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An empirical study on the relationship between consumption emotions and brand loyalty

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Consumption emotions play a crucial role in consumers' post-purchase behaviors. Evoked by potentially controllable factors related to marketers, consumption emotions fall into a two-by-two matrix: attribute-level emotions (ALE) and beyond attribute-level emotions (BALE) with positive or negative latencies. ALE is related to product, and BALE is related to marketing communication. The authors hypothesized a model of consumption emotions in relation to brand trust, brand affect, and brand loyalty in product consumption. The study tested the model by using a sample of 398 college students and applying structural equation modeling. The results supported most the hypotheses, suggesting indirect effects of the four major types of consumption emotions on brand loyalty via brand affect. Furthermore, the study revealed the direct effects of positive or negative emotions at the attribute level. The positive emotions on brand trust were induced by marketing communication, which in turn led to higher levels of brand loyalty. Nevertheless, the effect of negative emotions on brand trust was non-significant.

Keywords: Marketing communication; consumption emotions; brand trust; brand affect; brand loyalty

Introduction

Emotions affect human behavior to a considerable extent. Similarly, emotions influence consumers' behavior during and after their purchases. Since the 1980s, several studies have examined consumption emotions, and the relationships between consumption emotions, satisfaction, and other post-purchase behaviors have gained wide recognition (Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2005; Westbrook, 1980; White, 2010). In addition, brand loyalty, which is as an important variable in post-purchase behavior, has drawn increasing attention. Although some research has found that emotions affect brand loyalty in service industries, few studies have explored the relationship between consumption emotions and brand loyalty in product consumption. Consumption emotions, as the result of factors that are controllable by marketers, may also affect customers' brand loyalty to the manufacturers. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between consumption emotions and brand loyalty in product consumption with the aim of contributing to managerial practice in the industry.

Based on the literature review, in this study, the authors categorize consumption emotions into attribute-level emotions (ALE) and beyond attribute-level emotions (BALE). The authors hypothesize a theoretical model that incorporates the relationship between ALE and BALE. They test the model using the empirical data, and they describe the research results. Finally, they discuss the managerial implications, limitations of the study, and future directions for research.

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Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

Consumption emotions induced by product consumption

The term “consumption emotions” refers to a series of specific emotional reactions that occur in the consumer’s use of a product (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). How does emotion affect behavior? Weiner (1985) uses attributional theory to explain this causality. According to attributional theory, human behavior is determined by three attributional dimensions of emotions: the locus of causality, controllability, and the stability of emotions. Regarding the locus of causality, for example, people tend to behave differently when the emotion is attributed to the self or to others. Thus, consumption emotions would have a greater influence on post-purchase behavior if the consumer attributed the cause to the marketer rather than himself or herself. Moreover, the effect of emotions upon post-purchase behavior would be greater if their cause was identified by consumers as controllable rather than uncontrollable (Westbrook, 1987). Thus, there is a potential area for research on the causes of emotions, which may shed light on the understanding of consumers’ post-purchase behavior.

Previous studies suggested that product attributes (e.g., Westbrook, 1980), perceived service quality (e.g., Oliver, 1993), performance of service employees (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Yoo, Park, & Maclnnis, 1998), and store characteristics (e.g., Hui & Bateson, 1991; Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson, 1996; Yoo et al., 1998) are the major causes of the consumption emotions that influence their post-purchase behaviors. Among the emotions caused by the above controllable factors, the emotions caused by product attributes have been identified as having direct effects on post-purchase satisfaction (Westbrook, 1980). According to Nisbett, Zukier, and Lemley (1981), the dilution effect suggests that beyond these product attributes, other factors, such as advertising and consumers’ experiences, can also influence post-purchase behaviors. These effects may be due to the mediation of emotions (Oliver, 1993). Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) supported this view in observing that consumers were affected by the benevolent activities of firms. Mano and Oliver (1993) went further to state that the level of arousal and consumers’ assessment of the nature of products (e.g., utilitarian or hedonistic) could also affect the development of emotions. Furthermore, in purchase decisions that involve issues of environmental and social sustainability, consumers can experience guilt or pride (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014). Thus, some emotions that are irrelevant to product attributes might also affect consumers’ post-purchase behaviors.

In addition to product attributes, other factors that are controllable by marketers include the store environment and marketing communication. In the process of purchasing, the store environment may evoke consumption emotions. The store environment refers to the main settings of a store, including the three dimensions of physical setting (light, temperature, background music, and smells), design (color, furnishing, decoration, product display, and degree of crowdedness), and social factors (salesmen’s response and emotional expression) (Bitner, 1992). The findings of previous research suggested that a myriad of factors may arouse consumption emotions, including background music, smell, crowdedness of the store, behavioral reactions of the salespersons, store location, and store attributes such as their names (Bitner, 1992; Louro et al., 2005). Furthermore, the perceived online store environment was found to influence shoppers’ emotions (Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Siamagka, 2013; Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003). In addition to the store environment, marketing communications, such as advertising, public relations, such as charity, sponsorship, and sales promotions, may also trigger consumption emotions (e.g., Batra &

Ray, 1986; Raghurir, Inman, & Grande, 2004; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

First, several studies showed that advertising may arouse consumers' emotional reactions (e.g., Batra & Ray, 1986; Bruno, Melnyk, & Völckner, 2017; Cian, Krishna, & Schwarz, 2015; Edell & Burke, 1987; Hamelin, Moujahid, & Thaichon, 2017; Stayman & Aaker, 1988; Teixeira, Wedel, & Pieters, 2012). The emotion of warmth was found to be induced by commercials (Aaker, Stayman, & Hagerty, 1986). In addition to warmth, Edell and Burke (1987) demonstrated two other dimensions of emotions that were triggered by advertising: positive and negative emotions, which could be evoked by the same advertisement. Holbrook and Batra (1987) found three emotional dimensions in advertising: pleasure, arousal, and domination. Poels and Dewitte (2006) compared different methods used for measuring emotions in advertising. Based on their findings, they proposed that applying modern brain imaging techniques, such as Magnetoencephalography (MEG) or functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), to study the emotional reactions evoked by advertising was very promising, and could shed new light on the effects of advertising.

Second, marketers' charity events may provide emotional compensation for consumers, which contributes to their positive emotions (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Sponsorship may also trigger consumers' positive emotions (Chakraborti & Roy, 2013; Chavanat, Martinent, & Ferrand, 2009; Christensen, 2006; DeGaris, Kwak, & Mcdaniel, 2017; Deitz, Myers, & Stafford, 2012; Kim, Lee, Magnusen, & Kim, 2015; Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006; Mida & Zaiem, 2015; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Hansen, Hailing, and Christensen (2006) pointed out that sponsoring different groups could elicit different emotional results. Speed and Thompson (2000) showed that consumers tended to develop a positive emotion toward the sponsor. Christensen (2006) developed the Net Emotional Response Score (NERS) to measure consumers' emotional reactions to sponsorship.

Third, sales promotion was shown to elicit consumption emotions (Honea & Dahl, 2005; Lee, 2016; Lee & Tsai, 2014; Raghurir et al., 2004). The reason was that sales promotion usually led to pleasant and interesting emotional reactions among consumers (Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, 2000), and it provided consumers with a sense of being a "smart shopper," therefore evoking self-conceit (Schindler, 1989). Price promotions were shown to enhance consumers' positive emotional reactions (Lee & Tsai, 2014). However, other kinds of sales promotion, such as conditional sales promotion, induced negative emotions (Lee, 2016). Honea and Dahl (2005) developed a Promotion Affect Scale (PAS) to measure the emotions induced by sales promotion.

Previous research showed that both product attributes and marketing communication could induce consumption emotions. Among the controllable factors that induce consumption emotions, the store environment is related mainly to retailers. Product attributes, advertising, public relations are related to manufacturers, and sales promotion is mainly connected to retailers and manufacturers. The present study focuses on consumption emotions that are aroused by factors that are controllable by manufacturers. The present study does not consider consumption emotions that are induced by store environments because this topic is beyond the focus of the present study. In the present study, consumption emotions are divided into ALE and BALE. ALEs are induced by product attributes, such as product quality, features, outlook, style, color, packaging, place of origin, and reputation. BALEs are induced by factors other than product attributes that are controllable by the marketers. The main causes of BALEs are marketing communication, such as advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. Although the store environment is also a cause of BALE, because the store environment is related to retailers it is not examined in the present study.

Consumption emotions and post-purchase behaviors

Previous studies on the consumption of physical products were based on the valence-congruent view (e.g., Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002; Westbrook, 1980) of the emotion-behavior relationship in which positive emotions lead to positive behaviors and vice versa. Studies that used the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm (e.g., Oliver, 1980) went one step further to examine the effects of emotions on post-purchase satisfaction. Positive emotions induced during consumption can result in satisfaction, repurchase intention, and even positive word-of-mouth behaviors, whereas negative emotions can lead to dissatisfaction, negative word-of-mouth, and complaint behaviors (e.g., Mooradian & Olver, 1997; Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002; Westbrook, 1980; Wetzer, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2007). Emotions also have a direct influence on repurchase behaviors (Troilo, Cito, & Soscia, 2014). Furthermore, some studies focused on the relationship between specific emotions and post-purchase behavior. For example, gratitude, delight, and guilt were found to have different influences on post-consumption behaviors, which included positive and negative word-of-mouth, repurchase intention, and complaint behavior (Soscia, 2007). Pleasure and arousal affected satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and the likelihood of generating word-of-mouth (Ladhari, 2007).

Westbrook (1987) attributed three types of causes of emotions: the marketer, the buyer, and the buying situation. Among these three attributes, only negative emotions induced by the marketer and the product itself were found to have a systematic effect on post-purchase behaviors. In response to Westbrook's attribution of emotions, Oliver (1993) applied an alternative taxonomy of emotions to explain consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with product attributes.

Despite the previous conceptualizations and empirical evidence of the relationship between ALE and post-purchase satisfaction, Oliver (1993) argued that other variables might be able to be controlled by the firm, such as consumption experience, thus also inducing emotions that are highly relevant to post-purchase behaviors. It appears that consumption experiences should be closely connected to the store, either physically or virtually. The findings of studies based on environmental psychology suggested that the factors attached to consumption experiences, such as background music, in-store odor, crowded consumers, and performance of service encounters, affected consumption emotions (e.g., Donovan & Rossiter, 1982) and might consequently have a deciding role in consumers' buying behaviors (e.g., Bitner, 1992). Previous studies examined the moderators of the relationship between consumption emotions and satisfaction. Machleit and Mantel (2001) considered the moderator role of emotion attribution, in which store-induced emotions showed a greater impact on satisfaction than self-induced emotions did. Yoo et al. (1998) and Louro et al. (2005) found a causal relationship among store characteristics, consumption emotions, and post-purchase behaviors (i.e., perceived value, store attitude, and intention to repurchase).

Product attributes and store characteristics are among the most recognized controllable causes of consumption emotions. Keller (1993) classified product and service attributes into product-related attributes and non-product-related attributes based on the closeness of an attribute to its incumbent product or service. Product-related attributes denote the necessary characteristics of a product to fulfill its functionality. Non-product-related attributes are factors related to purchase or consumption, such as pricing, packaging, product appearance, attached usage image, and the self-image of the user. Keller (1998) extended his model by including brand personality, affect, and usage experience to reflect non-product-related attributes. Regarding store characteristics, Bitner (1992) highlighted

three key areas: (1) ambient elements (e.g., lighting, temperature, background music, and in-store odor); (2) design elements (e.g., color, decoration, display, and crowdedness); (3) social elements (mainly the interactions between consumers and service encounters).

However, the literature review revealed that the causes of consumption emotions are not limited to product attributes or store characteristics. In general, product attributes are the key driving force in the buying decisions made by consumers. Nevertheless, information that is unrelated to product attributes can also reduce the probability of making a drastic decision (Nisbett et al., 1981). That is, different attributes compete based on their weights and values to influence consumers' decision-making. Irrelevant information may have a confounding effect on this process, therefore diluting the effects of relevant information on the process (Anderson, 1971). Real-world observations of consumer behaviors supported the assumption that irrelevant information, such as advertising, benevolent activities, and sponsorship behaviors of firms, can lessen the effect of product attributes on consumers' product evaluation (Hoch & Ha, 1986; Meyvis & Janiszewski, 2002). Presumably, consumption emotions play a mediator role in this process.

Regarding the effects of "irrelevant information" on consumer behavior, the role of advertising in emotion has been well studied. Most of these studies were on the relationship between emotions and attitudes toward advertising (A_{ad}), attitude toward the brand (A_b), and purchase intention. The emotions induced by advertising were found to have a direct effect on A_{ad} (e.g., Aaker et al., 1986; Batra & Ray, 1986; Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Kemp, Bui, & Chapa, 2012; Labroo & Ramanathan, 2007; McKay-Nesbitt, Manchanda, Smith, & Huhmann, 2011; Yang, Kim, & Yoo, 2013). These emotions and indirectly influenced A_b mediated by A_{ad} (Batra & Ray, 1986; Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Olney, Holbrook, & Batra, 1991; Yi, 1990). A_b was found to have a direct influence on purchase intention (Batra & Ray, 1986; Yi, 1990). Other studies found that emotions indirectly influenced purchase intention mediated by A_{ad} (Aaker et al., 1986; Kemp et al., 2012). Some research showed that emotions have direct influences on A_b (Brown, Homer, & Inman, 1998; Ruiz & Sicilia, 2004; Stayman & Aaker, 1988) and purchase intention (Ruiz & Sicilia, 2004; Xu, 2017). However, research is lacking on the connection between the emotions evoked by advertising and post-purchase behaviors.

Similarly, benevolent activities, sponsorship behaviors, and sales promotion by firms can induce consumption emotions. Firms' benevolent activities provided an affect-based complement to consumers and thus elicit a positive emotion (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Sponsorship and sales promotion generated a similar effect. Most of the research focused on the relationship between the emotions elicited by sponsorship and sales promotion and those elicited by purchase intention and brand attitude (Chakraborti & Roy, 2013; Chavanat et al., 2009; DeGaris et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2015; Koo et al., 2006; Lee, 2016; Mida & Zaiem, 2015; Raghuram et al., 2004). Lee and Tsai (2014) demonstrated that consumption enjoyment had a direct influence on repurchase intention in price promotion. However, the review did not yield findings on whether emotions that were induced by sales promotion affected brand loyalty.

In summary, regarding ALE and post-purchase behavior in product consumption, most previous research focused on satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and repurchase intention. However, few studies examined the relationship between ALE and brand loyalty. Regarding BALE, most previous research focused on the relationship between BALE and pre-purchase behavior. Few studies examined the relationship between BALE and post-purchase behavior, especially brand loyalty. Based on our findings of the literature review, in the present study, we aim to differentiate between positive and negative ALE and BALE

and to examine their potential effect on brand loyalty in order to fill the gap in the extant research.

Consumption emotions and brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is the deeply held commitment to re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, which leads to repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing although situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential to cause switching behavior (Oliver, 1999). Several previous studies examined the relationship between consumption emotions and brand loyalty in service industries. Some studies found that emotions directly affected loyalty. In the retail marketing context, emotions indirectly influenced loyalty intention, which was mediated by attitude (Taylor, Ishida, & Donovan, 2016). Consumption emotions indirectly affected customer loyalty to e-mail providers through their satisfaction with the service (Ranganathan, Madupu, Sen, & Brooks, 2013). Emotions elicited by images of corporate social responsibility indirectly affected loyalty, which was mediated by satisfaction with bank services (Pérez & Bosque, 2015). Similar emotions were elicited by employee ingratiation (Medler-liraz & Yagil, 2013). The results of a study on the relationships between consumption emotions, satisfaction, and consumer loyalty to the vendors in grocery stores showed a direct effect of consumption emotions on satisfaction and an indirect effect of satisfaction on retail loyalty through trust and commitment (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2002).

Some research showed that emotions were types or components of customer satisfaction and that emotions served as a significant predictor of customer loyalty in service industries (Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997; Yu & Dean, 2001).

Bloemer and Ruyter (1999) found that that in service industries, positive emotions were a moderating variable in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Ou and Verhoef (2017) found that emotions were both independent moderating variables in loyalty intention.

However, several studies showed that emotions had a direct influence on brand loyalty in service industries. Service loyalty was directly influenced by emotions (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Pullman & Gross, 2004; White, 2006; White & Yu, 2005). Previous findings showed asymmetric effects of emotions on loyalty: negative emotions influenced loyalty more strongly than positive emotions did (Rychalski & Hudson, 2017). In retail services, customers' perceived control and retail atmospheric cues affected positive emotions, which affected loyalty (Loureiro & Roschk, 2014; Söderlund, 2007). Wang et al. (2017) found that employees' positive affective displays enhanced loyalty intention through customers' affective reactions in different services.

Although the investigation of the relationship between consumption emotions and brand loyalty is not new, previous studies mainly focused on the service industries, and little attention was paid to product consumption. Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1985) stated the distinctions between product and services, including intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability. Other research also found that consumers' evaluations of products and services were different (Sun, Keh, & Lee, 2012). Therefore, research is required to investigate the relationships between the emotions induced by product attribute and brand loyalty in product consumption. In addition to service industries, ALE may influence brand loyalty.

Regarding BALE, previous studies examined the relationship between these emotions and pre-purchase decision behavior, which included attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. However, in studies on the relationship between the emotions elicited by market-

ing communication and post-purchase behavior, the important post-purchase variable, brand loyalty, is rarely mentioned. However, empirical evidence showed that consumers correctly recalled past events based on the emotions that they experienced (Barrett, 1997; Machleit & Mantel, 2001). Thus, it is possible for consumers to recall emotions that are induced by marketing communication, which are irrelevant to product attributes in the post-purchase stage. However, the recalled emotions affect their subsequent behaviors, such as brand loyalty. Furthermore, according to Spreng, Mackenzie, and Olshavsky (1996), information delivered through advertising, personal selling, and packaging could influence consumer expectations and consequently induce consumption emotions and post-purchase satisfaction. Accordingly, marketers could also utilize marketing communication to deliver the same information. Thus, the emotions induced by marketing communication activities could also be recalled by consumers after purchasing, which may affect post-purchase behaviors. Therefore, BALE may influence satisfaction or other post-purchase behavior, such as brand loyalty.

Although satisfaction served as a mediator between emotions and loyalty in some studies, other research results suggested that satisfied customers may not necessarily remain loyal, and the role of satisfaction as an antecedent of loyalty has been critically analyzed (Oliver, 1999). Gitomer (1998) demonstrated that satisfaction as an outcome measure did not necessarily indicate that the customer would be loyal to the company. Customers may remain loyal to a brand because of factors other than satisfaction, such as high exchange cost (Burnham, Frels, & Mahajan, 2003). Burnham et al. (2003) stressed that satisfaction was not necessarily the sufficient condition of loyalty; it is possible for a customer to remain loyal simply because of high switching costs. For example, the psychological cost resulting from the ending of a brand relationship, that is, a brand affect, is among these switching costs. Therefore, consumption emotions, including ALE and BALE, may impact brand loyalty through mediating factors other than satisfaction. In their study on brand loyalty, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found that brand trust and brand affect served as two important antecedents of brand loyalty. Brand trust is the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), and brand affect is defined as the brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In an electronic customer relationship management (eCRM) study, Taylor and Hunter (2003) also found that brand trust and brand affect had direct effects on brand loyalty.

In the past decades, much research has been conducted on Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action (TRA). According to this theory, behavior is determined by the behavioral intention to emit the behavior. Moreover, two major factors determine behavioral intentions: attitude and subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude is the sum of beliefs about a particular behavior as weighted by evaluations of these beliefs, including the positive or negative emotions that the people have regarding the behavior. Behavior is dependent on the attitudes, beliefs, and intentions, and intention is the most important determinant of the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TRA has been validated in the field of consumer behavior (e.g., Shimp & Kavas, 1984; Bagozzi, Baumgartner, & Yi, 1992; Dwyer, Drayer, Greenhalgh, & Lecrom, 2013; Lee & Hong, 2016). Based on this theory, Song, Xing, and Chathoth (2015) developed a model of the affective theory of social exchange and TRA. Their results showed the affective effects on festival satisfaction and loyalty. TRA also has been applied to redefine brand loyalty. Ha (1998) investigated the relationships among several antecedents of unit brand loyalty (UBL) by applying TRA. The findings showed that consumers were brand

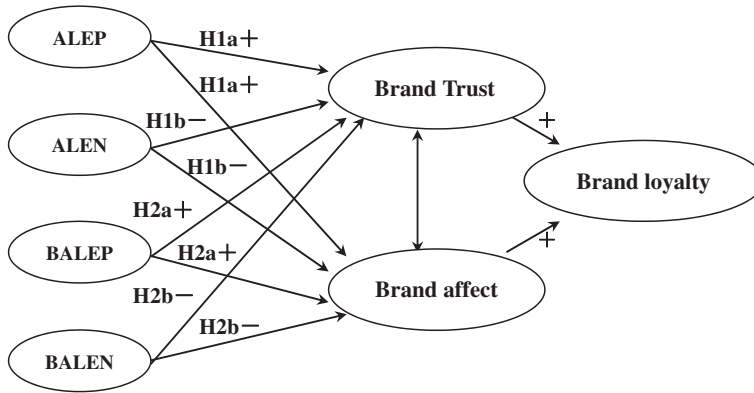


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

loyal when both attitude and behavior were favorable. In his study, Ha developed a table indicating eight combinations of customers' brand loyalty based on three variables: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and purchase behavior. Several studies incorporated emotions in TRA (e.g., Bilgihan, Madanoglu, & Ricci, 2016; Chen & Huang, 2016; Hartel, McColl-Kennedy, & McDonald, 1998; Mobin-ul-Haque, Azhar, & Manqoosh-ur-Rehman, 2014). Mobin-ul-Haque et al. (2014) found that emotions were antecedents of and mediators between attitude and behavioral intention. Bilgihan et al. (2016) also found that, based on TRA, emotions had direct effects on casino players' intention to return, and they had indirect effects on gamblers' loyalty. Fitzmaurice (2005) added an emotion variable (eagerness) to the TRA, which broadened the cognitive approach to modeling consumer's intention behavior. According to these findings, emotions induced by product and marketing communication may affect consumers' attitude toward the brand, such as brand trust and brand affect, and therefore indirectly influence brand loyalty. Therefore, consumption emotions, which include ALE and BALE, may be able to affect brand loyalty through the mediators of brand trust and brand affect. Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of our study.

Based on this theoretical framework, we state the following hypotheses:

H1: ALE has an indirect effect on brand loyalty via the mediating effects of brand trust and brand affect.

H1a: A positive ALE (ALEP) has an indirect positive effect on brand loyalty via the mediating positive effects of brand trust and brand affect.

H1b: A negative ALE (ALEN) has an indirect negative effect on brand loyalty via the mediating negative effects of brand trust and brand affect.

H2: BALE has an indirect effect on brand loyalty via the mediating effects of brand trust and brand affect.

H2a: A positive BALE (BALEP) has an indirect positive effect on brand loyalty via the mediating positive effects of brand trust and brand affect.

H2b: A negative BALE (BALEN) has an indirect negative effect on brand loyalty via the mediating negative effects of brand trust and brand affect.

Methods

Procedure

The study used a questionnaire to survey the participants' recall of their past consumption experiences. In related research on consumption emotions, the manipulation of emotions (e.g., via experimental control) may compromise the validity of the study. However, naturally induced emotions may overcome this drawback (Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997). Hence, this study used the method of retrospect instead of laboratory experiments.

Based on the literature review and a qualitative research (i.e., a focus group discussion), the study piloted a questionnaire that was translated from its initial English version into Chinese. A total of 120 college students participated in this pilot study to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (Churchill, 1979). The final eligible sample size was 61. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from 0.7868 to 0.9596, all of which were higher than the critical value of 0.7. Based on the initial results of the pilot study, minor revisions were made to the measurements. The main study surveyed college students at a major university in Sichuan Province in China. The study selected undergraduates as the participants due to homogeneity concerns, so as to ensure the internal validity of the current study (Westbrook, 1980). The students participated in the survey during their classes. Eight hundred questionnaires were distributed, and 707 responses were received. After removing the survey results that had incomplete or invalid data (i.e., identical responses across the survey questions) (Kim & Curry, 1977), 544 valid survey results were obtained: the response rate was 76.9%.

The results showed that 146 participants attributed consumption emotions to factors other than advertising, sales promotion, and sponsorship. These factors were related to the service, the attitudes of the salespersons in the stores, or to the participants themselves as well as their relatives. Because this study was focused on the relationship between ALE and BALE and brand loyalty to the manufacturers, 146 questionnaire results that reflected consumption emotions induced by the salespersons in the stores were eliminated. As a result, the final sample size was 398 (43.7% male, 54.0% female, 2.3% unknown).

From a prescribed list of products, the participants were invited to recall a particular self-selected consumption experience during the last few months, which had left a deep impression on them, such as purchasing chewing gum, tooth paste, bottled water, apparel, shoes, cellular phone, a computer, and MP3. These products were included on the list because they are common commodities that all the participants were likely to have purchased. This study design was useful for the subsequent explanation and generalization of the research results (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003). Based on the selected buying events, the participants were requested to recall their most vivid consumption experiences and answer the questions provided.

Measurement

This research framework was comprised of seven constructs. Among them, brand trust, brand affect, and brand loyalty were based on the measurement items in Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), which used a 6-point Likert scale. Brand trust was measured by three

statements: “I trust this brand,” “I rely on this brand” and “This is an honest brand.” Brand affect was measured by three items: “I feel good when I use this brand,” “This brand makes me happy” and “This brand gives me pleasure.” Brand loyalty was measured by four statements. Specifically, purchase loyalty was measured by two statements: “I will buy this brand the next time I buy this product,” and “I intend to keep purchasing this brand.” Attitudinal loyalty was measured by two statements: “I am committed to this brand,” and “I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands.” The constructs ALEP, ALEN, BALEP, and BALEN were measured using the Consumption Emotion Set (CES) (Richins, 1997). Before applying the CES to this research theme, its validity was assessed with the help of 151 undergraduates at a major university located in southwest China. The results of this assessment revealed that 63%–79% of the informants had never experienced emotions such as sadness, fear, shame, envy, loneliness, and romantic love during their consumption experiences. Westbrook (1987) stated that surprises are the amplification of positive or negative emotions, which in turn generate positive surprises and negative surprises. In the present study, it was difficult to differentiate between ALE surprise and BALE surprise. The authors also found that it was not possible to categorize peacefulness as a neutral emotion into either positive or negative emotions. Therefore, the remaining variables in the CES were as follows: (1) for ALEN and BALEN: angry, discontent, and worry; (2) for ALEP and BALEP: love, contentment, optimism, joy, and excitement. In the current study, all variables were measured using a 6-point Likert scale (from “not at all” to “very strong”).

Data Analysis and Results

Lisrel with PRELISII was used for the structural equation modeling (SEM). This structural model comprises 27 observable and 7 latent variables. Maximum likelihood was used to estimate the parameters in the equations. The sample size was about 5.4 times the free parameters. This ratio complies with the sample size suggested by Bentler and Chou (1987). Before formulating the SEM, normality tests were conducted for all variables. All S coefficients were less than 3, and all K coefficients were less than 10. Therefore, the data satisfied Kline’s (1998) suggestions of normality. An examination of the distribution of standardized residues (Q-plot) ensured that the data conformed to the basic requirement of multivariate normal distribution.

Measurement model

Following Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black’s (1998) guidelines, measurement models of each construct were developed and modified based on the following: (1) the standardized coefficients of observable variables are less than 0.95; (2) the fitness of each model. The results of the Chi-square test should not be significant; GFI and AGFI were close to or higher than 0.9, and RMSEA was less than 0.05; (3) the modification index (MI) was used to modify these measurement models. The RMSEA of the modified measurement model is 0.034, GFI and AGFI are 0.93 and 0.91, respectively, NFI, NNFI and CFI are 0.98, 0.99 and 0.99 respectively, PGFI is 0.71, SRMR is 0.031, respectively, therefore, the resultant measurement models were satisfactory.

The convergent validity and discriminant validity were examined in the structural model. Based on the guidelines of Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Hair et al. (1998), the correlation coefficients of the items used to measure the same construct were all larger than 0.5 with t-values larger than 3.29. Thus, convergent validity was assured. The correlation

coefficients of the items between different constructs were smaller than those within the same construct. These results confirmed the discriminant validity of the structural model. Furthermore, in all constructs, Cronbach's α was between 0.8139 and 0.9487. Thus, the construct reliability was acceptable. Based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) formula, the study also obtained composite reliability (CR) with values ranging between 0.84 and 0.94. The variance extracted (VE) showed values ranging between 0.58 and 0.80 (see Table 1 and 2). These results indicated that the data were suitable for structural modeling.

Structural model

Figure 2 shows the structural model: with Chi-square 365.04 ($df = 251, p < 0.01$), GFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.034, NFI = 0.98, NNFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, and SRMR = 0.031. Because the Chi-square is highly sensitive to sample size, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) suggested an alternative Chi-square that is divided by degrees of freedom (Chi-square/df). In this study, a Chi-square/df of 1.45 was obtained, which is smaller than the recommended value of 2 (Carmines & McIver, 1981).

Furthermore, to verify whether consumption emotions had a direct effect on brand loyalty, four paths were added to the direct relationship between ALEP, ALEN, BALEP, and BALEN and brand loyalty in the structural model, which was the full model. The goodness-of-fit of the competing model was not better than that of the structural model (see Table 3). The comparison of the nested model comparison showed that the differences between the structural model and the competing model were not significant. Moreover, the direct effects of ALEP, ALEN, BALEP, and BALEN on brand loyalty were not significant (t -values of 1.84, -0.74 , 0.80, and -0.09 , respectively). Regarding hypothesis H1 and H2, consumption emotions do not have direct effects on brand loyalty, but they mediate brand trust and brand affect and have indirect effects on brand loyalty.

The results showed that this structural model can be used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the structural model indicated that only BALEN did not pass the significance test. Among the endogenous latent variables, 44% of the variance in both brand trust and brand affect could be explained by consumption emotions. In addition, 46% of the variance of brand loyalty could be explained by brand trust and brand affect. Table 4 shows the direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects of the structural model. The results indicate that consumption emotions induce brand loyalty, although indirectly, via the mediating effects of brand trust and brand affect. The results also indicate that positive consumption emotions tend to induce positive brand trust and positive brand affect and vice versa. With the exception of H2b (which was partially confirmed), all other hypotheses were supported.

Discussion

Theoretical contribution

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential relationship between consumption emotions induced by ALE, BALE, and brand trust, brand affect, and brand loyalty in product consumption. Previous research on the relationship between consumption emotions and post-purchase behaviors was focused on factors that were controllable by marketers, including product attributes, service, and store environment. However, the potential effects of other controllable factors, such as marketing communication, on consumption emotions remained unclear. Therefore, this study was aimed to broaden the understanding of emotions induced by product consumption. The study classified consumption emotions

Table 1. Reliability Analysis of the Measurement Model.

Independent variable	Items	λ	t	SMC	error	CR	VE	Cronbach alpha
ALEN	A1. angry	0.86	20.67	0.74	0.26	0.84	0.64	0.8139
	A2. discontent	0.91	22.19	0.83	0.17			
	A3. worry	0.58	12.17	0.34	0.66			
ALEP	A4. love	0.73	16.13	0.53	0.47	0.88	0.65	0.8879
	A5. contentment	0.80	18.39	0.64	0.36			
	A6. optimism	0.83	19.59	0.69	0.31			
	A9. joy	0.86	20.83	0.74	0.26			
BALEN	B1. angry	0.90	22.57	0.81	0.19	0.88	0.72	0.8664
	B2. discontent	0.95	24.44	0.90	0.10			
	B3. worry	0.67	14.83	0.45	0.55			
BALEP	B4. love	0.77	17.82	0.59	0.41	0.91	0.72	0.9096
	B5. contentment	0.91	23.02	0.83	0.17			
	B6. optimism	0.82	19.83	0.67	0.33			
	B9. joy	0.89	22.36	0.79	0.21			
Brand trust	C1. I trust this brand	0.86	21.11	0.74	0.26	0.94	0.80	0.9487
	C2. I rely on this brand	0.88	21.92	0.77	0.23			
	C3. This is an honest brand	0.92	23.68	0.85	0.15			
	C4. This brand is safe	0.92	23.79	0.85	0.15			
Brand affect	D1. I feel good when I use this brand	0.90	23.02	0.81	0.19	0.89	0.68	0.9310
	D2. This brand makes me happy	0.96	25.93	0.92	0.08			
	D3. This brand gives me pleasure	0.91	23.60	0.83	0.17			
Brand loyalty	E1. I will buy this brand the next time I buy this product	0.52	11.82	0.27	0.73	0.84	0.58	0.8928
	E2. I intend to keep purchasing this brand	0.93	23.66	0.86	0.14			
	E3. I am committed to this brand	0.89	21.77	0.79	0.21			
	E4. I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands	0.64	13.69	0.41	0.59			

Table 2. Matrix of Correlation and Root Square of Variance Extracted of Measurement Variables.

	ALEP	ALEN	BALEP	BALEN	Brand trust	Brand affect	Brand loyalty
ALEP	0.81						
ALEN	-0.50	0.80					
BALEP	0.67	-0.27	0.85				
BALEN	-0.35	0.72	-0.22	0.85			
Brand trust	0.53	-0.58	0.43	-0.48	0.90		
Brand affect	0.57	-0.52	0.48	-0.47	0.82	0.83	
Brand loyalty	0.34	-0.40	0.31	-0.36	0.63	0.66	0.76

Note: Square root of average variance extracted (AVE) is shown on the diagonal of the matrix; inter-construct correlation is shown off the diagonal.

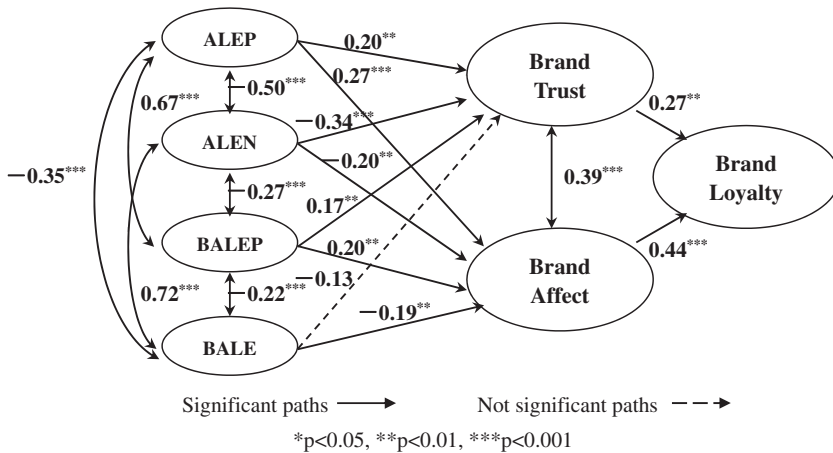


Figure 2. Structural model.

into ALE and BALE based on difference causes. ALE refers to consumption emotions induced by product attributes. BALE refers to consumption emotions that are induced by marketing communication, including advertising, sales promotion, and public relations.

The findings of this study revealed that marketing communication could also induce consumption emotions and consequently affect post-purchase behaviors. The causes of these beyond attribute-level emotions, or BALE, could be the specific characteristics of advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. Based on the structural model, ALE showed direct effects on both brand trust and brand affect. Among them, ALEP showed positive effect on both mediating variables, and ALEN showed negative effect on both mediating variables. Furthermore, ALEN showed a greater effect than ALEP did on brand trust. These results may confirm the famous “loss aversion behavior” as suggested in prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Consumers tend to present a greater response to negative emotions than to positive emotions. However, the effects of ALEP and ALEN on brand affect were not significantly different. A possible explanation is that the measure-

Table 3. Comparison of Goodness-of-fit Index Between Structural Model and Competing Model.

criteria	χ^2	RMSEA	GFI	SRMR	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	PGFI	χ^2/df
	<i>P</i> value is not significant	<0.05	>0.90	<0.08	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.95	>0.50	<3
Structure model	365.04 (<i>p</i> = 0.00)	0.034	0.93	0.031	0.91	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.72	1.45(<i>df</i> =251)
Competing model	361.95(<i>p</i> = 0.00)	0.034	0.93	0.031	0.91	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.71	1.47(<i>df</i> =247)

Note: Criteria of SRMR and CFI are from Hu and Bentler (1999), criteria of χ^2/df is from Bagozzi and Yi (1988), and other criteria are from Hair et al. (1998).

Table 4. Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Total Effects of the Structural Model.

Latent-dependent variable	Latent independent variable	Indirect effect	t value	Direct effect	t value	Total effects	t value
Brand trust	ALEP	–	–	0.20	2.79**	0.20	2.79**
	ALEN	–	–	–0.34	–4.50***	–0.34	–4.50***
	BALEP	–	–	0.17	2.85**	0.17	2.85**
	BALEN	–	–	–0.13	–1.92	–0.13	–1.92
Brand affect	ALEP			0.27	3.85***	0.27	3.85***
	ALEN			–0.20	–2.67**	–0.20	–2.67**
	BALEP			0.20	3.27**	0.20	3.27**
	BALEN			–0.19	–2.88**	–0.19	–2.88**
Brand loyalty	ALEP	0.17	3.55***	–	–	0.17	3.55***
	ALEN	–0.18	–3.39***	–	–	–0.18	–3.39***
	BALEP	0.13	3.24**	–	–	0.13	3.24**
	BALEN	–0.12	–2.66**	–	–	–0.12	–2.66**
	Brand trust	–	–	0.27	3.17**	0.27	3.17**
	Brand affect			0.44	5.14***	0.44	5.14***

Note:

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$.

ment items of brand affect used positive framing. This design could have biased the results to indicate that brand affect referred to only a positive affect. This potential bias could have caused the informants to generate distorted answers to the questionnaire. It is also possible that consumers' positive emotions lead to brand affect more easily than negative ones do. Negative emotions may be more likely than positive emotions for consumers to decrease their brand trust.

BALE also showed direct effects on both brand trust and brand affect. Among them, BALEP showed positive effects on both mediating variables, while BALEN showed a negative effect on only brand affect. A possible explanation is that most consumption emotions recalled by the respondents were positive and enjoyable. Compared with the average score of 3.1, 50% of the respondents score over 4 for positive emotions. Thus, the average score for negative emotions was 2.1, and more than 85% of the respondents had a score of less than 3. This finding may indicate the weak capability of BALEN to explain brand trust. In addition, the results of the focus group discussion (FGD) showed that BALE had a greater influence impact than ALE on brand affect, but a lower influence on brand trust.

Both brand trust and brand affect affected brand loyalty. The results of the structural model showed that brand affect had a greater influence than brand trust on brand loyalty. This finding is not in line with the results of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). In their study, brand trust was a salient variable in explaining brand loyalty. A potential reason for the deviation of our results from previous results is that we considered the influence of the consumers' affective factors on brand trust and brand emotion, and we did not consider

the influence of cognitive factors on these two variables. Perhaps emotional factors and brand affect were closer so that the brand affect had greater influence on brand loyalty than brand trust did. Another reason could be the differences between the Chinese and the US markets. In the Chinese market, brands are not regarded as trustworthy. Brands have to be very affective before they capture a consumer's loyalty.

Finally, because there are few comparative studies on the relationship between ALE and BALE regarding brand loyalty, our study aimed at exploring this issue in detail. The findings showed that ALE and BALE had indirect effects on brand loyalty, were mediated by brand trust and brand affect. ALEN showed the greatest influence on brand trust. However, BALEN did not show an influence on brand trust. This result demonstrates that brand trust is influenced by negative emotions, especially those induced by products. ALEP showed the greatest influence on brand affect. The other three kinds of emotions, including ALEN, BALEN, BALEP, had similar influences on brand affect, which demonstrates that brand affect was influenced by positive emotions more than by negative emotions. This result indicates that in product consumption, although emotions induced by product attribute have a significant effect on brand loyalty, the emotions induced by marketing communications have a supplementary influence on brand loyalty.

Managerial implications

The results of the study have the following main managerial implications:

First, manufacturers should pay close attention to product attributes, such as product quality, features, outlook, style, color, packaging, place of origin, and reputation. They may need to induce consumers' positive emotions by providing well-designed product attributes. Because negative emotions showed a greater influence than positive ones on brand trust, the main theme of marketing should be the avoidance of inducing consumers' negative emotions. Furthermore, marketers should aim to influence consumers' emotion attributions, that is, the attribution of positive emotions to marketers and negative emotions to other causes (Hui, Dube, & Cheat, 1997).

Because BALE influenced brand trust and brand affect, manufacturers should also consider the better management of marketing communication factors, such as advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. These activities may help manufacturers to induce consumers' positive emotions and consequently create brand loyalty through brand trust and brand affect.

Furthermore, brand affect had a greater influence than brand trust on brand loyalty. This finding suggests that in addition to the competition caused by product homogeneity, marketers should devote resources to create and retain affective relationships with consumers, which may be the most critical for firms operating in China to survive in the future.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has the following limitations. First, the convenience sampling was conducted with undergraduate students. Hence, the generalizability of the results is limited. Future research needs to replicate the study using random sampling in different populations. Second, in this study, brand loyalty was not absolute loyalty but behavioral loyalty, which means that attitudinal loyalty was not sufficiently considered. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) used positive word-of-mouth, first choice, intention to recommend, and encouragement of others to measure attitudinal loyalty. However, we did not consider these items in the present study. Therefore, future research on brand loyalty should consider

both attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty. Third, among the list of products provided, the majority of respondents recalled consumption experiences with high-involvement products. Thus, the uneven distribution of the products may have biased the results. In a future study, students could be asked to remember a specific consumption experience, such as buying cell phones, instead of choosing a variety of products, which may avoid this problem. Fourth, because of the nature of this research design, most participants in the study were better able to recall positive consumption experiences than negatives ones. The authors were unable to capture the effects of negative emotions. Future studies could employ a between-group design that randomly assigned a group of participants to provide positive consumption experiences and another group to provide negative consumption experiences. Nevertheless, this result raised the interesting question of why participants recalled more positive consumption experiences than negative consumption experiences. This question could be explored in future research.

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