

Understanding the Relative Effectiveness of Customer Relationships with Brands, Firms and the Front-line Employees – A Meta-Analysis.

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Abstract

To advance understanding of different types of business relational strategies influencing customer loyalty, this article conducts a meta-analysis of the links between relational mechanisms (i.e., satisfaction, trust, commitment) across relationships with the brand, the firm, and the front-line employee on objective/subjective measures of customer loyalty. The analysis of 297 publications (N = 484,118) across 885 effects in 45 countries reveals a natural relational progression showing that relationships between brands customers are stronger predictors of loyalty, followed by employee and firm relationships. These results can be observed at the granular (i.e., mechanism to outcome) and at aggregated (i.e., Relationship Quality = satisfaction + trust + commitment) levels. Results provide valuable contributions to theory and practice providing guidelines on how to best invest relational resources. (Note: between now and the conference, important moderators will be analyzed).

Subject Areas: *Marketing Strategy, Organization Relationships*

Track: Relationship Marketing