



## Employees' Awareness, Relationship, Mediation, Citizenship Behavior and Commitment on Brand: A Study

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### **Abstract**

*This is a study on the mediation role of employees brand commitment in the relationship between employees brand awareness and their brand citizenship behavior in ethio telecom. It has the objective of investigating the main relations between employees brand knowledge and their level of commitment to deliver the brand promises, the relationship between employees brand commitment and their brand citizenship behavior which will clearly result in investigation of the mediation role that employees brand commitment plays in between the two variables. This implies that ethio telecom employees are aware of their company brand and committed to deliver the brand promises of their company and as such they exert extra efforts that led them to be considered as the citizens of this brand. Based on the analysis result certain conclusions are made on which reasonable recommendations are made on intern.*

**Key words:** Brand knowledge, brand commitment, brand citizenship behavior

### **1. Introduction**

There are very few strategic assets available to a company that can provide a long-lasting competitive advantage, and even then the time span of the advantage is getting shorter. Brands are one of them. Brands have been mostly associated with consumers' perception of the products/services they consume or use. But now days according to Kornburger, 2010 brands are enacted in the behavior of the organizational members and they are becoming the way employees of a company do things around. This is because, unless employees know and believe their company's brand their actions towards their customers will not be implemented in a way their company wants it.

Brand has been defined in almost the same way that trademarks have

been defined. For example American Marketing Association (AMA) defined brand in a way that US Federal Trademark Act defined trademarks as "any word, name, symbol, or device, or any combination thereof adopted and used by manufacturers or merchants to identify their goods" (Cohen, 1986).

### **1. Literature Review**

The role of service employees and their views is very important if a company/management is to implement the most appropriate internal branding programs (Punjaisri Khanyapuss. 2007). According to this doctoral researcher when employees internalize the brand values they will consistently deliver on the brand promise across all contact points between the company and its



stakeholders. This suggests that the employees' commitment to deliver the brand promise is highly dependent up on their awareness of their company's brand and others have reached on a finding that 'if employees are aware of their brand they will be committed to deliver the brand promises and this will again lead them to be the citizens of their brand.' This is a literature review addressing the important aspects around these concepts based on findings of different studies on brand related issues.

Brand is a promise of performance that a provider of a service or a producer of a product gives to its customers. Managers should seek strategies of minimizing the gaps between brand promises and their final delivery to the customers by letting their employees recognize the overall objectives of their brand and means of delivering of these objectives. According to de Chernatony and Cottam (2009), employees are considered as the brand deliverers. As such, in order to deliver the brand promise accordingly, employees should align their attitude and behavior accordingly to the brand value (Ind, 2001) by 'living the brand'.

Grace, (2008). As customers' brand knowledge would lead to brand awareness, loyalty and satisfaction (Keller, 1993), it is also postulated that brand knowledge that employees hold in their mind also could contribute to brand success through their attitude and behaviors that is consistent with the brand.

According to Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009) employees' brand commitment is defined as, "the degree to which employees identify and are involved with their service brand, are

willing to exert additional efforts to achieve the goals of the brand and are interested in remaining with the service organization." It is also defined as the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand goals (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2008). Employees' commitment to the brand is said to be affected by their knowledge to the brand behaviors (Thomson et al. (1999), Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009))

As employees brand knowledge lays the base for employees brand commitment, the more employees are committed the more they will become the citizens of the brand, and this brings us to relatively new concept, brand citizenship behavior.

### **Employees Brand Citizenship Behavior**

Brand citizenship behavior (BCB) is relatively a new concept that explained how employees could improve their brand delivery performance by aligning their attitude and behavior to the organization's brand. Brand citizenship behavior is employees' willingness to exert extra effort that goes beyond its basic functions that projects the brand consistent behavior. Employees with high brand citizenship spirit are willing to give 'their all' towards accomplishing self satisfaction and organizational objectives. Such behavior also shows that employees are highly aware of the brand, committed enough to deliver the brand promises and loyal to the brand (Punjaisiri and Wilson, 2007)



### 3. Methodology

#### Theoretical Frame Work of the Study

Here this study has tried to relate the employees brand knowledge and employees brand citizenship behavior through the mediation role of employees brand commitment and this has been framed as: As it can be seen from this figure this study has tried to study the direction of relation existing between:-

- Employees Brand Knowledge and their Brand Commitment ( $R_1$ )
- Employees Brand Knowledge and their Brand Citizenship Behavior ( $R_2$ )
- Employees Brand Commitment and their Brand Citizenship Behavior ( $R_3$ )

Besides the direction of relations that is investigated through spearman's correlation the stud has tried to investigate the possible impacts of: Brand Awareness on employees Brand Commitment , Employees Brand Knowledge on Employees Brand Citizenship Behavior and Employees Brand Commitment on Employees Brand Citizenship Behavior

#### Population and Sampling

Internal branding and related concepts, unlike that of brand image and perceptions are always the concerns of employees and managers of the brand owner in our case ethio telecom. Therefore the target population here is the employees of ethio telecom residing in the six divisions of Addis Ababa selected for their convenience to the study.

Employees of ethio telecom within the six divisions of Addis Ababa are around 1876 of a total. Due to the

scattered distribution of the target population it is difficult to take much of them and therefore the study has used Malhorta Naresh, Marketing Research: An Applied Approach, (2007) which stated the appropriate sample size for a population between to be 1201–3200 is a minimum of 50, a medium of 125 and a maximum of 200. Using the maximum limit the study has tried to address 200 employees within the six divisions of ethio telecom in Addis Ababa.

The main input for this study is primary data collected through questionnaires of close ended questions distributed to the 200 samples selected plus 25% reserve (200 + 50) questionnaires for replacing those unreturned and not properly filled ones. As such 216 are properly filled and submitted. Before distributing these questionnaires a sample of 20 questionnaires were distributed to test the reliability of the items under each variable and all the three variables encompass reliable items in that the Cronbach alpha of the items became 0.637, 0.628 and 0.656 respectively for items of employees brand awareness, employees brand commitment and employees brand citizenship behavior.

#### Spearman's Coefficient of Correlation

Though we have other measures of correlation here we have ordered data whose relations are suitably measured by spearman's coefficient of correlation. This correlation output ranges from -1 to +1. The closer the coefficients to 1 the strongly positive the relation between the variables under consideration will be and the closer these values to -1 the strong negative relations these variables have and generally the coefficient outputs can be



interpreted as follows:

- Negative correlations refer to the opposite relations that the variables under consideration have; and it means as the one variable increases the other decreases and vice versa
- Positive correlations refer to the same direction relations that the variables under consideration meaning that as the level of one variable increases the other will also increase.

Generally here we have spearman's coefficient of correlation to measure the direction of the stated variables relation.

### **Ordinal Regression**

As it can be obtained from spearman's correlation the study has tried to determine the relationship direction of the variables accordingly but in order to estimate the impact of one variable on the other the study has used ordinal regression through the use of SPSS 20.

The study preferred ordinal regression in that no other regressions are suitable for ordinal nature data used for this study.

The median responses of each items under respective variables are taken and both the Spearman's correlation and the ordinal regressions has been used to be correlated and ordinally regressed.

### **Reliability Test**

In order to test the reliability of items under each of three variables Cronbach's alpha has been used and accordingly; 0.656, 0.680 and 0.656 values are estimated for employees brand awareness, brand commitment and employees brand citizenship behavior respectively.

### **Limitations**

Ethio telecom does not have more than 2000 employees in the six divisions of Addis Ababa but the scattered location of the divisional and sub division offices has made this research be time taking along with the employees' job style in which they are field workers; has led the data collectors not find them on daily basis. In addition to this due to the study's new nature many employees of the company have denied to fill the questionnaires which resulted it be late for timely submission of the paper. The other limitation was unavailability of books related to brand citizenship behavior leading the literatures to focus on articles of related topics at large.

## **4. Finding and Discussions**

### **4.1 Respondents Experience in Ethio telecom**

The study started its way by identifying the experience of the respondents since it is the base for determining the value ability of the information they provided in terms of having knowledge of the company's brand, being committed and even exerting extra effort i.e. brand citizenship behavior. Therefore it is assumed that the more the respondents stay in the company the more they give reliable information about their company and the more they reflect their brand behavior. As such it has been found that more than 78 % of the respondents have worked in the company more than five years in that they could have enough time to know more about their company and its brand.



Here is the summary of respondents experience in ethio telecom.

Table 4.1 Experience of respondents.

	Levels of experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 5	3	1.4	1.4	1.4
	1-3	15	6.9	6.9	8.3
	3-5	28	13.0	13.0	21.3
	Greater than 5	170	78.7	78.7	100.0
	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2 Correlation Results

The main objective of this study is to investigate the mediating role of employees brand commitment in the relationship between brand knowledge and brand citizenship behavior based on the stimulus-response model. As such in order to check this mediation role we have to investigate their respective relations as follows.

##### 4.2.1 The Relation between Employees Brand Knowledge and Employees Brand Commitment

This study has tried to investigate the relationship between employees brand knowledge and their commitment to deliver the brand promises and accordingly it has been identified that these variables have positive relations with spearman's coefficient of correlation 0.440. This shows that as employees are aware of their company's brand, they will be committed to deliver the promises of the brand they are working for.

##### 4.2.2 The Relation between Employees Brand Knowledge and Employees Brand Citizenship Behavior

The correlation result between employees brand knowledge and their brand citizenship behavior shows that there is a positive relation with Spearman's coefficient of correlation 0.418. This means the more employees are aware of their brand, the more they will exert extra brand behaviors which lead them to be considered as the citizens of the brand they are working for. And it was found that ethio telecom employees are well aware of their brand and committed to deliver the brand promises of ethio telecom.

##### 4.2.3 Employees brand commitment and their brand citizenship behavior

The same wise the relationship between employees brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior is investigated and found that there is positive relation between them approving that as employees are more committed they will start up giving all their sprit to the brand for which they are working for, and be the citizens of the brand under consideration(ethio telecom).



The correlation results are presented in table 4.2

Table 4.2: Correlation results employees b Employees brand commitment and their brand citizenship behavior

No.	Variable (relation) Investigated	Spearman's Coefficient of relations
1.	Employees brand awareness and employees brand commitment	0.440
2.	Employees brand awareness and employees brand citizenship behavior	0.418
3.	Employees brand commitment and employees brand citizenship behavior	0.379

### 4.3 Regression Results

As spearman's correlation is to test the relations nature of the variables under consideration, this study has used ordinal regression to investigate the impact of these variables respectively.

#### 4.3.1 Estimated Effect of Brand Knowledge on Employees Brand Commitment

The ordinal regression result of employees brand knowledge on employees brand commitment shows that as there is a change in employees brand knowledge there will also be around 80% same direction change in employees brand commitment

#### 4.3.2 Estimated Impact of Brand Knowledge on Employees Brand Citizenship Behavior

According to the spearman's correlation coefficient results employees brand knowledge has positive relation with  
Generally the impact of the independent summarized and presented in table 3.

their brand citizenship behavior and this study has investigated the level of impact that brand knowledge of employees has on their brand citizenship behavior and it has been found that as there is given change in employees brand knowledge there will be 76% same direction change in the employees brand citizenship behavior.

#### 4.3.3 Estimated Impact of Brand Commitment on Employees Brand Citizenship behavior

Once again the impact of employees brand commitment on the employees brand citizenship behavior has been estimated through ordinal regression and it was found that an increase or decrease in employees brand commitment will result in 84% same direction change in employees brand citizenship behavior.

variables on the dependent ones has been



Table 3: **Estimated Impact of Brand Commitment**

No.	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Estimated impact
1.	Employees Brand Knowledge	Employees brand commitment	80%
2.	Employees Brand Knowledge	Employees Brand citizenship behavior	76%
3.	Employees Brand commitment	Employees Brand citizenship behavior	84%

**5. Conclusions**

Based on the stimulus response model we can say that employees brand commitment plays a mediation role because the following has been met:-

- Employees brand knowledge has positive relation with Employees brand commitment.
- Employees Brand Knowledge has positive relation with Employees Brand citizenship behavior
- Employees Brand commitment has positive relation with Employees Brand citizenship behavior
- Generally this tells us employees brand commitment has mediation role between employees brand knowledge and their brand citizenship behavior.

This implies that ethio telecom employees are aware of their company brand and committed to deliver the brand promises of their company and as such they exert extra efforts that led them to be considered as the citizens of this brand. At the same time these findings reveal that companies should let their employees know the brand they are working for to make them committed enough to deliver the promises of the brand under consideration and even be the citizens of this brand.

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