FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

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ABSTRACT

Brand feedback means a business' written response to consumers' electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) messages or online product reviews that seeks to support the business' promise to meet the consumers' needs or desires (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018). Despite brand feedback's widespread presence today in eWOM forums, including on e-shopping sites like Amazon.com, scholars lack a thorough knowledge about how brand feedback works and its effects on consumers. We also lack tested guidelines on how businesses/brands could strategize brand feedback opportunities, especially since such opportunities often cost less. This study helps fill the research gap by examining how brand feedback to negative eWOM (i.e., eWOM with a negative valence) can impact consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Brand attitude means consumers' summary evaluation of a brand, and purchase intention means an expectation to buy the product. Even more importantly, however, the study seeks to understand how eWOM content features, particularly whether or not the negative eWOM message (which the brand feedback addresses) indicates brand to have a control over the problem ("controllability") and whether or not the particular problem is of a long-lasting nature ("stable"). The study also examines the moderating role of the surrounding eWOM (or "context") among which the target negative eWOM appear. Overall, the study will be a 2 (Brand Feedback: Present/Absent) X 2 (Controllability: Brand controlled/Uncontrolled) X 2 (Stability: Stable/Unstable) X 3 (Context: Mixed Neutral/Mixed Indifferent/Only Single Negative) between-subjects design. We chose to focus on negative eWOM, as brands are often most concerned about the effects of negative eWOM messages. In addition to eWOM theory, the study will draw on attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), and use Process software (Hayes, 2013) to analyze data. The findings will contribute toward eWOM and brand feedback theories, among others, and provide insights to industry on how businesses/brands could strategize their brand feedback opportunities.