

MASTER'S THESIS

A self-based perspective for consumer-brand relationship: understanding the role of brand attachment in brand equity creation

Kwan, Man Ching

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**A Self-based Perspective for Consumer-Brand Relationship:
Understanding the Role of Brand Attachment in Brand Equity Creation**

KWAN Man Ching

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Principal Supervisor: Prof. Gerard P. Prendergast

Hong Kong Baptist University

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ABSTRACT

Brand attachment has emerged as a critical brand equity driver that accurately predicts consumer loyalty behaviors (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerij, & Iacobucci, 2010). Prior research has emphasized the interpersonal paradigm and regarded brand merely as a relational partner, but neglected some unique characteristics of consumer-brand interactions, especially the cognitive elements embedded in various consumption contexts. Regarding both the cognitive and affective aspects, I presented a discussion of the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment and introduced a self-based perspective for the development of consumer-brand relationship that complements the interpersonal paradigm. Furthermore, I argued that brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand meanings and the intention to perform relationship maintenance behaviors. In Study 1, I validated a meaning-attachment-resonance (MAR) model via a survey and fitting of the data into structural equation models. Moreover, I conducted an experiment (Study 2) to evidence the causality for the proposed mediation effects. All in all, this research provided additional insights into the role of brand attachment in equity creation and relationship development. The research also addressed some unique characteristics of consumer-brand interaction by delineating the cognitive properties of brand attachment. More importantly, I introduced a self-based perspective to explain the mechanism underlying brand relationship development. This bridged two major bodies of literature about branding, suggesting that it is equally important to conceptualize brand as a relationship partner (interpersonal paradigm) and as a part of the self (self-based perspective).

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