

# Exploration of Relationship Qualities of Consumer-Brand-Consumer Triad in Brand Communities : Evidence from A Subaru Impr

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## ABSTRACT

Brand community, first defined and conceptualized by Albert Mu?缺z ,Jr & Thomas O ' Guinn in 2001, presents an unique set of relationship fabric – the consumer-brand-consumer triad, different from traditional “ brand-consumer dyad ” which has been traditionally studied by market researchers. Although Mu?缺z and O ' Guinn (2001) conceptualized Brand Community, with some consequent studies concerning the topic, nothing about its relationship strength among the elements has been further explored. The study explores the relationship qualities in the triad, i.e. brand relationship quality (BRQ) and communal relationship quality (CRQ), in order to provide a framework of understanding more about brand loyalty. BRQ is about the consumer-brand relationship, whereas CRQ is about the consumer-consumer( and community). The study is mainly based on the definition and characteristics of brand communities described by Mu?缺z and O ' Guinn (2001), as well as Susan Fournier ' s theoretic framework of brand-consumer ' s relationship quality (BRQ) in 1998, by interviewing method, in an attempt to conceptualize the relationship framework of the consumer-brand-consumer triad in a Subaru Impreza ' s brand community for implications and further research. The study finds in the brand community that, besides the six – faceted brand relationship qualities from Fournier ' s work, investment is also a key facet in the brand-consumer relationship (BRQ). It also finds that consumer-consumer relationship (CRQ) includes five facets: involvement, normative ness, commitment, self-connection and role-modeling. The study argues that single relationship quality of CRQ can influence a certain single relationship quality of BRQ, thus enhancing consumers ' brand loyalty and the cohesion of brand communities.

Keywords : brand loyalty ; brand relationship quality ; brand community ; consumer-brand-consumer triad ; brand-consumer relationship ; consumer- consumer relationship.

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