

BRAND-CENTERED RECRUITMENT: A NEW DISCOURSE IN THE DELIVERY OF EMPLOYEE BRAND PROMISE

Asad Ur Rehman, Salniza Bt Md. Salleh and Norzieiriani bt. Ahmad

¹Lecturer Commerce Department, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan, PhD Scholar SBM, UUM

²Associate Professor, School of Business Management, (COB), University Utara Malaysia.

³Senior Lecturer, School of Business Management, (COB), University Utara Malaysia

ABSTRACT: *To participate effectively in the present competitive market of higher education sector in Pakistan, universities must achieve a competitive advantage, which they can be attained by building the brand. This study promotes employees' brand citizenship behavior as a precursor to build strong organizational brand. The phenomena of internal branding is growing in marketing research in relevance of employees' behavior, but a few studies has discussed the relationship between brand-centered human resource practices and employees' brand citizenship behavior. The lack of studies in this area also raised question about what should be an appropriate behaviors of employees that contribute towards the successful delivery of brand promise. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the relationship between brand-centered recruitment and employees' brand citizenship behavior. University teachers from public sector universities from the province of Punjab Pakistan were involved in this study. For data collection purposes, 600 questionnaires were distributed to target respondents. However, only 384 questionnaires were usable. Result indicated that brand-centered recruitment practice exhibited a significant influence on employees' brand citizenship behavior. Further, detailed analyses also were discussed pertaining to the relationship of variables understudy. The implications as well as direction for future study also were addressed.*

KEYWORDS: Brand Citizenship Behavior, Brand-Centered Recruitment, Internal Branding, Brand Promise, Employee Branding

INTRODUCTION

In recent years marketing literature have documented the brand-centered human resource as an emerging area in an internal brand management. The academic researchers and practitioners recognized that brand-centered human resource practices such as brand-centered recruitment is critically important to align the behavior of employees to deliver an appropriate organization brand promise (Chang, Chiang, & Han, 2012; King & So, 2013). It was seemed truism that the involvement of human resource practices in an internal branding generated more positive behavior from employees, which later contributed to overall brand success (Aurand, Gorchels, & Bishop, 2005).

Scholars suggested that brand-centered recruitment play a pivotal role to manage internal brand identity (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005). Author claimed that, brand-centered recruitment fundamentally provide support to transform employees' behavior into pro brand manner. Under this line, recruitment process would be congruent with company brand which enable employees to deliver the successful brand promise (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). This is evident, employee

branding is based on the interaction of multiple stakeholders with the organization's employees, its success largely relies on employees' behaviors to deliver the brand promise to external stakeholders (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2017). Similarly, employees' behavior reflect brand values, it is seems important for organizations to recruit those individuals whose characteristics are consistent with an organizational brand values (Sepahvand & Sepahvand, 2013). However, review of literature indicates that most of the earlier researchers try to investigate the impact of brand-centered recruitment on management perspective (Chang et al., 2012; Magee, 2011; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). But these studies analysis did not considered the effect of recruitment process with respect to an employees' behavior. On the other side, it is truism that brand-centered recruitment has encouraged employees' behavior towards better performance and strengthens the organizational brand (Burmman, Zeplin, & Riley, 2009a; King & So, 2013). Therefore, this study intends to investigate that how brand-centered recruitment effects on employees' behavior to deliver the successful brand promise.

Second, internal branding literature has seldom addressed that how brand-centered recruitment has contributed towards employees' brand building behavior. Evidently, scholars argued that some individuals will have a stronger congruence between their personal values and the firm's brand values which enable them to deliver an appropriate brand promise (Burmman & Zeplin, 2005). However, research shown that limited attention has been given to explicate how brand-centered recruitment instils employees' behavior with organizational brand values for the development of successful brand (Hurrell & Scholarios, 2014). This paucity is considered significant, when employees' behaviors are aligned with organizational brand values then they are more likely to prompt better brand experience to customers. Thus, it is expected that brand-centered recruitment play pivotal role towards employee brand performance.

Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000), asserted that individual voluntary behaviors outside of role expectations might produce citizenship behaviors, which may enhanced the performance of the organization. Based on the study of Podsakoff et al. (2000), the German scholars Burmann and Zeplin (2005) propelled that employees' functional extra-role behavior in favor of the brand that really brings a brand to life, so this notion has been coined as brand citizenship behavior (BCB). Evidently, studies shown that brand citizenship behavior might foster employees' willingness to assert extra effort that goes beyond its actual job and projecting the brand related behavior (Burmman et al., 2009a). In addition, scholars argued that the employees' BCB could be a non-transactional relationship, which likely be enhanced by human resource practices (Chang et al., 2012). Similarly, Burmann et al. (2009a) stated that brand-centered recruitment can be the antecedent of employees' BCB, which in turn align employees' behavior towards the delivery of organizational brand promise. Hence, based on the importance of successful delivery of employees' brand promise, the present study attempted to investigate the relation among brand-centered recruitment with employees' BCB.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees' Brand Citizenship Behavior

Internal branding literature posited that employees behavior is a critically crucial for organizations to create and maintain a consistent brand promise (Henkel et al., 2007; Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010). This is noted that aligning of employee behavior with organization brand values may reinforce the successful delivery of brand promise (Burmman

& Zeplin, 2005). Author revealed that employees' successful brand promise may enhanced the organization brand identity is termed as brand citizenship behavior (BCB). Brand citizenship behavior is a notion of employees' willingness to perform extra role behavior that goes beyond its actual job i.e. projecting the brand related behavior. Previous studies shown that BCB has been evolved from the theory of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and first time introduced by German scholars (i.e., Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). BCB is significantly different from OCB. This is because BCB goes beyond the scope of OCB as it also consider the external targeted behaviors, while OCB is rather directed to internal dedicated behavior (Shaari, Salleh, & Hussin, 2012). Burmann and Zeplin (2005) argued that individual volunteer behaviors or extra efforts without any expectations of reward may contribute to strengthen the brand promise. But studies exhibited that relatively limited empirical research work has addressed how turn the employees behaviors consistent with the organization brand promise (Burmann et al., 2009a; Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014).

Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014), suggested that brand promise could be achieved through BCB when employees' behaviors (both on and off the job) contributed to an organization's branding efforts. On-the-job is related to in-role brand building behavior refer to employees indulged to meet prescribed standards by their organizational roles as brand representative (Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2009). These standards may be part of the organizational code of practice either written or unwritten in behavioral codes, manuals, displayed rules, etc. However, Burmann et al. (2009a) conceptualizes in-role brand behavior as brand compliance/brand obedience. Brand compliance refers to an employee's action to comply with prescribed roles of the organization's brand identity (Burmann et al., 2009a). In contrast, off-the-job brand building behaviors are discretionary that go beyond the prescribed roles for representing the brand (Helm, Renk, & Mishra, 2016). The discretionary behavior in the aggregate enhances the brand and mainly refers to participation (on the job) and positive word-of-mouth (off the job) (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Chang et al., 2012). Employees discretionary behavior refers to the extra role brand behavior which either extrinsic and intrinsically rewarded or not rewarded by the organizations. King and Grace (2008), suggested that discretionary behavior of employees' leads towards extra-role brand behavior that is congruent with an organization's brand values. However, as a terminology, extra-role brand behavior varies across studies. For instance, King and So (2013) conceptualizes it as "brand-building behavior", while Burmann et al. (2009a) terms it as "brand citizenship behavior". In sum, both term namely extra-role brand behaviors and in-role brand behaviors are aimed to align employees' behavior in accordance to an organization brand promise.

Brand-Centered Recruitment

Researchers have noted that brand-centered human resources as an imperative key lever in the internal branding (Aurand et al., 2005; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Evidently, studies revealed, brand-centered human resource practices such as recruitment contribute towards the delivery of strong brand promise and motivate employees to improve external image and reputation of the organizational brand (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Xu, 2009). Aurand et al. (2005), claimed that fair recruitment process improves employees' brand behaviors that are consistent with the external branding efforts. It is seems truism, fair recruitment practice enables employees to provide high quality services to customers (Girod, 2005). Similarly, Chang et al. (2012), revealed that human resource practices such as brand-centered recruitment may help employees to implement brand-centered strategies and provide foundation towards the development of strong organizational brand. In addition, integrated efforts of brand-centered recruitment

encourage employees to deliver the brand promise as perceived by the customers (Burmam et al., 2009a).

Delery and Doty (1996), argued that companies pay attention to select those employees who have appropriate qualities to achieve organizational benefits and goals. Thus, companies may espouse brand-centered recruitment method to select those individuals who act according to the proper brand behavior, which may help to create better organizational image. Literature indicated that companies with good brand image have good organizational identification and better perceptions of customers toward the organizations (Chang et al., 2012). In addition, Aurand et al. (2005) exhibited that individuals who are likely involved in human resource practices may reveal positive behaviors, which are consistent with Allen, Shore, and Griffeth (2003) who employ social exchange theory to explicate the relation between employees and the organization. Hence, it is assumed that brand-centered human resource practice such as recruitment is an essentials for the successful delivery of brand promise, i.e. provide the fundamental support to transform employees' behavior consistent with organizational brand.

Relationship between Brand-Centered Recruitment and BCB

Burmam and Zeplin (2005) asserted that BCB, which also refers to employees' behavioral branding (Farrell, Souchon, & Durden, 2001; Henkel et al., 2007; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007), can be achieved through brand-centered human resource practices. Evidently, Studies shown that brand-centered recruitment is critically important to deliver an appropriate brand promise by aligning employees' behavior with organizational brand (Chang et al., 2012; Sepahvand & Sepahvand, 2013). This is noted that individuals who recruited in congruence with company brand values may produce positive discretionary behavior which is consistent with BCB (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005; Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007). Based on this line, it is assumed that brand-centered recruitment practice might motivate employees to act according to brand related activities that induce the positive behavior and even altruistic spirit toward corporate brand. This is evident, brand-centered recruitment practice can effect on employees' altruistic behavior (Aurand et al., 2005) that contributes to brand citizenship behavior (Burmam et al., 2009a).

Study revealed that the relationship between brand centered human resource practices and BCB has been employed through the social exchange theory (Chang et al., 2012). Akingbola (2012), asserted that social exchange theory is the norm of reciprocity of action between parties that are not set in any contractual frame work to define the form, time, and degree of payback obligation. It is a voluntary reciprocal obligation behavior and gratitude that propels the individual making the complimentary repayment (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). On the base of this line, if brand-centered recruitment practice conveys appreciation and recognition of employees by the organization, employees develop social exchange to perform extra role behavior for the overall success of organizational brand promise. In addition, it has been noted that reciprocating behaviors go beyond contractual agreements behaviors (Organ, 1988). Hence, brand-centered recruitment has been found to be significant in social exchange processes to exhibit employees' willingness towards BCB. Therefore, based on the social exchange theory, employees that perceived they have an adequate brand- centered recruitment practices would likely to engage in brand citizenship behavior (Chang et al., 2012). Thus, generally it could be hypothesized that:

H1: Brand-Centered recruitment have a significant relation with employees' brand citizenship behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted questionnaire survey on a sample consisted of academic staff from public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan. The Punjab province having population of more than 115 million which is 61% of the total population of Pakistan and demographic information is the representative of whole Pakistan in characteristics (Economic survey 2013-14). A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed randomly among university teachers with the permission of universities' registrar. Only 411 completed questionnaires were returned. The response of 384 questionnaires were valid after deleting the record due to technical errors such as incomplete answers or missing values.

The three items for the construct of brand-centered recruitment was adapted from the study of Burmann et al. (2009a). As these items reflected an employees' perception about the recruitment practice in services sector. Furthermore, employees' BCB measurement items were adapted from the study of Erkmen and Hancer (2014) and Helm et al. (2016). The 7-point likert scale ranging from '1' "strongly disagree" to '7' "strongly agree" was used to measure the response.

RESULTS

Convergent Validity

For the purpose of data analysis this study was used the software of Smart-PLS version 2.0. The threshold values for loadings > 0.7 ; Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.7 and Average variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 was shown an appropriate convergent validity in Table 1. According to Hair et al. (2010) the factor loadings and average variance extracted values for each items would be above then 0.5. Result of convergent validity analysis in table 1 shown that the CR value ranged from 0.79 to 0.93 for each latent construct was grater then 0.7 as recommended by (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1: Convergent Validity Analysis

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Brand Citizenship Behavior	BC1	0.796	0.939	0.606
	BC10	0.733		
	BC2	0.822		
	BC3	0.822		
	BC4	0.756		
	BC5	0.749		
	BC6	0.743		
	BC7	0.774		
	BC8	0.778		
Brand-Centered Recruitment	BC9	0.806		
	RU1	0.850	0.799	0.577
	RU2	0.820		
	RU3	0.579		

CR = "Composite Reliability", AVE = "Average Variance Extracted"

Discriminant Validity

The items of variables that theoretically should not be related to each other and measure distinct concept among variables are known as discriminant validity (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). The measure of average variance shared among every variable would exceeded the variance shared among the variable and other variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 2 exhibit discriminant validity of the constructs.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity of the construct

Constructs	BCB	RECU
Brand Citizenship Behavior	0.779	
Brand-Centered Recruitment	0.588	0.759

BCB = “Brand Citizenship Behavior”, RECU = “Brand-Centered Recruitment”

Hair et al. (2010), suggested that an adequate discriminant validity of the constructs could be established, when square root of AVE is greater than the correlation for each construct as shown above in table 2.

Structural Model

The analysis result of structural model was exhibited in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3

Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β -Value	S.E	T - Value	p-value	Decision
H1	Brand-Centered Recruitment -> Brand citizenship behavior	0.588	0.053	11.064	0.00***	Supported

***: $p < 0.01$

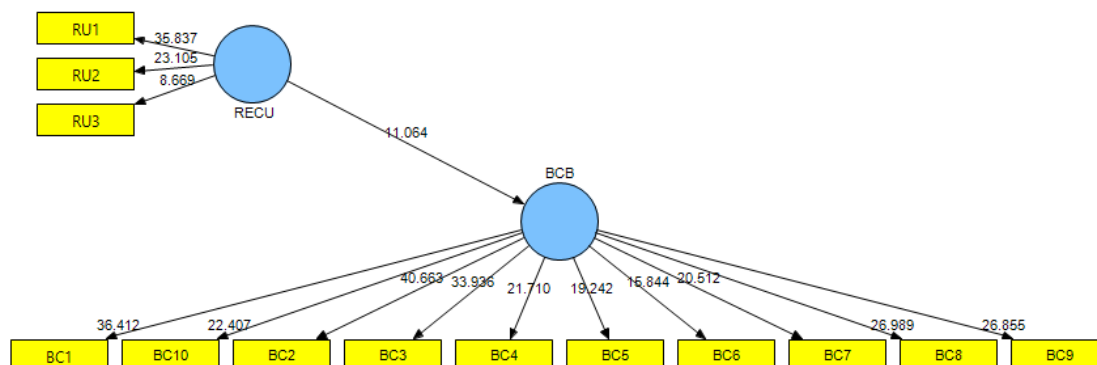


Figure 2. Result of the structural model analysis

The relationship between brand-centered recruitment and brand citizenship behavior was significant as shown in Table 3. Which suggested that the $\beta=0.588$, $t\text{-value}=11.064$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.01$. This result indicated that when the brand-centered recruitment was increased it resulted into increase in brand citizenship behavior. The brand citizenship behavior's R^2 value was 0.35, which suggested that the brand-centered recruitment explain 35 percent variance in it.

DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of the present study was to find the relationship between brand-centered recruitment and brand-citizenship behavior among the university teachers of public sector institutions in Pakistan. The result finding showed that the relation between brand-centered recruitment and brand citizenship behavior was significant. This finding was similar to the result of previous study (King & So, 2013). This indicates that brand-centered recruitment encourages the academic staff to achieve required performance and they are willing to exert extra role behavior to deliver the successful brand promise. This finding was also supported by social exchange theory, which indicated when there was strong relationship between human resource practices and employees' BCB, it enhanced the organizational brand strength and internal brand identity (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Thus, organizations need to adopt the brand-centered recruitment process and appreciate their employees' performance, this helps to increase the brand citizenship behavior among their employees.

Implications

This study theoretically and practically contributed in the area of internal branding. Theoretically, Present empirical study proved the positive relationship among brand-centered recruitment and brand citizenship behavior. This also added to existing literature in relation of internal branding and enhanced knowledge by developing the relationship among brand-centered recruitment and BCB. In the same way practically this research findings confirmed the concept that brand-centered recruitment process was of utmost importance in aligning employees' behavior to deliver the strong organizational brand promise among employees in public sector universities in Pakistan.

Based on the findings of above discussion, there were certain implications for the management of public sector universities in Pakistan as they were liable for encouraging and retaining talented teaching staff for their institutions. Firstly, the significant relationship between brand-centered recruitment and brand citizenship behavior is vital resource in increasing organizational brand strength and the internal brand identity. The public sector universities policy makers should be ensured the adoption of fair and effective recruitment process of hiring for the academic staff, it helped to motivate the employees towards citizenship behavior and keep them loyal with the organization.

Although, the increased competition among higher education institutions in Pakistan has developed pressure on top management to not only maintained good image but also improved institution's performance. Hence, it was seemed truism that universities should be focused on providing a good teaching services. Secondly, the behavior of academic staff should be aligned with an institution brand values for an appropriate delivery of brand promise. Therefore, to attain this brand promise, the brand-centered recruitment practice is known imperative.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research had a certain limitations that were recognized and needed to be reported. The main concern of this study was related with the BCB of an academic staff only as sample. But, internal branding literature have recognized the involvement of all employees to build a successful organizational brand. There is a need for future researchers to assess the behavior of both academicians and administrative staff, which contributes to deliver an appropriate university brand promise. Based on the importance of employees' behavioral branding, it was suggested that the future investigation should be conducted in other services sectors. Furthermore, the present research was cross-sectional in nature; thereafter longitudinal method study may be conducted in future to find the cause and effect relationship among variables and examine how brand-centered recruitment practice can lead towards employee's brand citizenship behavior. This study was assumed only brand-centered recruitment practice in relation to employees' BCB. Therefore, future researchers should consider other factors such as employees' brand understanding, brand oriented performance, and brand psychological ownership as an antecedent of an employees' BCB.

REFERENCES

- Akingbola, K. (2012). Context and nonprofit human resource management. *Administration & Society*, 0095399712451887.
- Allen, D. G., Shore, L. M., & Griffeth, R. W. (2003). The role of perceived organizational support and supportive human resource practices in the turnover process. *Journal of management*, 29(1), 99-118.
- Aurang, T. W., Gorchels, L., & Bishop, T. R. (2005). Human resource management's role in internal branding: an opportunity for cross-functional brand message synergy. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(3), 163-169.
- Baumgarth, C., & Schmidt, M. (2010). How strong is the business-to-business brand in the workforce? An empirically-tested model of 'internal brand equity' in a business-to-business setting. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(8), 1250-1260. doi: 10.1016/j.indmarman.2010.02.022
- Burmann, C., & Zeplin, S. (2005). Building brand commitment: A behavioural approach to internal brand management. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 12(4), 279-300.
- Burmann, C., Zeplin, S., & Riley, N. (2009a). Key determinants of internal brand management success: An exploratory empirical analysis. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16(4), 264-284.
- Chang, A., Chiang, H.-H., & Han, T.-S. (2012). A multilevel investigation of relationships among brand-centered HRM, brand psychological ownership, brand citizenship behaviors, and customer satisfaction. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46, 626-662.
- Delery, J. E., & Doty, D. H. (1996). Modes of theorizing in strategic human resource management: Tests of universalistic, contingency, and configurational performance predictions. *Academy of management Journal*, 39(4), 802-835.
- Duarte, P. A. O., & Raposo, M. L. B. (2010). A PLS model to study brand preference: An application to the mobile phone market *Handbook of partial least squares* (pp. 449-485): Springer.
- Erkmen, E., & Hancer, M. (2014). Journal of Air Transport Management Linking brand commitment and brand citizenship behaviors of airline employees : " The role of trust ".

- Farrell, A. M., Souchon, A. L., & Durden, G. R. (2001). Service encounter conceptualisation: employees' service behaviours and customers' service quality perceptions. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17(5-6), 577-593.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39-50.
- Girod, S. J. (2005). The human resource management practice of retail branding: An ethnography within Oxfam trading division. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 33(7), 514-530.
- Gould-Williams, J., & Davies, F. (2005). Using social exchange theory to predict the effects of HRM practice on employee outcomes: An analysis of public sector workers. *Public Management Review*, 7(1), 1-24.
- Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Babin, B. J., & Black, W. C. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (Vol. 7): Pearson Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Helm, S. V., Renk, U., & Mishra, A. (2016). Exploring the impact of employees' self-concept, brand identification and brand pride on brand citizenship behaviors. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(1/2), 58-77.
- Henkel, S., Tomczak, T., Heitmann, M., & Herrmann, A. (2007). Managing brand consistent employee behaviour: relevance and managerial control of behavioural branding. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(5), 310-320.
- Hurrell, S. A., & Scholarios, D. (2014). "The People Make the Brand" Reducing Social Skills Gaps Through Person-Brand Fit and Human Resource Management Practices. *Journal of Service Research*, 17(1), 54-67.
- King, C., & Grace, D. (2008). Internal branding: Exploring the employee's perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(5), 358-372.
- King, C., & So, K. K. F. (2013). Enhancing Hotel Employees' Brand Understanding and Brand-Building Behavior in China. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, XX, 1-25. doi: 10.1177/1096348013491602
- Löhndorf, B., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2014). Internal branding social identity and social exchange perspectives on turning employees into brand champions. *Journal of Service Research*, 1094670514522098.
- Morhart, F. M., Herzog, W., & Tomczak, T. (2009). Brand-specific leadership: Turning employees into brand champions. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(5), 122-142.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome*: Lexington Books/DC Heath and Com.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of management*, 26(3), 513-563.
- Punjaisri, & Wilson, A. (2007). The role of internal branding in the delivery of employee brand promise. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(1), 57-70.
- Punjaisri, K., & Wilson, A. (2017). The Role of Internal Branding in the Delivery of Employee Brand Promise *Advances in Corporate Branding* (pp. 91-108): Springer.
- Sepahvand, R., & Sepahvand, S. (2013). Investigating the effectiveness of Brand-centered human resource management on clients' satisfaction of company's brand with concentrating on Black Box processes. 5, 979-992.
- Shaari, H., Salleh, S. M., & Hussin, Z. (2012). RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND KNOWLEDGE AND BRAND REWARDS, AND EMPLOYEES' BRAND CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF BRAND COMMITMENT. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 13(3), 335.

- Sun, L.-Y., Aryee, S., & Law, K. S. (2007). High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: A relational perspective. *Academy of management Journal*, 50(3), 558-577.
- Xu, J. (2009). A Study of the Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Psychological Ownership : Multilevel and Longitudinal Approaches (pp. 241): Institute of Business Management , National Chengchi University.