

Factors Affecting Taiwanese College Students' Brand Loyalty towards Fast Fashion

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Introduction

Fast fashion provides the latest fashion trends along with agile response to consumer demand with reasonable prices (Choi, 2014; Jin, Chang, Matthews, & Gupta, 2012). Fast fashion's target market is large population of mobile young people. Due to the fact that fast fashion has become a key feature of the global fashion industry over the last decade (Choi, 2014), there is phenomenal growth in the availability of fast fashion brands in international markets. With the aggressive international expansion of fast fashion retailers, young consumers in Taiwan are attracted to fast fashion's "hot" products, featuring updated looks, greater variety, and limited editions.

This study aims to empirically investigate the factors affecting consumer's fast fashion brand loyalty from an international perspective by examining Taiwanese college students' perceptions of and loyalty towards fast fashion. Based on our extensive literature review, we proposed a research model (Figure 1) which examines the factors affecting consumer's brand loyalty in the fast fashion context. The research model encompasses six hypotheses that are illustrated in the model. We hypothesize that consumer's perceptions of fast fashion including brand awareness, perceived quality, perceived value, brand personality, organizational associations, and brand uniqueness affect consumer's brand loyalty.

Research Method

A survey instrument in the form of a structured questionnaire was designed based on a careful review of pertinent literature. The survey includes a pool of 20 items compiled from the literature. Specifically, three items measuring brand awareness were obtained from Buil, Chernatony, and Martínez (2008) and Tong and Hawley (2009); three items measuring perceived quality were obtained from Buil et al. (2008); while three measures of perceived value were from Netemeyer, et al. (2004). Two items were used to measure brand personality (Aaker, 1997). Three measures of organizational association were obtained from Buil et al. (2008). Three measure of brand uniqueness were from Netemeyer et al. (2004). Finally, three measures for brand loyalty were adopted from Yoo and Donthu (2001). The items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

The survey was first developed in English and then conducted in Taiwan. A translation and a back-translation of the questionnaire were performed. First, a research team including three marketing experts who teach marketing at a large university in Taiwan translated the questionnaires from English to Chinese version. Then an English native speaker who is also fluent in Chinese helped translate the survey back to English version. If the translated version is different from the original English version, discussions were held in the research team and adjustments were made in the Chinese questionnaire. Finally, the agreement of original and translated version has around 95% congruent rate. We recruited a sample of college students in that large Taiwanese university.

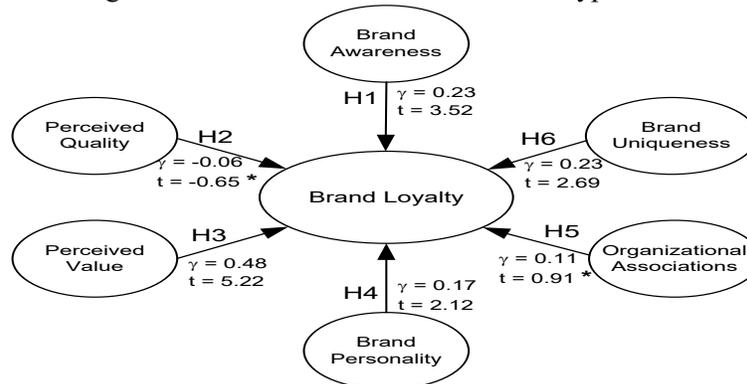
Respondents were first asked to select one fast fashion brand they were most familiar with from a set

of six top fast fashion brands including Zara, H & M, Mango, Topshop, Forever 21, and Uniqlo. Then they rated the pool of the 20 items included in the survey. A total of 300 responses were collected and 279 responses are valid. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 (47.7% between 18-20; and 52.3% between 21-25). Sixty-six percent of the sample were female.

Data Analysis and Results

Data was analyzed using structural equation modeling approach. Evaluation of the measurement model was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis. Multiple fit indexes were used to examine the model fit. A satisfactory fit is achieved for the measurement model and the analysis of composite reliability, the AVEs, and discriminant validity is also acceptable. The analysis of structural equation model supports the relationships stated in the H1, H3, H4, H6, demonstrating that brand awareness, perceived value, brand personality, and brand uniqueness positively and strongly affect Taiwanese young consumer's brand loyalty. However, significant support is not found for the H2 (perceived quality - brand loyalty, standardized path coefficient = -0.06, $t = -0.65$, non-significant), nor for the H5 (organizational association - brand loyalty, standardized path coefficient = 0.11, $t = 0.91$, non-significant). Thus, for the Taiwanese college students, brand awareness, perceived value, brand personality, and brand uniqueness are the contributing factors to generating consumer's loyalty towards fast fashion brands. The paper concludes with discussions, implications and limitations.

Figure 1 Structural Model and Research Hypotheses



Note: The path coefficients in the figure are standardized parameter estimates. * indicates the t-value for the standardized path coefficient is *not* statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

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