



# The Role of Brand Loyalty Between Brand Satisfaction, Brand Engagement, and Consumer Advocacy – A Conceptual Analysis

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**Abstract.** In the context of increasingly fierce business competition, the phenomenon of consumer advocacy is an important indicator of the success of marketing strategies that focus on customer experience. Satisfied consumers not only become loyal, but also voluntarily promote the brand to others, which is known as consumer advocacy. This study aims to explore the role of brand loyalty as a moderator in the relationship between brand satisfaction, brand attachment, and consumer advocacy. Expectancy-Disconfirmation (EDT) theory is used to explain how consumer expectations affect satisfaction, which in turn shapes loyalty and post-purchase behaviors such as advocacy. The results of this study show that brand satisfaction and brand attachment influence consumer advocacy, but this influence is stronger when it is supported by brand loyalty. The study also found that brand loyalty acts as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer advocacy, as well as between brand attachment and advocacy. These findings contribute to a better understanding of consumer loyalty dynamics and effective marketing strategies in building long-term relationships with consumers.

**Keywords:** Brand satisfaction, Brand attachment, Brand loyalty, Consumer advocacy, Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory, Experience-based marketing.

## 1 Introduction

With the growing business competition, the salience of consumer advocacies as one of metrics on effectiveness customer experience-based marketing strategies has increased. If the consumer is satisfied, he not only sticks to the brand but will become a vocal advocate of it amongst his peers, which we call in marketing as consumer advocacy [1]. The commercial advocacy of consumers has strategic importance, since it makes the positive image of brands with consumers and can affect potential consumer purchase stronger than other promotional tools [2]. ut this ideal level of consumer advocacy is hardly attained, notwithstanding many marketing initiatives, in such areas as brand satisfaction and brand engagement. Brand satisfaction - The Role of Satisfaction A higher value Degree of brand is about the role satisfaction satisfy is closely a worthiness word Loyalty is yet, "owning's 'ty' loyal. Research has indicated that brand satisfaction is a crucial factor leading to the formation of customer loyalty and satisfaction with the brand will lead customers to recommend others. Brand attachment, which reflects emotional relationship between consumers and the brand, is another significant

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determinant of consumer advocacy behavior HttpStatusCodeResult[3][4]. However, the problem that arises is that not all consumers who are satisfied with a brand automatically become brand advocates. This raises questions about additional factors that can mediate or moderate the relationship between brand satisfaction, brand attachment, and consumer advocacy.

Recent empirical studies show that there is a gap in the literature related to the role of brand loyalty as a moderator in the relationship between brand satisfaction, brand attachment, and consumer advocacy. Research [5] found that the effect of brand satisfaction on consumer advocacy can vary depending on Consumer brand loyalty. In addition, research on brand attachment as a driver of consumer advocacy through brand loyalty is still minimal, especially in the context of digitalization and dynamic market competition. Thus, a research model that can integrate these factors simultaneously is needed to understand how brand loyalty can serve as a moderator in influencing consumer advocacy.

This research offers novelty by adopting a frame of mind based on Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). This theory explains that consumer expectations and their experiences influence satisfaction, which ultimately determines loyalty and post-purchase behaviors, including consumer advocacy [6]. With reference to EDT, the study integrates brand satisfaction and brand attachment as factors influencing consumer advocacy. In addition, brand loyalty was analyzed as a moderator to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying consumer advocacy behavior. With this approach, this research is expected to fill the gap in the literature while making a practical contribution to the development of marketing strategies. The implications of this study are not only limited to efforts to improve consumer advocacy, but also provide insight for brand managers in designing more effective strategies to build long-term relationships with consumers.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT)

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) states that consumer satisfaction is formed from a comparison between initial expectations (expectation) and the actual performance of the product or service (perceived performance) [6]. If actual performance exceeds expectations (positive disconfirmation), consumers are satisfied; on the contrary, if it does not meet expectations (negative disconfirmation), they will feel dissatisfied. In the context of this study, "Brand Satisfaction" is strongly influenced by this process of disconfirmation, which then forms Brand Loyalty, and ultimately drives Consumer Advocacy. That is, when consumers feel satisfied that their expectations of a brand are met or even exceeded, they tend to become loyal and voluntarily recommend the brand to others.

In addition, EDT is also relevant in explaining the role of "Brand Attachment" that shapes consumers' emotional connection to brands. Consumers who have emotional attachment tend to set higher expectations for their experience. If the experience meets or exceeds expectations, then positive disconfirmation will strengthen their loyalty (H5), and encourage advocacy. So, in this research, EDT becomes a psychological basis

that explains how consumer satisfaction and attachment shape loyalty, which ultimately influences advocacy behavior towards brands [7].

## 2.2 Brand Satisfaction

Brand satisfaction is a reflection of the level of consumer satisfaction with their experience in using products or services from a certain brand. This concept not only measures how well a brand meets consumer expectations, but it also reflects the emotional and functional judgments that arise after an interaction with the brand. In this context, brand satisfaction is an important indicator that assesses whether the consumer experience during the process of purchasing and using the product has provided the expected added value or even exceeded initial expectations [8]. Brand satisfaction is seen as the result of a thorough evaluation of the brand performance felt by consumers, both in terms of product quality, brand authenticity, and the symbolic value inherent in the brand [9]. Empirical studies show that satisfaction with brands is influenced by various factors, such as brand authenticity, functional value, emotional value, and symbolic value offered to consumers (Anisimova, 2013). When consumers feel that brands are able to meet their needs and preferences consistently, brand satisfaction levels increase, which ultimately strengthens the relationship between consumers and brands.

In the context of the relationship between consumers and brands, brand satisfaction acts as an important mediator that connects brand experience with brand loyalty. Research by [10] It shows that a positive brand experience can increase consumer trust and satisfaction, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. Further, brand satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty. [11] shows that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between perceived quality, perceived value, and lifestyle fit with brand loyalty, especially in low-engagement products such as oral care products. It emphasizes the importance of brand satisfaction in maintaining consumer loyalty, even in product categories that consumers consider less important.

## 2.3 Brand Attachment

Brand attachment (brand attachment) depicts a deep emotional connection between consumers and brands, which goes beyond mere functional satisfaction. According to [12] Brand attachment is formed through strong cognitive and affective connections, where consumers feel the brand as part of their self-identity. This attachment creates a sense of belonging and a desire to maintain a long-term relationship with the brand According to [13], brand attachment is formed through two main factors: (1) the connection between the brand and the consumer's self-concept, and (2) the salience of brand-related thoughts and feelings. This connection illustrates how consumers associate brands with their personal identities and values, while salience reflects how often and strongly brand-related feelings and memories arise in consumers' minds. Strong brand attachment can lead to more positive consumer behaviors, such as intent to recommend brands, higher loyalty, and tolerance for brand mistakes [13]. Further, brand attachment serves as a foundation for the development of "brand love" or brand love. [12] posits that in order to love a brand, consumers need to feel emotionally

attached to the brand, feel that the brand is irreplaceable and miss it when it doesn't exist. This emotional attachment becomes a bridge that connects brand satisfaction with long-term loyalty, creating a deeper and more meaningful connection between consumers and brands. Therefore, companies need to focus on creating brand experiences that are authentic and relevant to consumer identities, in order to build deep and lasting emotional attachment.

## 2.4 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty (brand loyalty) is a consumer's deep commitment to a brand, which is reflected in repeated buying behavior and recommendations to others. This brand loyalty is the result of a complex interplay between brand value perception, emotional engagement, and a consistent and satisfying consumer experience [14]. Brand loyalty grows when consumers feel emotionally and functionally connected to the brand, resulting in repeated intentions to choose the brand amid the many alternatives available in the market [14]. According to [15] Brand loyalty encompasses two main dimensions: behavioral loyalty, which is consistent repurchase, and attitude loyalty, which is a positive preference for the brand. These two dimensions evolve along with a consistent brand experience and the fulfillment of consumer expectations both emotionally and functionally. When consumers feel that the brand is able to meet their needs and provide a satisfying experience, brand loyalty will grow stronger, leading to repeat purchases and a long-term commitment to the brand.

Positive emotions can help solidify emotional attachments and enhance the intensity of loyalty. On the downside, bad experiences can negatively impact loyalty and brand perceptions of consumers. Study by [16] Evidence that positive brand experience will drive consumers' overall brand loyalty, they are willing to buy again and recommend to the others. These positive experiences help fuel an emotional connection between consumers and brands that engage them — fostering loyalty. This is also supported by a study that brand loyalty stemmed from emotional bond and self-identity created through the meaningful and relevant experience with the brands for consumers, not only rational effect factor as satisfaction or use value [17], that brand loyalty is rooted not only in rational aspects such as satisfaction and use value, but also in the emotional attachment and self-identity built through meaningful and relevant brand experiences for consumers.

## 2.5 Consumer Advocacy

Consumer advocacy is a form of proactive behavior in which consumers are not only satisfied with a brand, but also actively promote and defend it. This behavior includes spreading positive reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, and defending the brand when faced with criticism or attacks. According to [18], brand advocacy takes the form of support and (some) recommendation against ... brands, including (especially active promotion on behalf of consumers as well as backing for a brand in negative circumstances.” This kind of loyalty is a reflection of an emotional intensity in the relationship between consumers and brands. What's more, brand self-identification and the belief that brands represent consumers' personal values are commonly used forms of consumer advocacy. If identity-threatened consumers read criticism of the brands

they are cheering for, then they will be more inclined to actively defend the brand [19], which also indicates that the perceived threat to identity, can lead to a brand advocacy behavior, under which consumers actively speak out on behalf of the brand and defend it against opponents. This highlights the crucial role of emotional engagement and self-brand connection, in influencing consumer advocacy behaviour.

### **3 Methodology**

This study uses a conceptual approach to clarify theoretical constructs and develop new interpretations based on existing literature [20]. According to [21], a concept review assist in documenting research lacunae and framing up models for further empirical investigations. Relevant literature is incorporated to match the research purpose and facilitating an in-depth insight into connections between core topics. The result of this procedure is a set of hypotheses which can be tested empirically in at study. The goal of this framework is to answer a number of important questions (1) Does brand satisfaction have an effect on consumer advocacy? (2) Does brand attachment have an effect on consumer advocacy? (3) Does brand satisfaction affect brand loyalty?(4) Does brand attachment affect brand loyalty? (5) Does brand loyalty have an effect on consumer advocacy?(6)Does brand loyalty mediate the influence of brand satisfaction on consumer advocacy? (7)Does brand loyalty mediate the influence of brand attachment on consumer advocacy?

## **4. Results & Discussion**

### **4.1 The Influence of Brand Satisfaction on Consumer Advocacy**

Brand satisfaction is a fundamental element in building a long-term relationship between consumers and companies. When consumers feel satisfied with a brand, both in terms of product quality, service, and overall experience, they tend to develop positive attitudes that can encourage prosocial behavior towards the brand. One concrete form of this attitude is consumer advocacy, which is the tendency to recommend a brand to others voluntarily.

The phenomenon of consumer advocacy has become an indicator of strategic success in modern marketing. Satisfied consumers not only become loyal customers, but also act as informal marketing agents who have great influence, especially in the era of social media and digital communication [22], [23]. In this context, brand satisfaction serves not only as the end result of the consumption process, but also as a trigger that mobilizes consumers' emotional and social engagement with the brand [23].

Theoretically, the relationship between satisfaction and advocacy is explained through social exchange theory and consumer loyalty theory [24]. Consumers who derive high value from their interactions with brands will feel compelled to "repay" in the form of active endorsements. Therefore, the hypothesis that brand satisfaction has a positive effect on consumer advocacy becomes very relevant to test, given the great strategic potential of consumers who feel satisfied in expanding brand reach organically.

## **4.2 The Influence of Brand Attachment on Consumer Advocacy**

Brand attachment describes the depth of the emotional connection formed between the consumer and the brand. When consumers are highly attached to a brand, they fancy that the brand is part of them as being or as what they are. This kind of high emotional fidelity not only leads consumers to actively defend, promote and recommend the brand to their circle and it is conducive to strong loyalty [25]. In the realm of brand attachment, consumer advocacy is underpinned by more than rational satisfaction, and it represents a strong emotional bond [26]. Enhanced brand passion and Brand dedication is stronger for highly involved consumers, because they feel they have a personal connection that is not easily replaced. In this case, brand attachment becomes a powerful catalyst in transforming passive consumers into active marketing agents. From a psychological and behavioral perspective of consumers, brand attachment reflects an affective dimension of loyalty that is more difficult for competitors to influence. Therefore, testing the hypothesis that brand attachment has a positive effect on consumer advocacy is crucial, as it shows how emotional power is able to drive prosocial behaviors that are valuable for brand sustainability in the long run.

## **4.3 The Influence of Brand Loyalty on Consumer Advocacy**

Brand loyalty has long been considered a key pillar in customer retention strategies, but in a broader context, loyalty has also been a trigger for consumer advocacy. Loyal consumers not only exhibit repetitive buying behavior, but also have a high tendency to recommend brands to others, even in situations without external incentives or encouragement. Brand loyalty creates a psychological commitment that encourages consumers to actively voice support for their chosen brand [27]. In an era of fierce market competition, consumer advocacy is a valuable asset. Loyal consumers not only extend the customer lifecycle, but also strengthen the brand's reputation in the market through recommendations that are considered more credible than traditional advertising [28]. This relationship between brand loyalty and advocacy is strengthened by trust and repeated positive experiences, so that consumers feel confident in spreading their influence to their social networks. From a theoretical perspective, this relationship is explained through behavioristic and affective approaches in consumer behavior. Loyalty as a form of long-term attachment reflects the utilitarian and emotional values that consumers get. Therefore, the hypothesis about the influence of brand loyalty on consumer advocacy is worth exploring in depth, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how loyalty plays a dual role: keeping consumers with the brand and expanding the consumer base through voluntary recommendations.

## **4.4 Brand Loyalty, Brand Satisfaction, and Consumer Advocacy**

Brand satisfaction is an important initial foundation in creating a positive relationship between consumers and brands. However, not all satisfied consumers will immediately advocate. In this context, brand loyalty plays an important role as a moderation variable that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between consumer satisfaction and advocacy. Brand loyalty is contagious SI as a psychological bridge that turns satisfaction into active behavior, such as providing recommendations and defending the

brand voluntarily. When brand loyalty is high, the impact of satisfaction on advocacy becomes stronger [29]. Consumers who are not only satisfied but also loyal, tend to have a deep emotional attachment and commitment, which drives them to become enthusiastic brand advocates [29]. In contrast, consumers who are satisfied but have not yet formed strong loyalty tend to be passive, despite having a positive perception of the brand. Therefore, loyalty is not only the end result, but also the catalyst that mobilizes satisfaction into action. Conceptually, this moderation by brand loyalty is explained through commitment-affection theory, in which emotional and cognitive engagement reinforce behavioral intentions. Thus, testing the role of loyalty moderation in the relationship between satisfaction and advocacy is essential to illustrate that building loyalty is not just about retaining customers, but also turning satisfied customers into influential brand advocates.

#### 4.5 Brand Loyalty, Brand Engagement, and Consumer Advocacy

Brand attachment reflects a deep emotional connection between consumers and brands, which can drive advocate behavior [25]. However, the effect of this attachment to advocacy is not always constant, and can be influenced by the level of consumer loyalty to the brand. Brand loyalty in this case acts as a moderation variable that strengthens the influence of attachment on advocacy, by creating a synergy between emotional affection and behavioral commitment. Consumers who have a high attachment and strong loyalty, will feel that they have a brand personally and consider it as part of their identity. This creates an intrinsic drive to share positive experiences, provide recommendations, and defend the brand from criticism. In contrast, without strong loyalty, emotionally attached consumers may not have a strong enough drive to act as brand advocates [25]. Loyalty provides consistency and sustainability to the emotional bond. From a theoretical perspective, moderation by brand loyalty is in line with the theory of engagement and social identity, where advocate behavior is reinforced by the perception of attachment and complementary loyalty. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the role of brand loyalty as a moderator between attachment and advocacy is crucial to describe the emotional dynamics and behavior of consumers more comprehensively.

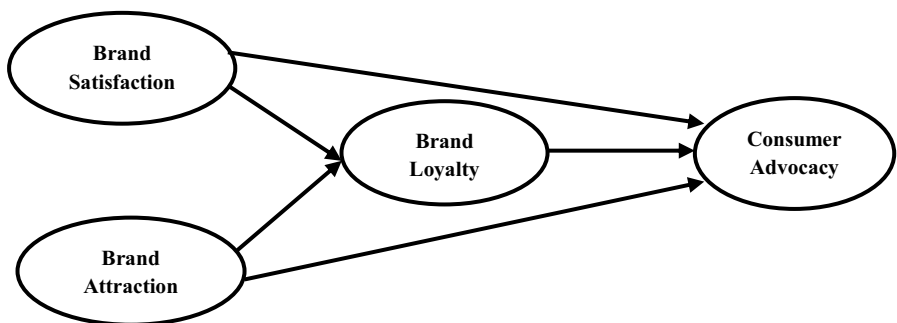


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

The framework of this study explains that brand satisfaction and brand attachment are hypothesized to affect consumer advocacy, either directly or indirectly through brand loyalty as a mediating variable. Consumers who feel satisfied with a brand are more likely to be motivated to recommend the brand, as are consumers who have a strong emotional attachment to the brand. However, the influence of both will be stronger when accompanied by brand loyalty, because loyalty reflects consumers' long-term commitment to the brand. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis (H6) asserts that brand loyalty mediates the influence of brand satisfaction on consumer advocacy, while the seventh hypothesis (H7) emphasizes that brand loyalty mediates the influence of brand attachment on consumer advocacy.

## 5 Conclusion

Brand loyalty plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between brand satisfaction, brand attachment, and consumer advocacy. While brand satisfaction and brand attachment can drive consumer advocacy, brand loyalty amplifies that influence, making it stronger and more consistent. Thus, a marketing strategy that emphasizes building brand loyalty can significantly increase consumer advocacy. These findings provide insights for brand managers to design strategies that not only focus on retaining customers but also on turning them into active brand advocates, which in turn can organically improve brand reputation and reach.

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