

Brand Loyalty and Brand Love: A Model Proposal

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to reframe the conceptualization of brand loyalty including its antecedents and its outcomes. The purpose is to end up with a new model suggestion which highlights the causality approach between brand love and brand loyalty as a fundamental component. The consequences of brand loyalty demonstrated by a positive word-of-mouth, share of wallet increase, price tolerance and resilience to negative information should convince practitioners to create closer proximity between their brands and consumers, investing in branding actions.*

Keywords: *Brand loyalty, satisfaction, trust, commitment, affect, brand love, consumer behaviour.*

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I. Introduction

Brand loyalty concept has been and remains the main target of companies over time. From all sectors and in all sizes, customers are considered the key of competitive positions in the marketplace. All marketing strategies aim on gaining consumer's satisfaction. In order to foster long-term connections, managers strive to treat their customers like friends by taking time to understand what they want and what they try to achieve. Consumers are constantly sharing across different platforms. Brands, nowadays, can occupy different spaces to pick up on trends and design what is best for their customers' satisfaction. However, satisfaction construct has been perceived insufficient to qualify a consumer's behaviour or attitude as loyal (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995). Thus, many researchers have studied consumer's behaviour, in the years after, moving beyond one concept to confirm that satisfaction can't explain completely a consumer's loyalty towards a brand or a product/service (Albert and Merunka, 2013). The necessity of including other factors is mandatory such as brand trust, brand commitment and brand attachment (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). All these relational concepts have been tested and studied to understand the relationships. We believe that the intensity degree of each feeling depends on the consumer. Yet, deep underlying feelings should include stronger emotions inspired from human's relationships such as affinity, sympathy or love to understand differently brand loyalty (Palmatier and al's, 2006). Therefore, brand loyalty can be evaluated from another perspective, which embraces a specific aspect of human affection that can be confusing regarding attachment or dependence as emotions (Albert and Florence, 2010).

For a detailed understanding of the link between marketing related variables and brand loyalty, based on relational exchanges between brand and its consumers (Fourmier, 1998); few researchers have been interested in examining the potential of love to describe its relevance to brand loyalty and brand outcomes (Ahuvia, 1999). In fact, emotional delight of love has been the topic of recent studies that have revealed that consumer might experience love for a brand (Albert and al, 2008). The purpose of this paper is to interpret existing models of brand loyalty determinants, relating them to brand love in order to suggest a causality model that associates brand loyalty outcomes within its fundamental determinants including brand l

II. Brand loyalty

Several studies have defined brand loyalty (*In 1978, Jacoby et Chestnut have counted more than 300 studies and 53 definitions of the concept*) but the first interest to the question of loyalty towards a brand has emerged with Copeland in 1923. He had defined it as an attitudes serial starting from the brand recognition until insisting on purchasing it, which represents a strong link between attitude and consumer's behaviour. Later on, Brown (1952) and Cunningham (1953) have suggested to associate behaviour's approaches to attitude to understand deeply the concept.

In order to offer an overview on the main contributions of brand loyalty, we suggest approaching the traditional dimension, bidimensional and then the affective conceptualizations previously discussed in theory.

II.I. Unidimensional aspect of brand loyalty

Since it was introduced by Copeland in 1923, as the insistence of purchasing a brand despite deficiency or insufficiency of the product, researchers have been interested in 1950 to the individual behaviour. The idea was to explain the reason why we would over like or prefer a brand to another (Brown, 1953; Bass and Al, 1968; Carman, 1970). They have presented, initially, the repeat purchase as the action of obtaining the same product constantly through regular purchase calculations over a set of individuals (Cunningham, 1956). To posit later, that brand loyalty leads to repeat purchase among customers (Frank, 1967). Consequently, the measurement of brand loyalty is represented by purchase frequency. This traditional approach was criticized by authors who defended the fact that this barometer doesn't study the concept deeply (Crié, 1999; N'Goala, 2000). Moreover, it removes from consideration consumer's sensitivity to other offers available on the market place and the environment impact on choosing a brand over another (Starfford, 1966; Carman, 1970).

II.II. Bidimensional aspect of brand loyalty

Another stream of research has related brand loyalty to behaviour, attitude and the mixture of both dimensions (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978).The behaviourist approach based on the conditioning theory which proposes that a consumer is considered loyal when he buys regularly the same brand (Sheth, 1968). Loyalty is determined, thus, by the purchase probability and the purchase repeat. The attitudinal approach posits that a consumer is loyal when he develops a positive attitude towards a brand. The mixed integrates the two previous approaches: a loyal consumer buys regularly expressing simultaneously a positive feeling regarding the brand (Day, 1969 ; Assael, 1987).

II.III. Affective aspect of brand loyalty

Despite the environmental factors able to influence the consumer's purchase of a brand, loyalty can be described as a deep commitment to acquire the favourite brand, regularly in the future (Oliver, 1997). It includes, in addition to that, resistance to change and the ability to surpass pressure of competitors (Dick and Basu, 1994); entitled « strong loyalty attitude ». According to Fishbein et Ajzen (1975), a rational consumer takes advantage of the information surrounding him in decision making and considers the previous experiences.

Starting from satisfaction, explained to be a reflected and an intentional action, it represents the motivator of purchase repeat (Labarbera and Mazursky, 1983). The disconfirmation model of customer satisfaction comes from Bearden and Teal, (1983); Oliver and Bearden(1985) consists of :

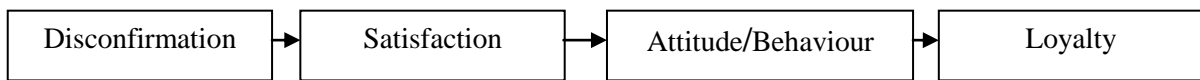


Figure 1: Disconfirmation Model

Although researches of satisfaction lead to loyal behaviour, some of them argue that a satisfied customer can't be loyal. Our wished behaviour can't take place, simply because the environment in which we progress turns its effectiveness hard to operate, barely impossible (Bearden, Chiao, Woodside, 1979).Oliver (1997) associates loyalty to the succession of steps of cognitive loyalty, based on beliefs towards the brand, affective loyalty (positive attitude), cognitive loyalty (behaviour intention) and the loyal behaviour (purchase repeat). He posits that loyalty can't be achieved without those steps, insisting on the importance of the affective side, including satisfaction and other determinants of affective loyalty.

Hence, we can summarize the main research streams of loyalty as follows:

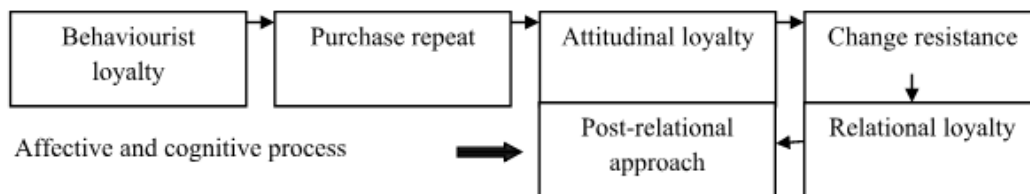


Figure 2: Loyalty streams schema

III. Brand loyalty determinants

To understand brand loyalty, we highlight to distinguish its antecedents and their contributions to its construction as it has been defined in literature.

III.I. Brand commitment

Initially, commitment is defined by Morgan and Hunt (1994) as a long-term willingness to pursue a relationship. Anderson and Weitz (1992) add the ability to sacrifice in order to strengthen that bond. In association to our context, commitment is expressed by the change resistance in a purchase situation (Cunningham, 1967). It contains stability, strength and intensity as components to empower the relationship (Allen and Meyer, 1993). It has been considered similar to brand loyalty (Beatty and Kahle, 1988): When the consumer continues not only to select the same brand among many others (Lastovicka and Gardner, 1979), but also buys it more often (Engel and Blackwell, 1995).

Samuelson and Sandvik (1997) describe loyalty as a consequence of the strong bonds between consumers and a brand. Frisou (2000) differentiates two categories of commitment: explicit commitment expressed by the desire to maintain an appropriate exchange and an implicit commitment defined by the consumer's awareness of his behaviour towards the brand. Therefore, commitment is a condition to attitudinal brand loyalty (Amine, 1994; Bloemer and Kasper, 1993; Lacoëuilhe, 2000) and joins the behaviourist dimension since it generates a repeat purchase (Oliver, 1999).

Keller and Lehmann (2003) explained brand loyalty starting from its consequence to conclude that commitment is a result of brand affect. However, this definition can't be related to the utilitarian function since the consumer seeks for his pleasure and a positive evaluation of the brand (Geyskens and al, 1995). The researchers called it affective commitment.

This leads us to conceptualize the brand affect, as the second antecedent of brand loyalty (Lacoëuilhe, 2000).

III.II. Brand affect

Considered to be a key construct in brand loyalty conception (Lacoëuilhe, 2000 ;Aurier, 2001 ; Chaudhuri et Holbrook, 2001), brand attachment represents the strong bond between the brand and the customer (Mende and Bolton, 2011). It impacts the attitudinal loyalty (Fournier, 1998), positively the word of mouth (Vlachos and al, 2007), price tolerance (Orth and al, 2010) and the consumer behaviour (Vlachos and al, 2010; Park and al, 2010). Aurier and al (2001) include it as a component of the relational chain of brand loyalty.

From all existing definitions, we highlight Lacoëuilhe and Belaid's definition (2007): brand affect is the psychological affective long-term link empowered by nostalgic connexions and values sharing: expressed by joy, the pleasure of consuming the brand and the difficulty to replace it.

As per humans, objects might represent an emotional value and enhance individual's spirit (Kleine and al, 1995). The intensity of the affect depends on commitment degree towards these objects. For brands, it starts by brand liking (Aaker, 1991) then ends up by a strong dependence. This emotion is raised thanks to the brand image and its personality. Consumers tend to prefer brands close to their personalities (Dolich, 1969).

Brand affect is explained by its expressive function of spreading values and beliefs believed in (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Perrin-Martinenq (2003) distinguishes three types of brand affect: the forced attachment as a result of change difficulties, the behaviourist attachment explained by the lack of alternatives or commitment to a contract within the brand and the affective that occurs because of the consumer's willingness.

Some researchers posit that brand satisfaction is close to brand affect (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). However, brand satisfaction concerns both the cognitive and affective aspects. In another part, brand affect is a mainly affective construct that can outstage liking and express strongest emotions as love.

III.III. Brand satisfaction

Considered to be the main component of loyalty, as business profit has been proven to be strongly linked to customer's satisfaction (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Anderson and al, 1992; Fornel, 1992).

As per loyalty, satisfaction construct can be approached from different perspectives such as the cognitive dimension, the affective and relational dimensions.

- Cognitive satisfaction

It can be defined as a psychological state which made topic of discussion starting from the sixties. Cardozo (1965) conditionates product assessment to customer's expectations. According to his theory, repeat purchase is a consequence of satisfaction. Thus, other indirect factors might be included in the evaluation process such as promotion and communication actions (Miller, 1977, Anderson, 1973).

Confirmation paradigm (Churchill and al, 1982): posits that satisfaction ends up from a comparison between the product use and expectations. It refers to four determinants: product performance or outcome, consumers' expectations, the non confirmation and satisfaction.

The opposite of this paradigm is called the non confirmation paradigm (Oslo and Dover, 1976) which impacts satisfaction. Therefore, attitude and brand loyalty.

- Affective satisfaction

This dimension refers not only to consumer's feelings during the consumption experience but also to emotions stated after evaluation (emotional experience). In fact, factors as the mood, optimism or life quality impact the global satisfaction (Westbrook, 1987). We can add other independent emotional variables that may be positive or negative such as joy, excitement, interest, fear, hesitation or sadness.

Woodruff and al (1983) posit that satisfaction is an emotional state which completes the cognitive aspect (Oliver, 1993). Both states occur simultaneously. Other aspects were discussed over time to understand satisfaction like the type of purchase (regular or non-frequent) (Babin and Griffin, 1994). Emotions depend, in this case, on the purchase purpose.

In terms of transaction, brand loyalty and satisfaction's positive link is obvious (Lababera and Mazursky, 1983; Fornell, 1992; Olsen, 2002) and impact thus, purchase intention and attitude. In order to understand this link, many conditions are taken into consideration such as the product topic of loyalty (Jones and Sasser, 1995), the individual and his implication (Ngobo, 1998). The most defended assumption posits that brand loyalty occurs when a minimal verge of satisfaction is achieved. According to Ngobo (1998), brand loyalty occurs only when satisfaction is experienced. Oliver (1993) demonstrates that the understanding of affective variables increases satisfaction level. Therefore, link between both constructs remains asymmetric (Anderson and Mittal, 2000).

In opposition to what has been discussed previously, Oliver (1997) considers satisfaction as the affective aspect of brand loyalty, separately from other aspects of the construct. Thus, insufficient to justify a loyal behaviour. Authors have included moderator variables to demonstrate the link's logic as trust, commitment or opportunism (Ganesh and al, 2000). The relational dimension joins this stream: a satisfied customer is committed and trusts the brand, willing to repeat his purchase for the same brand (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999).

III.IV. Brand trust

Considered to be the main construct in relational marketing (Palmatier and al, 2006) due to its strong impact than any other affective determinant on brand-consumer relationships (G.MacDonald). In this context, trust includes cognitive and affective elements (McAllister, 1995). Other assumptions of honesty and commitment were added by growing literature later (Bromiley and Cummings, 1995).

Based on partners' perceptions in a transaction, trust turns an exchange climate smooth and makes negotiation easier between customer and supplier (Bromiley and Cummings, 1995). It can accelerate cooperation in uncertain situations (Deutsch, 1962 and 1973) and ensure employees satisfaction (Davis and al, 2000). Towards a brand, trust is defined to be a consumer's willingness (Gurviez and Korchia, 2002) that reflects assumptions based on integrity, credibility and kindness.

Thus, brand trust is a bidimensional concept with an affective dimension which integrates kindness and a cognitive dimension that concerns credibility and integrity (Ganesan, 1994; Doney and Cannon, 1997). Or a multidimensional if we separate the two determinants of credibility and integrity (Aurier and al, 2001; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002).

Trust's impact on brand loyalty were confirmed through repurchase behaviour (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Kabol, 2002; Roostika, 2011), researchers agreed on the main importance of the construct. However, its conceptualization was criticized by Wilson (1995) in the relational brand-customer process: the impact is more important in the relationship start and becomes less strong at the maturity. This inconvenient concerns other determinants such as satisfaction, cooperation...

Brand trust leads to brand loyalty since it implies customer's commitment (Gurviez and Korchia, 2002).

IV. Brand loyalty models

Brand loyalty concept has been investigated through many decades. The important number of definitions which has been suggested witnesses its complexity. Nevertheless, outputs and sources of brand loyalty have been studied by few researchers starting by Tumer Kabadayi and Aygun (2007) who tried to examine the interaction between brand trust, brand satisfaction, brand affect to affect brand loyalty generating ,therefore , brand tolerance as an outcome.

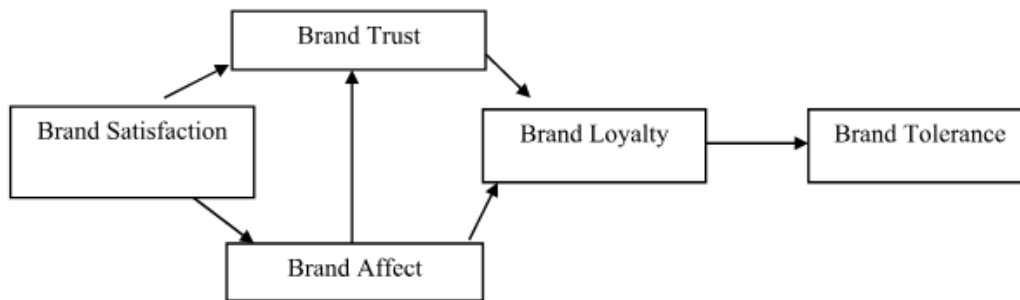


Figure 3: Tumer Kabadayi and Aygun's Model (2007)

Following the same logic, Ayoubi (2016) in her thesis stated that true brand loyalty implies all previous outputs in addition to identification to the brand. As a result, if the consumer is loyal, he will be more likely to build a long term relationship which includes loyalty intention, a positive word of mouth, resistance to persuasion and the share of wallet increase.

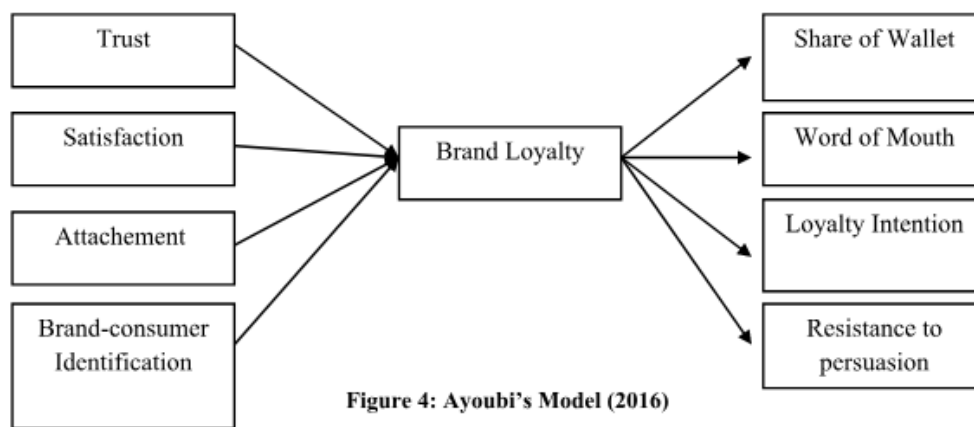


Figure 4: Ayoubi's Model (2016)

In order to conceive a more current definition to brand loyalty, Gounaries and Stathakopoulos (2003) have related brand loyalty types to individual's drivers, social drivers and brand drivers considering risk aversion and influence aspects. Other researchers have focused on one determinant to check its contribution in the concept shaping, such as understanding customer satisfaction in the commercial airline industry (H.Zins, 2001). To explain brand performance through brand loyalty, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) focused on brand affect and brand trust emphasizing both dimensions of loyalty.

We highlight the model suggested by Ayoubi (2016) which involves all determinants and where it will be suitable to add new research perspectives.

A number of brand loyalty consequences have been discussed by researchers studying the concept. In our context, we choose to focus on the four alternatives presented in the selected model:

Share Of Wallet (SOW): specific to the banking sector, in which Ayoubi (2016) has tested her model. All banks customers' increases their number of operations as they are loyal to their programs and trust the service.

Word of mouth: or brand recommendation, is when, based on his experience, the consumer recommends or not the brand to his surroundings (Dick and Basu, 1995). Oliver (1995) suggests, in few cases that the sharing of experience provides the satisfaction and not the brand itself.

Loyalty intention: expressed by the positive response to satisfaction towards a good or a service (Zeithaml and al., 1996). Considerated to be the first step before extreme loyalty.

Resistance to persuasion: driven by positive attitude (Dick and Basu, 1994), turns customers insensitive to persuasion who resist rather than be embraced by competition attempts. In her results, Ayoubi (2016) figured out that competitors' offers are what make the consumer loyal.

In addition to these consequences, we can add the purchase delay in case of the absence of the desired brand, the willing to look for it in other stores and the emotional disappointment of not finding it.

The main critics related to brand loyalty models concern generalization assets and limitation in research samples. Thus, it has been suggested to refine other primary behavioural consequents in addition to considering supplementary components of affective process to explain the loyal response (Maclnnis and al, 2001).

In extension to previous findings, it was suggested to examine personal factors such as impulsiveness and develop the link through other marketing related variables for a deeper understanding. Reverse causality and check results which perhaps turn to be significant. As the relational concepts expand, other constructs such as attraction, familiarity, love or power should be considered for their potential relevance to both consequences and determinants (Ahuvia 1999).

V. Model proposal

The model we suggest follows the research implications mentioned above. In order to complete previous research contributions and in addition to approaches that try to define brand loyalty appropriately. We propose a model that aims to test new affective and cognitive variables in addition to brand loyalty determinants: brand love and commitment as a cause; price tolerance and resilience to negative information as outcomes.

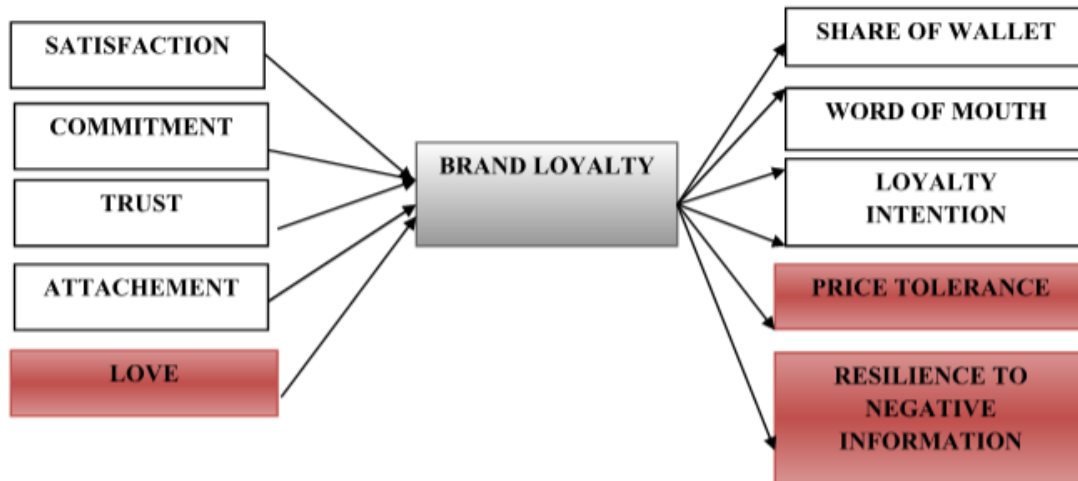


Figure 5: Theoretical Model

First of all, it will be a fruitful direction to analyse the influence of commitment instead of brand-consumer identification since commitment includes attitudinal and behavioural effects as per brand loyalty and belongs to the same psychological constructs group. Furthermore, brand-consumer identification concerns partnership to a group and emotional investment which is not quite close to brand loyalty components. Commitment’s conceptualization remains more general and doesn’t exclude a specific variable.

V.I. Brand love

In the brand-consumer relationship, brand love is a recent marketing concept and has been witnessed to impact other variables such as word of mouth and purchase decision making (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Despite its emergence as an important construct, there is still a lack of understanding about what generates a love relationship between a consumer and a brand and what its behavioural consequences may be.

Brands that stimulate deep love from their customers are likely to achieve loyalty to the brand and gain a sustainable competitive advantage over other brands that simply use brand loyalty programs (Yang, 2010). Thus, loyalty is a main outcome of brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

Since commitment is the core component of loyalty (Oliver, 1999), brand love entails emotion and passion to complete brand loyalty. Fournier (1998) answers the question of whether consumers can experience a feeling of love toward a brand, she established that such a feeling may exist and consumers may develop strong relationships with brands. The combination of emotion and passion is romantic in nature (Sternberg, 1986) and highly interactive (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1989; Sternberg, 1997). Therefore, brand love is conceptualized as emotional and passionate feelings for a brand that might lead to loyalty.

V.II. Price tolerance and Resilience to negative information

Price tolerance can be described as the reaction of customers to the price increase of a specific product and is constructed as a price span within the boundaries of which the consumer does not change his buying behaviour (Tümer Kabadayi and Aygun, 2007). We might expect customers to have greater price tolerance for products providing greater loyalty.

In this way, the tolerated price range stretches from the actual price paid by the consumer to the maximum price that a consumer is willing to pay for the product (Herman et al., 2004). Definitions in literature are likely to help us build the logical link between brand loyalty and price tolerance. They suggest that

consumers who are on the average more brand loyal in a given product category would be likely to have a wider latitude of price acceptance for that brand because brand loyalty would keep the consumer more focused on the benefits of the brand and less focused on price (Tümer Kabadayi and Aygun, 2007). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found a positive relationship between favourable brand attitude and being more willing to pay premium prices for a brand. The purpose of the proposed model is to confirm the positive link between brand loyalty antecedents and price acceptance. Furthermore, it aims to examine how brand loyalty leads to resilience to negative information through its determinants. Hence, if a consumer is loyal, then he tends to ignore negative information he receives about the brand.

VI. Conclusion

Brand loyalty construct has been the topic of investigation for years. Nevertheless, unlimited research implications imply that other variables might interfere to define the relationship. Because loyalty is a relational concept, it logically should be related to other relational constructs. We therefore investigate how brand loyalty might be explained by other consumer-brand relationship antecedents. Specifically, we consider two main research questions: how satisfaction, commitment, trust, attachment can impact brand loyalty? What will be brand love's impact on brand loyalty? This article aims to enlighten the role of love to build brand loyalty, next to the construct basics: starting by understanding each concept dimension, brand loyalty models and focusing on brand love's contribution. As illustrated in a model proposal which takes also into consideration brand loyalty outcomes such as price tolerance and resilience to negative information. The following step should concern the model test among companies in order to approach the empirical aspect later on.

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