

THE ROLE OF SELF-CONCEPT BRAND IMAGE CONGRUITY IN CONSUMERS' ATTITUDINAL FORMATION AND ATTITUDINAL BRAND LOYALTY: A VIEW FROM UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC PRODUCT BRANDS

Joseph F. Rocereto, Monmouth University, United States
Hyokjin Kwak, Drexel University, United States
Marina Puzakova, Drexel University, United States

ABSTRACT

There has been great interest in the marketing literature regarding the effects of consumer self-concept brand image congruity. While previous studies have investigated various marketing-related consequences of this construct, few studies have investigated its impacts on the traditional tri-component attitude model that has been identified by researchers as a necessary component of attitudinal brand loyalty. The current study addresses this gap in the literature by examining the effects of consumer self-concept brand image congruity on consumer attitude and attitudinal brand loyalty. Furthermore, while differences between hedonic and utilitarian products have been long investigated, the marketing literature is lacking in providing empirical evidence regarding the manner in which the effects of self-concept congruity constructs may differ between the two product types. In this study, it is theorized that the attitudinal components will serve differing roles in the creation of brand loyalty between hedonic and utilitarian products.

Two studies were used to assess the differential role of one's attitude on the creation of brand loyalty within the settings of two different product types. Study 1 asked respondents to consider their preferred brand of wallets (i.e., utilitarian product), and Study 2 asked respondents to consider their preferred brand of jeans (i.e., hedonic product). One's level of self-concept brand image congruity was modeled as the primary exogenous construct for each study, the three attitude components (i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative) were modeled as potential endogenous mediators, while brand loyalty was hypothesized to be the primary consequence for each study. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze our hypotheses.

Results of the two studies reveal that, while consumer self-concept brand image congruity plays a significant role in consumer attitude formation and attitudinal brand loyalty for each product type, the attitude components serve differing roles in the creation of brand loyalty between product types. Specifically, consumer self-concept brand image congruity positively influences the cognitive and affective states of consumer attitude in regards to the utilitarian product. Further, it was found that one's affective component positively influenced purchase intentions, which then positively influenced brand loyalty in the case of the utilitarian product. However, in the case of the hedonic product, both the cognitive and affective components of one's attitude were insignificant in the creation of brand loyalty. Rather, for the hedonic product, self-concept brand image congruity directly influenced purchasing intentions, which then positively influenced brand loyalty. The interpretation of these results provide evidence that, in the case of a hedonic product, the strong level of affect which is created by the self-concept congruity construct towards such a product increases the strength of the relationship between the congruity construct and purchase intentions, leaving the other attitude components as insignificant in the creation of brand loyalty.

References Available on Request