

2 Classification of relevant terms and definitions

To ensure this dissertation, its theories, and empirical analyses are convincing and comparable, it is important to ensure that primary terms and definitions are circumscribed clearly and agree to their meanings and limitations. Thus, the following terms are discussed further: **brand citizenship behavior**, **brand commitment**, **culture**, and **cultural values**.

The primary purpose of internal branding is to turn employees into brand ambassadors through brand identity-based behaviors. **Brand citizenship behavior** is a “global concept that summarizes all brand relevant behavioral performances of internal stakeholders that are consistent with the brand identity and the brand value proposition and strengthen the brand.”⁴⁹ Despite the notion that employee brand-aligned behavior is represented equally in various internal brand management conceptualizations, the current state of research on brand citizenship behavior is still in its infancy. Employee behavior constitutes the target or dependent variable of internal brand management,⁵⁰ and brand-aligned behavior is a prerequisite to fulfillment of the brand promise; employees who are responsible for fulfilling the brand promise must deliver the service consistently to attain and maintain the desired identity with the brand.⁵¹ Most internal brand models reflect a general understanding of the importance of employee brand-aligned behavior. Insights into the process of attaining and maintaining employee brand-aligned behavior and development of a specific definition are recent;⁵² brand citizenship behavior is possibly the most dominant conceptualization.⁵³

In accord with organizational behavior research in which organizational commitment is a central antecedent of organizational citizenship behavior, **brand commitment** in internal brand management is a central determinant of brand citizenship behavior.⁵⁴ Brand commitment refers to the commitment of consumers or to the internal brand commitment of employees.⁵⁵ For the purposes of this

49 PIEHLER (2011), p. 303.

50 VALLASTER/DE CHERNATONY (2006), p. 761 ff.

51 PUNJASRI/WILSON (2007), p. 57 ff.

52 Cf. WITKE-KOTHE (2001); BREXENDORF/TOMCZAK (2005); VALLASTER (2004).

53 BURMANN/ZEPLIN (2004) and BURMANN/ZEPLIN (2005); one of the most comprehensive and detailed extension of BURMANN, C. /ZEPLIN, S.'s model by PIEHLER (2011); see also MALONEY (2007).

54 PIEHLER (2011), p. 198.

55 For a discussion of the definitional aspects of brand commitment, refer to B 3.1.

study, brand commitment refers to internal brand commitment without adding the term “internal” explicitly.⁵⁶ Brand commitment is “the extent of psychological attachment of internal stakeholders to the brand,”⁵⁷ which influences willingness to exert extra effort toward reaching the brand goals. High brand commitment is central to attaining and maintaining brand citizenship behaviors (refer to B 3.2). Brand commitment is based on a strong belief in and acceptance of the general brand management objectives, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the brand, and a desire to maintain organizational membership.

As internal branding emerges as a key process to align the organization and its internal stakeholders with the brand, brand management research identifies the processes required to encourage brand citizenship behavior through brand commitment. However, internal brand management research does not consider the role of culture on brand commitment and its antecedents, even though multinational enterprises face heterogeneous environments in which internal brand stimuli operate. Defined as “the core values and beliefs of individuals within a society formed in complex knowledge systems during childhood and reinforced throughout life,”⁵⁸ **culture** is often examined from a values perspective. Proponents of the value approach⁵⁹ consider values the building blocks of culture since they offer both direction and intensity.⁶⁰ Cultural values are ingrained in societal members through daily exposure to customs, law, norms, scripts, and organizational practices.⁶¹ Cultural dimensions of values reflect the basic issues societies confront when regulating human activity.⁶²

Cultural values add complexity to the process of developing a shared brand perception since it is determined by the impact of cultural influences on communicative, cognitive, and affective processes. Studies propose that the concept of self as interdependent in a collectivist setting or independent in an individualistic setting influences the various emphases on commitment components. A large body of research investigates commitment in collectivistic versus individualistic contexts.⁶³ Based on the assumption that brand commitment is a three-component model,⁶⁴ this study posits collectivistic cultures demonstrate higher levels of normative commitment while organizational members from an individualistic

56 BAUMGARTH/SCHMIDT (2010), p. 1250 ff.

57 PIEHLER (2011), p. 200.

58 EREZ/EARLEY (1993), p. 43.

59 HOFSTEDE (1980a), ROKEACH (1973), and SCHWARTZ/SAGIV (1995) pursue value-based approaches. Refer to B 3.6 for a discussion of various approaches.

60 See B 3.5.

61 Refer to TRIANDIS (1972).

62 Refer to SCHWARTZ/BILSKY (1987); SINGH (2004); KLUCKHOHN/STRODTBECK (1961); ROKEACH (1973); ROKEACH (1967).

63 COHEN (2007c), p. 273 ff; COHEN (2009), p. 332 ff; GELADE et al. (2008), p. 599 ff.

64 Based on the three-component conceptualization of ALLEN/MEYER (1990), p. 1 ff.

background exhibit higher levels of affective brand commitment (refer to B 3.5.4).⁶⁵ Although the literature contains no studies of brand commitment in a cross-cultural comparison of individual value orientation, a large body of cross-cultural organizational commitment research suggests culture influences commitment formalization.⁶⁶

65 GLAZER et al. (2004), p. 323 ff; see also JOHNSON/CHANG (2006), p. 549.

66 BODKIN et al. (2009), p. 1013 ff; BROOKS/WALLACE (2004), p. 1 ff; CHEN/FRANCESCO (2000), p. 869 ff.



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