationships, ability to forecast unique relationship results and distinction between commitment and consumption habits. On basis of theories in the field of brand relationships and finding of previous relevant studies, a theoretical model and hypotheses about relations among factors in the model were built.

Research was conducted through a two-step procedure, preliminary research and formal research. Preliminary qualitative research was conducted using in-depth interview technique for seven brand communities such as: facebook, Google+, twitter, ZingMe, YouTube, tinhte.vn, BlackBerry, a starting scale was built and then modified to obtain an appropriate scale for consumers in Vietnam. Preliminary quantitative research was conducted through questionnaires delivered directly to a sample with sample size $n = 145$ to assess preliminary scale using EFA and reliability analysis of

Cronbach's alpha using SPSS software. Formal quantitative research methods conducted with a sample of 696 social network users through structured questionnaires in order to confirm the reliability and validity of the scale, and test the theoretical model along with hypotheses, by method of SEM analysis using AMOS software.

Testing results show that the scale of concepts being studied after adjustments are satisfactory about reliability and validity, research model was supported by survey data, and hypotheses about relations between Personal Meaning, Cultural Meaning, Brand Attachment and Brand Value (H_1 , H_2 , H_3 and H_4) were accepted. Hypotheses about relations between Brand Attachment, Brand Value and Brand Consumer Behaviors, Brand Bias Behaviors and Brand Commitment Behaviors (H_{5a} , H_{5b} and H_{5c} , and H_{6a} , H_{6b} , H_{6c}) were also accepted.

Testing results of theoretical model show that Personal Meaning had positive stronger effect on Brand Value ($\gamma = .658$) than effect on Brand Attachment ($\gamma = .479$). Cultural Meaning also had positive stronger effect on Brand Attachment ($\gamma = .858$) than effect on Brand Value ($\gamma = .281$). Next, Brand Attachment has increasing positive impact on Brand Behaviors, Brand Bias Behaviors and Brand Commitment Behaviors ($\gamma_1 = .489$; $\gamma_2 = .648$; and $\gamma_3 = .682$, respectively). Brand Value had also decreasing positive impact on Brand Consumer Behaviors, Brand Bias Behaviors and Brand Commitment Behaviors ($\gamma_1 = .208$; $\gamma_2 = .207$ and $\gamma_3 = .135$, respectively). Thus hypothesis H_7 was accepted. Customers who have had a long-term relationship with a brand shall likely be committed to higher loyalty - Hypothesis H_8 was accepted.

The contribution of this research is to develop and propose the two concepts: Personal Meaning and Cultural Meaning of the brand. Those are the two new antecedents complemented to the theoretical models of the previous researchs. In particular, relations of Personal Meaning and Cultural Meaning with Relationship Quality (Brand Attachment and Brand Value) fully reflect the nature of the relationships as Para-Relationships and Trully Relationships in a theoretical model. The concepts along with scales being tested in this research contribute to theory system modification as well as provide a valuable reference for subsequent empirical researches, especially expand this theoretical model the research in the field of multi-industry brands. Findings of theoretical model testing using market data also support hypotheses that Personal Meaning and Cultural Meaning factors of the brand should be considered as a source nurturing and enhancing customer engagement with the brand. Brand Attachment is a

good indicator of Brand Commitment Behaviors while Brand Value have only the ability to explain Brand Consumer Behaviors.

In management area, this research helps marketers and managers having a comprehensive view of their role to create and maintain cultural meaning of brand in the consumer community. Building a community is not a simple work, but when a brand community start shaping and growing, those will attract more and more customers to participating in brand experience and engagement with the community.

Signature

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