UNDERSTANDING THE OPPOSING ROLE OF CONSUMERS' BRAND RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF NEGATIVE EVENTS: A META-ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

When faced with negative events such as brand transgressions, companies are typically highly concerned with how their loyal customers are affected. Prior research has found that consumers with a strong consumer brand relationship (CBR) often react less negatively to such events (buffering effect). However, there is also evidence of stronger adverse reactions from these consumers (amplifying effect). To reconcile these opposing effects of a CBR, we conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis covering a variety of negative events and brand relationship constructs. Based on broad, empirical generalizations we demonstrate that the interplay of self-brand distance and the type of negative event (value- vs. performance-based) determines whether the buffering or amplifying effect occurs. For marketers, our results indicate that CBRs based on consumers' self-concept can protect brands from negative responses in performance-based incidents but may backfire in events related to the brand's values.

Subject Areas: *Branding, Consumer Behaviour, Customer Relationship Management and Customer Satisfaction*

Track: Product and Brand Management