The purpose of the current research is to begin to answer some of these questions. A convenience sample of service consumers were questioned across multiple industries using the Critical Incidence Technique (CIT; c.f. Flanagan 1954). Specifically, respondents were asked to identify both a favorable and unfavorable experience in the hotel and full service restaurant industries and to indicate their perception of the brand equity associated with the service provider's brand name. Perceived service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions were also measured using established scales. The intent is identify perceived differences in perceptions under favorable and unfavorable circumstances and for service providers with high and low brand equity. The results provide some interesting insight to these effects and lead to several strategic recommendations.

THE IMPACT OF SALESPERSON COGNITIVE ASSOCIATION STRENGTH AND FAVORABILITY ON PURCHASE AGENT LOYALTY BEHAVIORS

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This research is designed to explore outcomes of brand equity in terms of loyalty behaviors. Specifically, this research tests equity notions in a personal selling framework. Therefore, it is designed to both extend the domain of brand equity, as well as to consider differential consequences of brand equity depending on the bases of equity (strength of the association versus favorability).

In particular, we focus on different types of brand loyalty behaviors, such as regular repeat purchase, providing referrals and resistance to competitive sales presentations. We theorize that these loyalty behaviors may occur as a result of different cognitive processes and thus may draw differently upon brand (salesperson) association strength and favorability. We contend that repeat purchase of industrial products may often rely heavily on recognition-based retrieval of associations, whereas resistance to competitive sales presentations or providing referrals may depend more on recall of associations.

If recall of associations is important to these behaviors, then both strength and favorability of associations should influence the likelihood of the behavior occurring. In contrast, if recognition drives routine repurchase, then only the favorability of associations should influence the likelihood of the behavior occurring. Strength of associations may be relatively unimportant for recognition-based loyalty behaviors, because there is no need to first locate brand associations in memory before considering their content.

Using a survey methodology, we introduce a new concept with the salesperson as the object of the brand equity. We present results of our exploratory investigation addressing these hypotheses. Implications for theory and practice will be discussed.

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND EQUITY AND CORPORATE REPUTATION

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In coping with an increasingly competitive marketplace, the marketing profession has sought better ways to make products stand out and continuously attract consumers. Building a brand's equity is one such way. Stronger brand equity is believed to increase marketing effectiveness, allow for the charging of price premiums, increase brand loyalty, and help support product line extensions (e.g., Aaker 1996; Keller 1998).

At the same time, different researchers have offered different definitions of the term "brand equity" (Feldwick 1996). In the narrowest sense, brand equity is often considered the financial value of the brand as an asset (Eubank 1993). It has also been conceived as the strength of attachment and the network of nodal associations consumers express towards a brand (Keller 1993). Aaker (1996) considers brand equity to include not only the incremental price premium a brand earns but also loyalty, perceived quality and a series of organizational associations. We suggest that the equity, either financial or consumer-based, associated with a brand provides an additional benefit to companies by increasing their overall corporate reputation.

Walker Information defines corporate reputation as

"***the reflection of an organization over time as seen through the eyes of its stakeholders and expressed through their thoughts and words.***"

In essence, stakeholders consider everything they've seen, heard or thought about a company in the past to create expectations of how it will behave in the future. This definition is consistent with and builds on definitions in the reputation literature (see Fombrun 1996).

Brand equity, because it captures the strength of the relationship between a company's products and consumers, is one of several dimensions of corporate reputation. Based on field surveys with consumers and other stakeholders in two programs, we will empirically explore how brand equity impacts corporate reputation. In addition, we will link both brand equity and corporate reputation to stakeholder loyalty.

Preliminary analysis suggests that brand equity and corporate reputation are discriminant, even for consumers but especially with non-consumer stakeholders. Finally, brand equity is a key determinant of corporate reputation for consumers, but has a much smaller effect for non-consumer stakeholders.

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