Editorial

Consumer brand relationships

Welcome to Vol 25, Issue 6 of the *Journal of Product and Brand Management*. This issue has in total eight contributions. Continuing the 25th year celebration of the journal, this issue starts with a contribution from Don Schultz, member of the journal's Senior Advisory Board, and the rest of the papers stem from the call for papers for the special issue on consumer brand relationships. The 19 authors who have authored the papers in this issue are based in universities from eight different countries.

Don Schultz reviews, updates and suggests new approaches to estimating/determining market brand equity (MBE) impact based on additional brand investments in existing brands. The paper focuses on the brand owner's values/returns rather than those of the customer/consumer, and it presents a novel forward-looking approach that can be used by senior managers to estimate the value that might be created in the future, replacing traditional, outdated and irrelevant return-on-investment (ROI) historical approaches.

Consumers form relationships with brands from a very young age (Rodhain and Aurier, 2016). Since the concept was introduced as an important aspect for investigation (Fournier, 1998), considerable research has been conducted about consumers' relationships with brands. The relationships that consumers form with brands have a balance and can be positive (brand love) or negative (brand hate). The *Journal of Product and Brand Management* (*JPBM*) is among the few journals which, from early on, has published articles related to this emerging and important topic (Esch *et al.*, 2006; Jevons *et al.*, 2005). The journal has published papers on specific areas related to consumers' positive brand relationships such as brand bonding (Mitchell and Orwig, 2002), brand romance (Agarwal, 2014; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011), brand evangelism (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013), brand communities (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013), brand authenticity (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014), brand tribalism (Taute and Sierra, 2014) and brand love (Fetscherin *et al.*, 2014; Huber *et al.*, 2015; Sarkar and Sreejesh, 2014; Vernuccio *et al.*, 2015). More recently, articles focusing on specific areas related to consumers' negative brand relationships such as brand avoidance (Strandvik *et al.*, 2013) and brand hate (Zarantonello *et al.*, 2016) have been published in the journal.

A central role and important vehicle for research collaborations, as well as dissemination of research in this field, is the International Consumer Brand Relationships (ICBR) conference. The fourth ICBR conference was held on May 21-23, 2015, at Porto Business School, Portugal. Over 60 experts from 20 different countries attended the conference which featured over 45 presentations. This issue combines some of the best papers presented at the conference as well as articles that have been submitted independently to the journal.

Kaufmann, Loueriero and Manarioti contribute to the understanding of the complex brand relationships consumers have by exploring the dynamics between brand love and co-creation. The authors argue that consumers experiencing brand love are more willing to engage in an active co-creating behavior, especially in the context of a brand community.

Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru test and extend Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) brand love model by examining the moderating effects of brand experience and price on the relationship between brand love and word of mouth (WOM), both online and offline. Based on an online survey, the authors confirm that self-expressiveness of the brand and trust are positively associated with brand love and that brand love relates to online and offline WOM effects.

Marticotte, Arcand and Baudry explore brand evangelism. Their paper examines how brand relationship variables regarding one brand (i.e. brand loyalty, brand community identification and self-brand connection) influence oppositional referrals to a rival brand (i.e. desire to harm and trash-talking). A survey of 59 online communities devoted to video games was conducted using a sample of 809 respondents, all owners of either a PlayStation or an Xbox. The authors find the desire to harm the rival brand is strongly and positively associated to participation in trash-talking. Brand loyalty is connected to both dimensions of oppositional brand referrals.

Jeon and Baeck investigate consumers' attitudinal and behavioral responses to brand crises and examine an empirical model to explain consumers' internal process in the context of negative information about a brand. They analyze the relationships between brand association types, brand-customer relationship strength and consumers' responses depending on the types of brand crises. They find that consumers' responses were less negative in a corporate ability (CA) crisis than in a corporate social responsibility (CSR) crisis. In addition, consumers with high brand-customer relationship strength and brand associations showed more favorable responses to a brand crisis related to CA than related to CSR.

Giovanis presents research on the formation process of consumer-brand relationships in the service industry. By considering a chain-of-effects model, he integrates two brand commitment paradigms perspectives with service evaluation theory, representing the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the relationship-building process. His findings indicate that brand loyalty is determined by relationship commitment, which, in turn, is influenced by the consumer-brand relationship components (trust, satisfaction, investment size and quality of alternatives) as well as by the service brand's perceived value. Finally, the relationship quality components of the brand mediate the relationships between service brand evaluation and brand commitment.

Trudeau and Shobieri explore and compare the roles of brands' experiential and transformational benefits in the formation of consumer-brand relationships. Focusing on the consumption of cosmetics, the study investigates how brand experience, self-esteem and self-expression impact the strength of the consumer's relationship with the brand. The authors conclude that brand experience and self-expression have significant positive impacts on consumer-brand relationships.

Le Roux, Thebault, Roy and Bobrie explore the concept of brand typicality and its impact on brand evaluation in the context of counterfeits and imitations. Their study shows that brand typicality, as well as brand name and product

appearance, impact brand evaluation. Under high typicality conditions, any variation in brand name and/or product appearance results in an unfavorable brand evaluation, whereas under low typicality conditions brand evaluation is only negatively impacted by brand name variations. This suggests that brands and product categories are not equally impacted by counterfeiting and imitation.

We hope that the set of articles presented in this issue provides another piece to the puzzle in better understanding consumers' relationship with brands. We would like to thank all the authors for their submissions and consideration of *JPBM* as a quality outlet for research related to brand relationships. We would also like to thank all the reviewers involved in the assessment of the papers in this issue for providing guidance to the authors on how to improve their submissions. The people who reviewed papers in this issue are based in universities from seven different countries and are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Syed Akhter, Marquette University, USA.
- Elfhterios Alamanos, Newcastle University Business School, UK.
- Ilaria Baghi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy.
- Enrique Becerra, Texas State University-San Marcos, USA.
- Laurence Dessart, KEDGE Business School, France.
- Bashar Gamoh, University of Toledo, USA.
- Apostolos Giovanis, Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece.
- Cid Gonçalves Filho, Universidade Fumec, Brazil.
- Maria Karampela, University of Strathclyde, UK.
- Constantinos Leonidou, University of Leeds, UK.
- Fuan Li, William Patterson University, USA.
- Paulo Prado, Federal University of Parana, Brazil.
- Femke Van Horen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

We hope that you find reading this issue intellectually stimulating and enjoyable.

Marc Fetscherin
Ricardo Roseira Cayolla
Francisco Guzmán
Cleopatra Veloutsou

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