An exploration of brand equity antecedents concerning brand loyalty: A cognitive, affective, and conative perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the antecedents of brand loyalty from the perspective of Oliver's (1997) cognitive, affective, and conative theorization of consumer loyalty. A convenience sample of 285 students across multiple majors of study completed a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire included brand equity, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty items. Each item was measured based upon a seven-point Likert scale. Two jean brands, one premium jean brand and one non-premium jean brand, were utilized to assess the items. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test proposed research hypotheses. Based upon Oliver's theorization of consumer loyalty, a positive relationship was confirmed between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction, brand emotional value and brand loyalty, and brand satisfaction and brand loyalty for both jean brand groups. This study indicated a lack of association between brand awareness and brand emotional value. This notion suggests that even if a retailer carries a brand with high awareness, that brand will not necessarily invoke an emotional value in the consumer. Therefore, retailers should consider stocking more than just well-known brands, and make sure that the brands they carry meet the functional and non-functional needs of their consumers.

Introduction

As the marketplace becomes more competitive, new options make the decision-making process more complex for consumers. One factor, however, that helps consumers make decisionsare brand names. Brand names help consumers identify the source of a product, and signal specific attributes and key benefits of the product to the consumer (Aaker 1991; Kotler and Keller 2009). Thus, brand names can impact the way consumers perceive a specific product, andmay cause consumers to form positive impressionsor images (Keller 1993).

It is important to understand the specific factors consumers assess when developing an impression of a brand, as a positive impression towards these factors may lead a consumer to loyalty. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to identify the antecedents of brand loyalty from the perspective of Oliver's (1997) cognitive, affective, and conative theorization of consumer loyalty. Oliver (1997) contends that there are several dimensions of loyalty: cognitive, affective, and conative. Based on Oliver's dimensions, this research will focus on assessing brand equity components that are antecedents of brand loyalty, as understanding these factors through the cognitive, affective, and conative construct will provide deeper insights on brand loyalty.

Oliver's (1997) dimensions of loyalty have been applied to literature across several disciplines (Back and Parks 2003; De Silva and Syed Alwi 2006; Han, Kim, and Kim 2011).

However, most of the studies have not applied the loyalty dimensions to the components of brand equity. Brand equity is defined as the intangible value a brand holds with consumers (Aaker 1991). That is, consumers assign a certain value to a brand based upon their personal perception of the brand. If the consumer's perception is positive, then loyalty may ensue thereby causing repetitive brand purchasing (Oliver 1999). Therefore, it is imperative to understand the components of brand equity that are antecedents to loyalty behaviour, as this understanding will have key marketing implications. Three objectives are used to guide the study: 1) to examine the relationship between brand equity, emotional value, and brand satisfaction, and 2) to investigate the relationship between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction, and 3) to assess the relationship between brand emotional value, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

Literature review and hypothesis development
Brand Loyalty Phases
Loyalty is defined as "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior," (Oliver 1999, 34). Oliver (1997) contends that there are three key phases in attitudinal loyalty: *cognitive, affective, and conative*. The first loyalty phase is cognitive, which entails the presence of explicit knowledge about a product/brand.Affective loyalty is the second loyalty phase. This level of loyalty entails consumers' feelings, moods, and emotional responses towards a product/brand (Oliver 1997). Moreover, the concept of satisfaction has been noted as an essential part of the affective loyalty stage, as pleasurable responses to a product/brand are akin to satisfaction (Bandyopadhyay and Martell 2007). Lastly, the third phase of loyalty, conative loyalty, includes behavioural intention, and is defined as "an intention or commitment to behave toward a goal in a particular manner" (Oliver 1997, 393). In other words, this phase entails a commitment to a product/brand that leads a consumer to repurchase (Oliver 1997). It should be noted that Oliver (1999) also discusses a phase of loyalty called the action loyalty, which refers to the intentions of a customer that are converted to an actual purchase. However, this phase will not be applied in this study, as the purchase intention aspect of loyalty is outside of the scope of this study.

Given Oliver's (1997) theory of the three phases of loyalty, this paper will be organized based upon each phase: cognitive, affective, and conative. Specifically, key brand equity and branding components will be categorized as cognitive, affective, orconative. Based on this categorization, the literature will be reviewed in this manner and order.

Brand Equity
Brand equity is defined as "the value attached to a functional product or service by associating it with the brand name" (Aaker and Biel 1993, 17). Aaker (1991) defines five categories of assets that are the basis of brand equity: *brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets*. Brand loyalty refers to a consumer repeatedly purchasing a product, while brand awareness encompasses a consumer being able to accurately identify a particular brand (Aaker 1991). Perceived quality entails the overall quality observation a consumer has of a product, and oftentimes leads to brand associations – which are the actual emotions consumers relate with certain brands (Aaker 1991). Lastly, other proprietary brand assets involve the patents, trademarks, and channel relationships brands represent (Aaker 1991).

While Aaker's (1991) seminal work conceptualizes brand equity, a number of other researchers have applied the concept of brand equity in their studies (e.g., Bhardwaj, Kumar, and Kim 2010; Lee, Lee, and Wu 2011). Bhardwaj, Kumar, and Kim (2010) assess the concept of brand equity by examining whether or not there are differences in consumer perception of American and Indian brands among Indian students. The results showed that Indian students do perceive American brands and Indian brands differently given the emphasis the students placed on the brand equity factors of emotional value and perceived quality. Lee, Lee, and Wu (2011) also assess different factors contributing to brand equity in their study. They report that when a brand with a weak brand acquires a brand with a good image, then it creates the perception of better quality and higher equity among consumers.

It is imperative to further identify specific factors that influence a consumer's overall perception of a brand, and the value that it holds as it relates to brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. Given this notion, the present study will examine the concepts of brand equity, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty. While Aaker (1991) contends that brand loyalty is a part of brand equity, this study will not consider brand loyalty as a part of brand equity, and will instead consider it a result of brand equity factors as assumed in other literature (Kim, Morris, and Swait 2008; Kuenzel and Halliday 2010). Specifically, this study will assess the influence of the following factors regarding a brand's equity: *brand awareness, brand image, brand perceived quality, brand emotional value, and brand satisfaction*. In addition, *brand emotional value* and *brand satisfaction* will be examined as it relates to *brand loyalty*. The remainder of the literature review will assess past literature that directly evaluates these factors.

Cognitive Stage: Brand Awareness, Brand Image, and Brand Perceived Quality
Brand Awareness

Brand awareness occurs when a brand is recognized by a consumer (Aaker 1991). The concept entails a consumer identifying a brand due to prior exposure. Thus, given a consumer's awareness of the brand, that brand becomes a part of the consumer's consideration set for an actual purchase (Keller 1993). A wellrecognized brand is likely to establish a positive brand image, and, thus, have a positive effect on purchase intention (Esch et al. 2006).

The concept of brand awareness has been researched extensively in past literature across various industries (Agarwal and Rao 1996; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005). For instance, Yaseen et al. (2011) assessed the relationship between purchase intention and profitability, and assumed that brands with high awareness would receive high favourability (Yaseen et al. 2011). The results from the study showed that brand awareness indeed does have a strong relationship with purchase intention; however, brand awareness did not have a relationship with profitability.

Dew and Kwon (2010) explore the concept of brand awareness among college females, and examine this concept as it applies to apparel brands. The authors seek to understand whether brands with a high awareness among consumers have more satisfactory brand associations (Dew and Kwon 2010). The authors confirmed that brands with a higher level of brand awareness did have a noted level of favourable brand associations among consumers (Dew and Kwon 2010). The present study examines the concept of brand awareness further by assessing the relationship between brand awareness and brand emotional value and brand satisfaction.

Brand Image

Brand image is defined as the impression of a brand's total personality in a consumer's mind (Marconi 2000). Furthermore, according to Aaker and Biehl (1993), brand image has four

important components that aid in classifying the concept: *personality and character, visual representation, hard attributes, and soft attributes.* Personality and character encompass the adjectives and descriptions that are evoked from a brand, while visual representations entail the unique symbols that are associated with the brand (Aaker and Biehl 1993). Hard attributes are the specific product features and benefits the product provides. Lastly, soft attributes include how a consumer personally connects to a brand in order to make it a part of their lifestyle (Aaker and Biehl 1993).

Several studies have examined the influence of brand image (Pappu and Quester 2006; Sonnier and Ainslie 2011;). For instance, Yu, Lin, and Chen (2013) contend that the ongoing prevalence of e-commerce allows consumers to gain more information regarding brands, which then positively impacts their consumer perceptions (Yu, Lin, and Chen 2013). Based on this notion, they hypothesize that Internet user purchase intention of luxury brands will be positively influenced by the brand image. The authors confirmed that brand image positively predicted purchase intention of luxury brands.

Sondoh et al. (2007) assess brand image as it relates to brand satisfaction. Within their study, they found that certain brand image benefits - such as functional, experiential, social and appearance benefits - positively influence brand satisfaction. That is, consumers are more satisfied with a brand when they perceive that the brand has experiential, social, and functional image benefits.The present study investigates the concept of brand image further by assessing the relationship between brand image and brand emotional value and brand satisfaction.

Brand Perceived Quality

Brand perceived quality is defined as a consumer's perception of the overall quality of a brand – not necessarily based on knowledge of specifications(Aaker 1991). This definition suggests that consumers do not necessarily need to have experience with the product in order to judge its quality. Rather, the consumer's perception of the product can be perceived versus actual.

The variable of brand perceived quality has been examined by several researchers (Severi and Ling 2013; Yaseen et al. 2011). Yang and Wang (2010) measure the variable of brand perceived quality from a store brand perspective. Specifically, they posit that a store brands' perceived quality has a positive effect on perceived value, and that a store brands' perceived quality has a positive effect on individual store brand loyalty (Yang and Wang 2010). Through participant's assessment of two Shanghai supermarket store brands, the authors found that brand perceived quality has a positive influence on individual store brand loyalty. Thus, the perceived quality of a brand can indeed influence a brand's loyalty.

Correspondingly, previous studies have indicated that perceived quality and satisfaction are highly correlated (Olsen 2002; Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt 2000). For instance, Homburg et al. (2002) analyse perceived quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction from the perspective of buyer-supplier relationships. Their findings suggested that perceived quality does indeed have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Thus, perceived quality is an important antecedent of customer satisfaction in business relationships with manufacturing firms (Homburg et al. 2002). The present study broadens the concept of brand perceived quality by examining the relationship between brand image and brand emotional value and brand satisfaction.

Affective Stage: Brand Emotional Value and Brand Satisfaction
Brand Emotional Value

Brand emotional value is defined as the benefit derived from the feelings that a brand generates (Sweeney and Soutar 2001). This definition deems that consumers can place brands in a high regard based upon emotions that a brand creates in them. Thus, a sense of pleasure and happiness can develop in consumers upon using certain brands (Kumar, Lee, and Kim 2007).

Previous studies showed that a positive feeling about a certain brand increases consumers' satisfaction toward brand (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Stauss and Neuhaus 1997). A positive emotion towards a brand creates not only brand satisfaction, but a negative brand emotion leads to brand dissatisfaction (Rockwell 2008). Kumar, Lee, and Kim (2007) assessed that emotional value is an important factor regarding brands, and that retailers should focus on the distinctive and emotional aspects of U.S. brands in order to appeal to Indian consumers (Kumar, Lee, and Kim 2007). In line with the previous studies cited, this study postulates the positive effect of brand emotional value to brand satisfaction. The present study examines the concept of brand emotional value further by evaluating the relationship between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Brand Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as the consumer's fulfillment response based upon a judgment that a product or service feature has provided a pleasurable level of consumption (Oliver 1997). Once consumers have reached a certain level of satisfaction with a brand, product or service, this can lead to a consumer repeatedly purchasing a product – brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Thus, it can be assumed that there is a direct relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

The significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been confirmed in various contextual situations (Kim, Park, and Jeong 2004; Martenson 2007). Christodoulides and Michaelidou (2010) clearly confirmed that e-satisfaction and e-loyalty have a positive relationship between them. Mittal and Lassar (1998) found that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on brand loyalty. As previous literature has confirmed, brand satisfaction will act as a strong determinant of behavioural aspect of brand loyalty. In addition, many studies have proved that satisfaction is an antecedent of brand loyalty (Bloemer and De Ruyter 1998; Jones and Suh 2000). Thus, it is expected that satisfaction with lead to loyalty. The present study assesses the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Based upon the literature review among key concepts, this study anticipates the following hypotheses.

H1: A positive relationship will exist between brand awareness and brand emotional value in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H2: A positive relationship will exist between brand awareness and brand satisfaction in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H3: A positive relationship will exist between brand image and brand emotional value in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H4: A positive relationship will exist between brand image and brand satisfaction in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H5: A positive relationship will exist between brand perceived quality and brand emotional value in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H6: A positive relationship will exist between brand perceived quality and brand satisfaction in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H7: A positive relationship will exist between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

Conative Stage: Brand Loyalty
Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as a deeply held commitment to re-purchase a preferred brand or service consistently in future (Oliver 1999). This consistent behaviour of re-purchase by the consumer then indicates that they have an allegiance to a particular brand versus other competitive brands. When this level of loyalty is reached, consumers are less likely to switch to another brand (Marconi 2000).

Jayasankaraprasad and Kumar (2012) discuss a connection between satisfaction and purchase intention. They confirm the relationship between satisfaction and behavioural loyalty (i.e. purchase intention) from the perspective of the food industry.

This concept of brand loyalty is often discussed in relation to brand satisfaction (Paswan, Spears, and Ganesh 2007; Schultz 2005). Rockwell (2008), for example, discusses brand satisfaction as a function of a consumer's experience with a brand. That is, brand satisfaction is achieved when a consumer's experience with a brand exceeds or meets their expectations. This ultimately leads to a customer being retained by the brand, essentially leading to customer loyalty (Rockwell 2008). The present study contends that brand satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Based upon the literature review, the relationships between brand emotional value and brand loyalty and brand satisfaction and brand loyalty are following.

H8: A positive relationship will exist between brand emotional value and brand loyalty in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

H9: A positive relationship will exist between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty in a **a)**premium brand jean purchasing group and **b)**non-premium brand jean purchasing group.

Method

College students were chosen as respondents for this study because they possess homogeneity in terms of certain demographic characteristics (Bodey and Grace 2006). Two hundred eighty five usable responses were obtained from a mid-size southeastern university located in the U.S. Approximately 90% of the sample were females and a mean age of the sample was 19.88 years (SD = 2.50).

Before conducting the survey questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted among students to determine the brand of jeans to be used in the final study. The clothing category of jeans was used, as this is an item that is commonly worn and purchased by college students. Twenty students were asked in an open-ended manner to list several premium and non-premium brand jeans. Given a frequency assessment of each type of jean brand, True Religion was selected as the premium brand of jeans and Wrangler was chosen as the non-premium brand of jeans. As a result, True Religion jeans and Wrangler jeans were selected to be included in the final study.

The questionnaire survey contained hypothetical scenarios related to jean brands,thus each participant was randomly assigned to one of two scenarios. They were first instructed to read the scenario and complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section consisted of two general questions about the brand. These questions were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale. In the second section, fourteen items of brand awareness (n = 3), brand image (n = 3), brand emotional value (n = 5) and brand perceived quality (n = 3) were adapted from Bhardwaj et al. (2010) and Wu and Chen (2010). Brand satisfaction and brand loyalty were measured in the third section, and were adapted from

Bhardwaj et al. (2010).All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The final section gathered respondents' demographic information.

Results

The uni-dimensional model of the brand awareness, brand image, brand perceived quality, brand emotional value, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty scales were confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). All factor loadings for each indicator well explained brand awareness, brand image, brand perceived quality, brand emotional value, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

The results of the model fit of CFA indicated a significant chi-square value (χ^2 = 598.92, *df* = 155 (p = .00)), indicating that the model does not fit the data adequately. However, this statistical test is known to be oversensitive and bias toward rejection. Therefore, other fit indexes were employed to assess the model fit, such as normed chi-square (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Results revealed that these fit indexes equal to, or better than recommended values (χ^2/df = 3.86, CFI = .97, NNFI = .97, RMSEA = .100, and SRMR = .056). Thus, it was concluded that the measurement model fit the data reasonably. The construct reliability (CR) was conducted on each construct and it met the requirement (i.e. more than .7), which explains internal consistency. The convergent validity was conducted and all factor loadings of observed variables on their corresponding latent variables were supported and the scores of average variance extracted (AVE) indicated the convergent validity (i.e., more than .5) (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Structural Equation Modelling

To test the research model to measure differences between premium (True Religion) and non-premium (Wrangler) brand jeans, the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis of each group (i.e., premium group vs. non-premium group) was performed using LISREL 8.8. The model fit for the premium group was found to be good (χ^2 = 358. 14 (*df* = 158), p = .00, χ^2/df = 2.27, CFI = .97, NNFI = .97, RMSEA = .094, and SRMR = .055). For the non-premium group, the model fit was poor compared to the premium group, but it was acceptable (χ^2/df = 2.61, CFI = .96, NNFI = .95, RMSEA = .11, and SRMR = .084).

Hypotheses Testing

As previously discussed, the data was assessed based on two groups. Given these two groups, the following discussion of the hypothesis testing will be discussed separately, starting with the premium brand jean group and concluding with the non-premium brand jean group. This will allow for a clear examination of each hypothesis per each jean group.

For the premium brand jeans group, four hypotheses were supported in the structural equation modelling analysis among the nine suggested hypotheses. Figure 1 presents the findings of the premium brand jeans group. H1a hypothesized that brand awareness would significantly influence brand emotional value, and this path was found to be positive and not statistically significant (γ = .11, t-value = 1.10, p > .05). Thus, H1a was not supported. H2a postulated that brand awareness would significantly influence brand satisfaction and this path was found to be negative and statistically insignificant (γ = -.01, t-value = -.08, p > .05). Therefore, H2a was rejected. H3a predicted that brand image would significantly influence brand emotional value, and the path was found to be negative and statistically not significant (γ = -.10, t-value = -1.04, p > .05). H3a, thus, was not supported. H4a, hypothesized a positive relationship between brand image and brand satisfaction, was found to be statistically insignificant (γ = .13, t-value = 1.40, p > .05). Hence, H4a was rejected. H5a postulated that brand

perceived quality would significantly influence brand emotional value. The path between brand perceived quality and brand emotional value was found to positive and statistically significant (γ = .77, t-value = 7.49, p < .001), thus H5a was supported. H6a, the path between brand perceived quality and brand satisfaction, was anticipated to be significantly positive, however, it was found to be insignificant (γ = .10, t-value = .83, p > .05). Therefore, H6a was not supported. H7a hypothesized that brand emotional value would significantly influence brand satisfaction (β = .65, t-value = 6.18, p < .001), and it was found to be positive and statistically significant. Therefore, H7a was supported. H8a postulated that brand emotional value would significantly influence brand loyalty. The path between brand emotional value and brand loyalty was turned to be positively significant (β = .23, t-value = 2.84, p < .01), thus H8a was supported. Last, H9a predicted that brand satisfaction would significantly influence brand loyalty, and the path was found to be positive and statistically significant (β = .72, t-value = 7.23, p < .001). Hence, H9a was supported. Figure 1 summarizes the findings of the premium brand group.
"Insert in Figure 1"

For non-premium brand jeans group, among the nine hypotheses tested, five were supported in the structural equation modelling analysis and Figure 2 depicts the results. H1b hypothesized that brand awareness would significantly influence brand emotional value, and this path was found to be statistically significant (γ = -.40, t-value = -3.12, p < .01). However the path was turned to be negative, thus, H1b was not supported. H2b hypothesized that brand awareness would significantly influence brand satisfaction and this path was found to be negative and statistically insignificant (γ = -.12, t-value = -.1.02, p > .05). Therefore, H2b was rejected. H3b predicted that brand image would significantly influence brand emotional value, and the path was found to be positive and statistically significant (γ = .52, t-value = 2.75, p < .01). H3b, thus, was accepted. H4b hypothesized that brand image would significantly influence brand satisfaction, and the path was found to be positive and statistically significant (γ = .37, t-value = 2.11, p < .05). Hence, H4b was supported. H5b predicted that brand perceived quality would significantly influence brand emotional value. The path was found to positive, but statistically insignificant (γ = .29, t-value = 1.74, p > .05), thus H5b was not supported. H6b, the path between brand perceived quality and brand satisfaction, was postulated to be significant, however, it was found to be positively insignificant (γ = .08, t-value = .52, p > .05). Therefore, H6b was rejected. H7b hypothesized that brand emotional value would significantly influence brand satisfaction (β = .47, t-value = 5.20 p < .001), and it was found to be positive and statistically significant. Therefore, H7b was supported. H8b postulated that brand emotional value would significantly influence brand loyalty. The path was found to be positively significant (β = .30, t-value = 3.62, p < .001), thus H8b was supported. Finally, H9b hypothesized that brand satisfaction would significantly influence brand loyalty, and the path was found to be positive and statistically significant (β = .60, t-value = 6.36, p < .001). Hence, H9b was supported. Figure 2 summarizes the findings of the non-premium brand group.
"Insert Figure 2"

Discussion And Implications

This study was designed to examine the components of brand equity that lead to loyalty behaviour. It assessed the components of brand awareness, brand image, brand perceived quality, brand emotional value, and brand satisfaction as antecedents of brand loyalty. Overall, across both jean brand groups, brand emotional value and brand satisfaction were confirmed as important antecedents to brand loyalty. In addition, the relationship between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction was confirmed for both jean brand groups. However, a

relationship between brand awareness, brand image, and brand perceived quality consistently across both jean brand groups was not confirmed.

A positive relationship between brand awareness and brand emotional value was not confirmed in H1a and H1b. While few studies to date have specifically examined the relationship between brand awareness and brand emotional value, more studies have assessed the connection between brand equity variables, such as brand awareness, and brand associations (Dew and Kwon 2010; Low and Lamb 2000). Favourable associations based upon brand awareness were confirmed in a few of these studies. However, the favourable associations did not inevitably lead to a favourable brand emotional value. Thus, a correlation between brand awareness and brand emotional value cannot be assumed, and this relationship should be further examined. In addition, a positive relationship was not confirmed between brand awareness and brand satisfaction for H2a and H2b. This result is consistent with research conducted by Esch et al. (2006). The researchers seek to understand the overall impact of brand knowledge on current and future purchase intentions. The results of the study revealed that brand awareness did not have a positive impact on brand satisfaction (Esch et al., 2006). Thus, a relationship between brand awareness and brand satisfaction is yet to be confirmed.

The relationship between brand image and brand emotional value was confirmed for the non-premium brand jeans group (H3b), but not confirmed for the premium brand jeans group (H3a). Very few articles have connected brand image to brand emotional value explicitly, however, many articles have discussed the relationship between brand image and favourable brand associations (Aaker and Biehl 1993; Faircloth, Capella and Alford 2001; Pappu and Quester 2006). Nonetheless, brand associations cannot be viewed as in the same vein with brand emotional value, as these are two separate variables. Thus, the relationship between brand image and brand emotional value should be studied further. The relationship between brand image and brand satisfaction was confirmed for the non-premium brand jeans group, but not confirmed for the premium brand jeans group (H4b). The results for the non-premium jeans brand group are consistent with past research (Sondoh et al. 2007), as the authors confirmed that a positive brand image will lead to brand satisfaction. One could posit that the relationship was not confirmed within the premium jeans brand group given the demographics of the group. Given that the participants are solely students with minimal income, they are likely to not have experience with premium brand jeans to the extent that they have experience with non-premium brand jeans.

Therefore, while they may understand the brand image of premium brand jeans, students may not connect the brand image to brand satisfaction because of their lack of experience with the premium jeans brand. The impact of brand perceived quality on brand emotional value was confirmed for the premium brand jeans group (H5a), yet not confirmed for the non-premium brand jeans group. This result indicates that the relationship between brand perceived quality and brand emotional value should be examined further, especially since very few studies have assessed these variables. The relationship between brand perceived quality and brand satisfaction was not confirmed in H6a and H6b. This finding is inconsistent with previous research on perceived quality (Bitner and Hubbert 1994; Homburg et al. 2001), as past studies have found a relationship between perceived quality and satisfaction. However, the majority of the past studies focus on the perceived quality of consumer goods, services, etc. where the perceived quality may have more a direct link to satisfaction for consumers. Given that this study specifically focuses on jeans, consumers may not necessarily associate a particular jean brand with a certain level of satisfaction. Lastly, consistent with previous studies (Jones and Suh 2000; Kumar et al. 2007; Martenson 2007; Rockwell 2008), this study confirmed a

positive relationship between brand emotional value and brand satisfaction, brand emotional value and brand loyalty, and brand satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

One interesting managerial implication from the study would be the lack of association between brand awareness and brand emotional value. The results of the study regarding this factor shows that a consumer having knowledge of a certain brand does not necessarily mean the consumer will have an emotional connection to the brand. Thus, the retailer must do more than just carry a brand that has high brand awarenessto invoke an emotional value in the consumer for the brand. For instance, in addition to carrying a popular brand, a retailer may want to provide additional information about the history of the brand, sustainability efforts, or corporate social responsibility of the brand. Studies have shownthat consumers reward brands that are socially responsible through purchase (Madrigal and Bousch,2008; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Therefore, giving the consumer this type of additional information about the brand would incite more of an emotional sentiment. Additionally, the results of the study did not show a relationship between brand awareness and satisfaction. This result implies that even though a retailer carries a popular, well-known brand, that it will not inevitably lead to customer satisfaction. Thus, retailers should be careful to consider more than just the brand and make sure that the well-known brand they carry meet the functional and non-functional needs of their consumers.

There was indeed a positive the impact of brand emotional value on brand satisfaction. This indicates that retailers should place more focus on brand emotional value to improve brand satisfaction. To emotionally attach the brand to consumers, practitioners can use a social networking, such as a Facebook brand fan page, and employ advertising with nostalgic appeals. This type of strategy may help to create "brand communities" whereby members who have strong preferences for a brand form alliances (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The creation of a "brand community" through social networking further promotes an emotional connection between the brand and consumer. It was also confirmed that brand emotional value has a direct impact on brand loyalty. Thus, if a consumer has an emotional connection to the brand, then they are more likely to stay loyal to the brand. This is especially important because past studies have shown that when consumers emotionally identify with a brand, then they become loyal and are less likely to switch to alternative brands (Lam et al. 2010; Oliver 1999). Lastly, the results of the study show that brand satisfaction has a positive relationship with brand loyalty. While this relationship has been proven in past studies, the results reiterate the importance of the relationship. That is, retailers who want to have consistent repeat purchases from customers must first make sure customers are acutely satisfied with their purchases and their overall retail experience.

Limitations and Future Studies

A main limitation of this study was that all respondents were from same demographic group. Therefore, future studies need to consider more diverse population segments. In addition, a survey questionnaire study was conducted, however, further studies are recommended to consider examining a true-experimental study because the true-experimental study may produce a different result.

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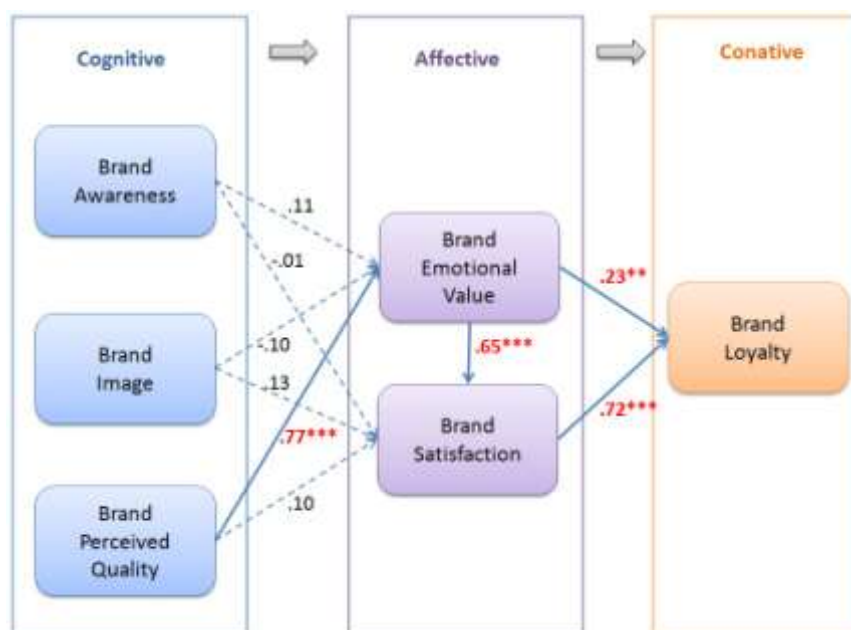
Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001
Model fit: χ^2 = 358. 14 (*df* = 158), p = .00; normed chi-square = 2.27; CFI = .97; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .094; SRMR = .055

Figure 1. Structural model and research hypotheses of the premium brand jeans group.
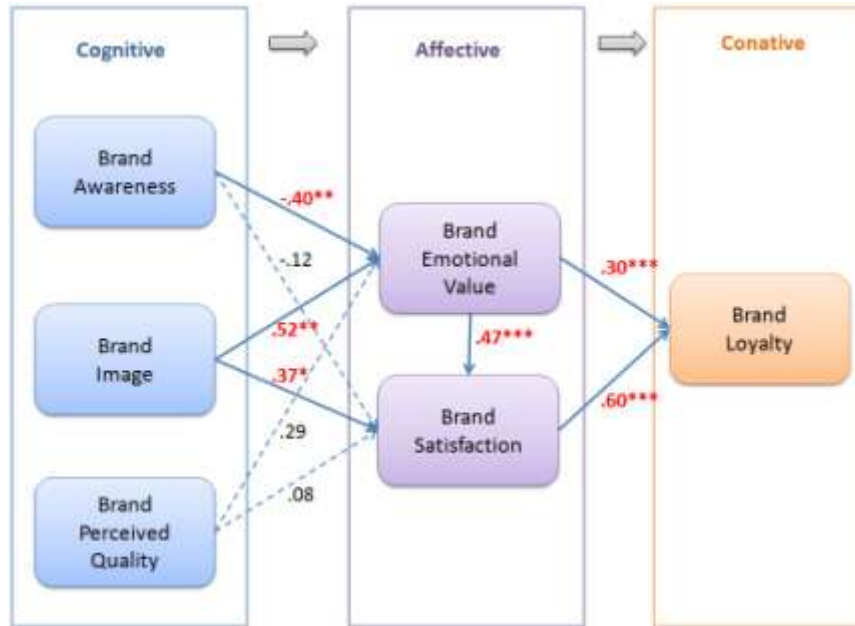
Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001
Model fit: χ² = 412. 08 (*df* = 158), p = .00; normed chi-square = 2.61; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95;
RMSEA = .11; SRMR = .084

Figure 2. Structural model and research hypotheses of the non-premium brand jeans group.