

BRAND COMMUNITY FORMATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract:

Brand communities have the potential to increase the loyalty of those consumers who are members, to generate oppositional loyalty towards the brands of competitors and also to influence new product adoption behaviour. Moreover, this concept contributes to a better understanding of the relationships between consumers and a specific brand and thus presents an interest not only for marketing researchers, but also for brand managers. Starting with the 21st century, brand communities have been conceptualized and studied many times in the marketing literature, which has explored both the positive and negative consequences of these consumption communities. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the most important findings related to this marketing topic. Therefore, the article begins with the review of the most relevant definitions given to brand communities which are then analysed. Secondly, there is a section dedicated to the characteristics and particularities associated with these consumer communities, which were identified by previous research. Subsequently, another section focuses upon the emergence process of such communities, the way they are constructed by customers and also upon the factors and steps that allow the formation and organization of brand communities. Finally, some implications for brand management are offered, as well as some directions for future research.

Keywords: *brand community, collective consumption, community behaviour, brand loyalty.*

JEL codes:: *M31*