ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A multilevel study of brand-specific transformational leadership: employee and customer effects

Hsu-Hsin Chiang[1] · **Tzu-Shian Han**[2] · **David C. McConville**[3]

Abstract

In this study, we examine the effects of brand-specific transformational leadership (TFL) on the brand-related attitudes and behaviors of employees and customers. We test relationships between brand-specific TFL and employees' brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior and then the resulting effects on customer citizenship behavior and customer-based brand equity. Data from 18 international tourist hotels in Taiwan, including 136 supervisors, 268 employees and 221 customers, were analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling to investigate the multilevel relationships. Support is found for all hypotheses. The findings advance understanding of brand-specific TFL and the effects this leadership style can have on the brand-related attitudes and behaviors of both employees and customers.

Keywords Brand-specific TFL · Brand commitment · Brand citizenship behavior · Customer citizenship behavior · Customer-based brand equity

Introduction

In this study, we investigate the effects of brand-specific transformational leadership (TFL) on both employee and customer behaviors. Brand-specific TFL has been defined as "a leader's approach to motivating his or her followers to act on behalf of the corporate brand, by appealing to their values and personal convictions" (Morhart et al. 2009, p. 123). Currently, only a small number of studies in the brand management literature have researched brand-specific TFL and its effects. Morhart et al. (2009) study of how managers can elicit brand-building behavior from frontline employees was the first published study (to the authors' knowledge) to test brand-specific TFL. Morhart et al. (2009) conceptualization of brand-specific TFL suggests that such leaders will act as role models, authentically living the brand values, articulating the brand vision, while arousing "personal involvement

and pride in the corporate brand." This approach will, according to Morhart et al. (2009, p. 123), cause followers to "rethink their jobs from the perspective of a brand community member." In essence, brand-specific TFL is a form of leadership which inspires employees to develop a positive perception of a brand, leading to positive brand-related behavior. Morhart et al. (2009) findings showed that brand-specific TFL can have several positive effects on followers. These included an increase in in-role and extra-role brand-building behaviors and lower turnover intentions. A small number of empirical studies of brand-specific TFL have since been conducted, also showing positive effects on employee attitudes and behaviors. For example, (Shaari et al. 2015) found that brand-specific TFL had a significant positive relationship on brand citizenship behavior. Punjaisri et al. (2013) tested relationships between brand-specific transformational leadership, employees' brand identification, service recovery performance, trust in the leader and the corporate brand, finding that brand-specific TFL had a positive impact on all variables studied. More recently, Lee et al. (2019) found that brand-specific TFL required the mediation of person-job fit and person-group fit to influence employee-based brand equity. Several studies have also attempted to theorize how brand-specific TFL is likely to affect employees (or followers). It is theorized that when brand-specific TFLs construct a brand-related vision, this influences the

✉ David C. McConville
  dcm@cm.nsysu.edu.tw

1 National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan, ROC

2 National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC

3 Institute of Human Resource Management, College of Management, National Sun Yat-sen University, 70 Lianhai Road, Kaohsiung 804, Taiwan, ROC

personal values of employees—causing them to transcend self-interests and behave in ways that are more consistent with the brand vision (Burmann and Zeplin 2005). This process, of aligning employee behavior with brand identity, has been referred to as "internal branding" (De Chernatony 2001; Mitchell 2002). It is argued that during a process of internalization (as personal values align with the brand) employees are likely to feel more capable and confident in performing brand-related activities, becoming more willing to devote themselves to the corporate brand. However, currently only a small number of studies have attempted to empirically test how and when brand-specific TFL has such effects.

In this study, we hypothesize that brand-specific TFL will have an impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors. More specifically, we investigate links between brand-specific TFL and brand citizenship behavior and the role of brand commitment, to develop understanding of how brand-specific TFL affects behavior. In addition to employee attitudes and behaviors, we extend the question of what impact brand-specific TFL has, by asking: what happens when employees affected by brand-specific TFL engage with customers, and can brand-specific TFL have an indirect effect on customers? Our test of brand-specific TFLs impact on customer-based brand equity responds to calls from brand management scholars to study the antecedents of brand equity (Keller and Lehmann 2006). Our review reveals that few studies in brand management have explored the effects of brand-specific TFL on employee attitudes and behaviors, and fewer still have collected data from both employees and customers. In this study, we hypothesize that relationships will exist between brand-specific TFL, employees' brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior (BCB). We then examine effects on customers, to investigate if a relationship exists between BCB and customer citizenship behavior (CCB) and between CCB and customer-based brand equity (CBBE).

Employee effects of brand-specific TFL: brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior

Brand commitment

First, we argue that the "internalization" of the brand is likely to lead to a psychological bond with the brand. Burmann and Zeplin (2005) suggest that brand commitment causes employees to develop positive attitudes toward the target of their commitment. Commitment has been found to be an antecedent of psychological ownership (Burmann and Zeplin 2005; Van Dyne and Pierce 2004), a psychologically possessive characterized by feelings of "ours" or "mine." The literature leads us to posit that employees experiencing

brand commitment will psychologically experience the brand's image as an extension of their own self-image, feel more responsible for protecting and maintaining the brand image, and feel a greater desire to promote the brand and the values he/she associates with the brand. We extend prior research which suggests brand-specific TFL positively influences employees' values and perceptions (Burmann et al. 2009, Morhart et al. 2009) to hypothesize that the interactive processes of brand-specific TFL (Harris and De Chernatony 2001) causes brand values to be internalized by employees, leading to feelings of brand commitment. Hogg and Terry (2000, p. 121) define social identity theory as "a platform from which to describe in detail how social categorization and prototype-based depersonalization actually produce social identity phenomena." Social identity theory suggests that we are strongly motivated to feel positive about groups we belong to, because we base such a large part of our self-esteem on our group membership (Callaghan and Lazard 2011, p. 57). Building on previous literature which finds that organizational communication is an antecedent of organizational identification (e.g., Smidts et al. 2001), we argue that brand-specific TFLs play important and influential roles in developing feelings of connection, commitment and identification among employees. Our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1 Brand-specific TFL positively affects employee brand commitment.

Brand citizenship behavior

Following the first hypothesis, we argue that when employees identify with the brand, their personal values will begin to align with brand values, and they will be more likely to engage in brand citizenship behavior (BCB) (Chang et al. 2012). Sun et al. (2007) describe service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior as the discretionary behaviors of service-contact employees which extend beyond formal role requirements and enhance customers' perceptions of the service process. We envisage that brand leaders will create a framework that encourages employees to engage in positive BCBs. Social exchange theory provides a basis for understanding reciprocal behavior between individuals (Vaughan and Renn 1999; Groth 2005). When employees perceive that it is in their interest to engage in behavior that is consistent with brand values, we propose that high-quality brand-related social exchanges are more likely to develop between employees and organizational leaders (Chen and Klimoski 2003).

Building on these propositions, in Hypothesis 2 we posit a relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCB. Evidence suggests that leadership, specifically transformational leadership, is positively associated with employee attitudes and behaviors, including organizational citizenship behaviors

(Podsakoff et al. 1990), extra-role brand-building behaviors, in-role behavior and decreased turnover intentions (Morhart et al. 2009). Brand-specific TFLs are likely to construct a brand-centered vision that influences the personal values and convictions of employees. As a consequence, we argue that this will lead to brand-related altruistic attitudes and BCB (Burmann and Zeplin 2005). Our second hypothesis reads as follows:

H2 Brand-specific TFL positively affects employee brand citizenship behavior.

Brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior

Feelings of organizational commitment have been found to relate to changes in employee attitudes (e.g., responsibility, altruism, etc.) toward the target (e.g., organization, brand, etc.), thus helping employees to identify self-existence and self-meaning (Van Dyne and Pierce 2004). Chang et al. (2012) explored the effects of brand psychological ownership, finding a positive relationship with BCB. We argue that employees experiencing feelings of commitment over the brand will develop favorable feelings toward the brand, feel they are effective in brand-related activities, identify with the values of the brand and be more willing to defend the brand. Employees experiencing brand commitment will be more likely to perceive the corporate brand image as an extension of themselves (feeling it is "theirs") and will feel responsible for defending the brand against criticism. We infer from the work of Eisenberger et al. (1986), Pierce et al. (2001) and Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) that employees experiencing brand commitment will engage in positive brand-building behaviors.

H3 Employee brand commitment positively affects employee brand citizenship behavior.

The mediating role of brand commitment

Hypotheses 1–3 lead to the fourth hypothesis in which we propose that relationships among brand-specific TFL, brand commitment and BCB are correlated. When brand-specific TFLs construct a brand-related vision, this is likely to affect employees' personal values and motivation to transcend self-interests (Burmann and Zeplin 2005; Morhart et al. 2009). That is, employees will feel that their personal values are consistent with brand values, identify with the corporate brand, and feel a responsibility for the brand. It is this alignment of values and internalization of the brand which we argue will induce employees to feel positively toward the brand and as a consequence, engage in positive brand behaviors such as extra-role brand-building.

Employees who believe that the reciprocal exchange of valued benefits can occur, are more likely to learn how to establish exchange relationships with the organization (Molm et al., Molm 1995). Furthermore, employees who develop a social identity through the process of corporate branding are also likely to develop a sense of belongingness with the corporate brand (Masterson and Stamper 2003), experience brand commitment and display BCB. In hypothesis 4, we propose that brand commitment mediates the relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCB.

H4 Employee brand commitment mediates the relationship between brand-specific TFL and employee brand citizenship behavior.

Customer citizenship behavior and customer-based brand equity

Employee brand citizenship behavior and customer citizenship behavior

Customer-contact employees, who are demonstrating BCBs, are likely to be engaging positively with customers and providing opportunities for customers to participate in the service process (e.g., providing feedback). We argue that the behavior of frontline employees, already influenced by brand-specific TFL, will lead to positive changes in customers' perceptions and behavior (Chang et al. 2012). Some studies suggest that the citizenship behavior of one individual can be shaped by the citizenship behavior of another. For example, Yi et al. (2013) found that the citizenship behavior of focal customers was shaped by the citizenship behavior of other customers. Nguyen et al. (2014) investigated links between employee orientations and customer behavior, finding that employees with low levels of customer orientation (compared to high levels) correlated with lower levels of customer citizenship behavior. Customers were less likely to provide feedback or return to the organization. Results in Chang and Chieng (2006) also suggest that experiences of a brand can influence feelings about that brand, finding that individual and shared experiences shaped the consumer–brand relationship, working through brand attitudes, brand image and brand personality. Chang and Ko (2014, p. 65) state that "once brand leadership perceptions are developed among target consumers, it helps procure and cultivate loyal customers." Collectively, these findings suggest that CCB is likely to be influenced by the attitudes and behavior of others, including employees. We propose that employees demonstrating BCBs will influence customers' brand-related attitudes (e.g., positive brand association, a sense of brand loyalty and greater brand awareness), leading customers to engage in CCB. Hypothesis 5 is as follows:

H5 Employee brand citizenship behavior positively affects customer citizenship behavior.

Customer citizenship behavior and customer-based brand equity

Groth (2005) defines CCB as "voluntary and discretionary behaviors that are not required for the successful production and/or delivery of the service but that, in the aggregate, help the service organization overall." In hypothesis 6, we argue that CCB will positively relate to CBBE. Strong brand equity is achieved when consumers recognize brands, have favorable brand identification have and brand loyalty (Keller 1993; Çifci et al. 2016). In a general sense, brand equity is defined in terms of the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand; effects that would not occur if the same product or service had a different brand name (Keller 1993, p. 1). Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand, and holds favorable, strong and unique brand associations in their memory (Keller 1993, p. 2). Past studies have referred to the awareness, attachment, association, attitudes and loyalties of customers in relation to the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller 1993; Washburn and Plank 2002; Ailawadi et al. 2003; Netemeyer et al. 2004; Boo et al. 2009; Çifci et al. 2016). In this study, we remain consistent with Kim et al. (2008) measure of brand equity, which includes four dimensions: brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association.

The CBBE, that customers experience, may be explained by the satisfaction experienced prior to it. Customers experiencing BCB, by frontline employees, may be more likely to reciprocate by also engaging in CCB. We envisage positive effects on CBBE. Kumar and Kaushik (2017, p. 1247) argue that "brand identification enhances customer loyalty and develops long-term relationships between the customer and the brand." Although not tested in this study, we envisage a range of other positive consequences, including enhanced organizational performance, influenced by positive citizenship behaviors such as providing feedback to the organization, helping other customers and making recommendations (Groth 2005). Hypothesis 6 proposes the following:

H6 Customer citizenship behavior positively affects customer-based brand equity.

The mediating role of customer citizenship behavior

M'zungu et al. (2010, p. 611) found support for their hypothesis that "a brand orientation mind-set is the first essential requirement toward safeguarding brand equity." We build on previous work, such as Bartikowski and Walsh (2011), in which it was found that customer-based corporate reputations led customers to exhibit CCBs, such

as helping customers and providing valuable feedback. We posit that employees who identify with brand values are likely to develop a sense of brand psychological ownership and reciprocate by exhibiting BCBs (Chiang et al. 2013). As employees display BCB, this will shape the perceptions of customers (Burmann and Zeplin 2005). In hypothesis 7, we propose that employee's brand-oriented attitudes and behaviors mediate the relationship between employee BCB and CBBE.

H7 Customer citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between employee brand citizenship behavior and customer-based brand equity.

Hypotheses 1–7 are presented in Fig. 1.

Method

Sample and procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to managers, frontline employees and customers of international tourist hotels in Taiwan. We utilized a list of Taiwanese international tourist hotels to ensure that the hotels in the sample had similar environmental characteristics. The brand-specific TFL questionnaire measured managers' perspectives; employee questionnaires measured employees' cognition and behaviors, including brand commitment and BCB. Customer questionnaires measured customers' perceptions and behaviors, including CCB and CBBE. Four hundred fifty questionnaires were sent to managers and 136 were returned, representing a response rate of 30%. Six hundred employee questionnaires were sent and 268 were returned, representing a response rate of 45%. Finally, 450 customer questionnaires were sent and 221 were returned, providing a response rate of 49%. According to Maas and Hox (2005), the multilevel data of 136 supervisors, 268 employees and 221 customers collected from 18 international tourist hotels reached the requirement for hierarchical linear modeling.

Table 1 displays findings from 136 supervisors. Among these supervisors, 64 are male (46.3%) and 73 are female (53.7%). Most supervisors are between 26 and 45 years old (72.8%) and have a College/University degree (70.6%). Most respondents are middle managers (45.6%) and have worked for 3–4 years (24.3%). Table 2 displays findings from 268 employees. Among these employees, 85 are male (31.7%) and 183 are female (68.3%). Most employees were age 26–35 (44.1%). Most respondents are unmarried (64.2%) and have been employed for more than 1 year (59%).
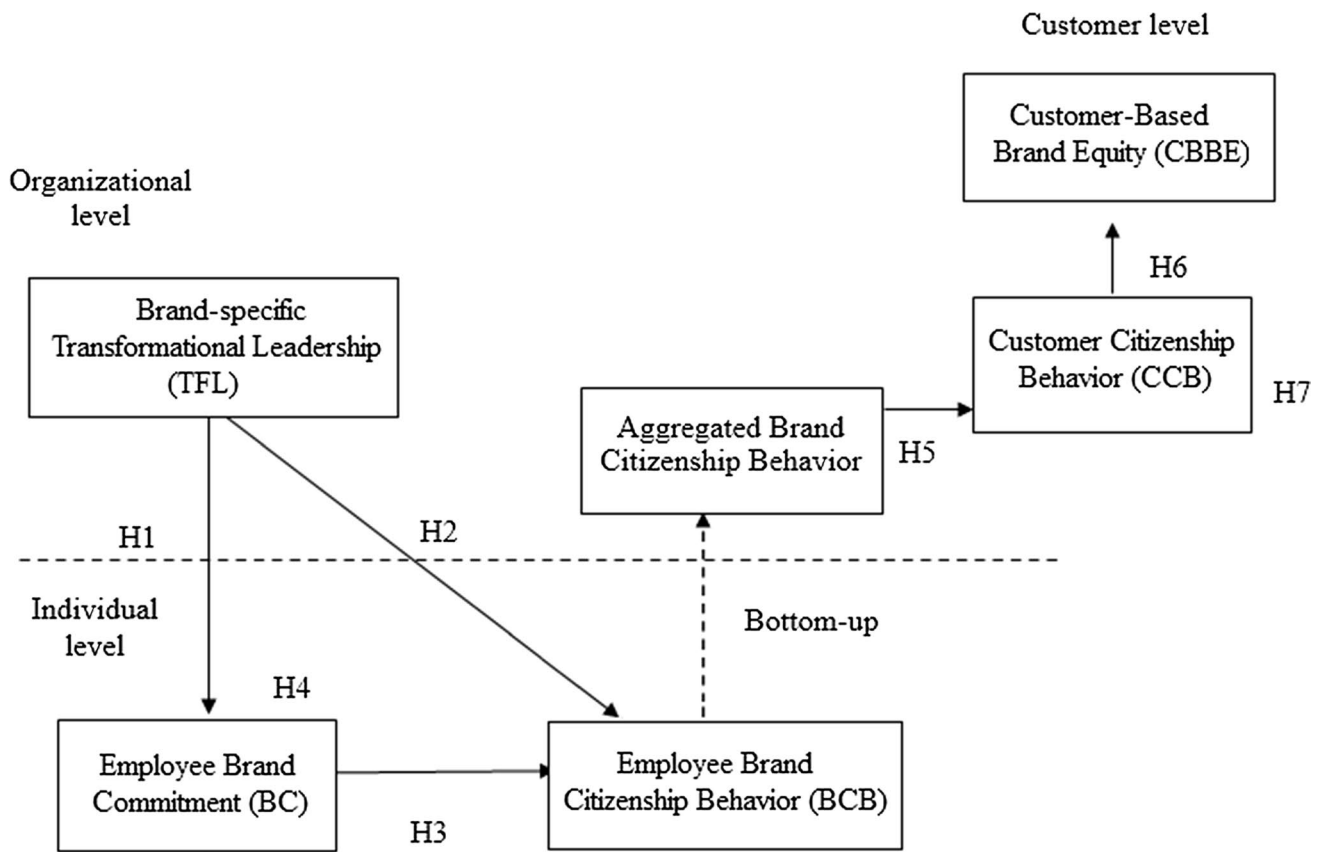
Fig. 1 Research framework

Measurements

We measure brand-specific TFL using items from Morhart et al. (2009) version of brand-specific TFL. For brand commitment, we apply the conceptual definition and measure used in Burmann and Zeplin (2005) and Chiang et al. (2018). We use measurement items from Chang et al. (2012) to measure BCB, and items from Groth (2005) to measure CCB. Finally, we measure CBBE using items found in Kim et al. (2008). The multiple dimensions of CBBE proposed by Kim et al. (2008) include brand loyalty, perceived value, brand awareness and brand association. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree) and can be found in the "Appendix" (Tables 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).

Control variables

Prior studies have suggested that descriptive control variables such as gender, age and education have an influence on employee service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Hsiao et al. 2015). Chang et al. (2012) suggested that demographic variables which include gender, age and education affect brand psychological ownership and BCB.

Therefore, given the variables included in this study, demographic variables including gender, age and education were included as control variables.

The mediating roles of brand commitment and CCB

The research framework (H4) indicates that brand commitment plays a critical role in the relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCBs. The individual-level variables of brand commitment and BCBs were aggregated to the organization-level. H7 proposes that CCB mediates the relationship between aggregated BCB and CBBE. HLM is used to examine the mediating effects of brand commitment and CCB, by following procedures described in Baron and Kenny (1986). The PRODCLIN program was used to estimate the confidence interval of the indirect effect of brand-specific TFL on BCC via brand commitment and the confidence interval of the indirect effect of aggregated BCB on CBBE, via CCB.

Common method variance

Building on Podsakoff et al. (2003), procedural and statistical remedies were utilized to mitigate the concern of

Table 1 Descriptive statistics (supervisors)

Types	Category	Number	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	63	46.3
	Female	73	53.7
Marriage	Married	81	59.6
	Unmarried	54	39.7
	Other	1	0.7
Age	Under 25	4	2.9
	26–35	51	37.5
	36–45	48	35.3
	46–55	27	19.9
	56–65	6	4.4
Education	Junior high school	7	5.1
	Senior high school	17	12.5
	College/University	96	70.6
	Master's	14	10.3
	Other	2	1.5
Position	Frontline manager	53	39
	Middle manger	63	45.6
	Senior manger	21	15.4
Tenure (yrs)	≤1	23	16.9
	> 1 and ≤ 2	22	16.2
	> 2 and ≤ 4	33	24.3
	> 4 and ≤ 6	13	9.6
	> 6 and ≤ 8	18	13.2
	> 8	27	19.9

Table 2 Descriptive statistics (employees)

Types	Category	Number	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	85	31.7
	Female	183	68.3
Marriage	Married	93	34.7
	Unmarried	172	64.2
	Other	3	1.1
Age	Under 25	88	32.8
	26–35	118	44.1
	36–45	40	14.9
	46–55	16	6.0
	56–65	6	2.2
Education	Junior high school	4	1.5
	Senior high school	41	15.3
	College/University	208	77.6
	Master's	15	5.6
Tenure (yrs)	≤1	110	41.0
	> 1 and ≤ 2	82	30.6
	> 2 and ≤ 4	27	10.1
	> 4 and ≤ 6	13	4.9
	> 6 and ≤ 8	15	5.6
	> 8	21	7.8

common method bias. In the procedural remedies, multilevel data were collected from different sources. That is, this study collected organization-level data (brand-specific TFL) from supervisors and individual-level data (brand commitment and BCC) from employees. Respondents were anonymous and assured that there was no right or wrong answer when answering questions. As for the statistical analysis, Harman's single factor was utilized to test for CMV bias. All individual-level items were reduced to one general factor. The fitness results indicated: $x2/d.f. = 5.72$; $RMSR = 0.075$; $CFI = 0.95$; $IFI = 0.95$; and $RMSEA = 0.17$. This represents a poor fitness. All individual-level items were then measured according to the proposed model (two-factor model), and the results for fitness were: $x2/d.f. = 4.25$; $RMSR = 0.058$; $CFI = 0.96$; $IFI = 0.96$; and $RMSEA = 0.13$, indicating that the fitness of the three-factor model was better than that of a one-factor mode. Although the bias of common method is not completely eliminated, the problem of CMV is substantially reduced. Therefore, common method variance was not a major concern in this study.

Reliability and validity

Since there is only one construct at the organizational level (brand-specific TFL), validity examinations were conducted for individual-level constructs only. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to conduct validity tests for brand commitment and BCB in order to show convergent and discriminant validities. Cronbach's alpha of brand-specific TFL, brand commitment, BCB, CCB and CBBE were 0.972, 0.952, 0.963, 0.865 and 0.88, respectively, indicating an acceptable level of reliability for each multilevel variable (Hair et al. 2006).

Convergent Validity

Since there is only one construct at the organizational level (brand-specific TFL), validity examinations were conducted for individual-level constructs only. Building on the results of the CFA, we utilize the factor loading (λ), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) and significance (T) to examine the convergent validity (Hair et al. 2006). Convergent validity refers to the degree to which measurement items of a concept are related. As shown in Table 3, the results of the CFA were all above the fitness index, indicating brand commitment and BCB both have convergent validity.

Discriminant validity

This study utilized phi matrix which included phi (Φ), standard error (SE) and significance (T) to examine discriminant validity (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1981). Discriminant

Table 3 Convergent validity

Constructs	λ	T	S E	CR	AVE
Brand commitment	0.72–0.84	14.23–15.12	0.29–0.48	0.953	0.65
Brand citizenship behavior	0.68–0.81	11.1–13.67	0.35–0.58	0.973	0.6
Fitness index	> 0.5	> 1.96	–	> 0.7	> 0.5

Table 4 Discriminant validity

Constructs	Brand commitment	Brand citizenship behavior
Brand commitment	0.52[a] (0.07)[b] 7.40[c]	
Brand citizenship behavior	0.39 (0.05) 8.20	0.47 (0.07) 6.92

[a] Φ

[b] SE

[c] T

validity tests whether measurements, that are not intended to be related, are unrelated. The results presented in Table 4 show statistical differences exist between brand commitment and BCB.

Analytical procedure

This study investigates relationships among constructs at the individual, organizational and customer level. The hierarchical data, which includes supervisors, employees and customers, are nested in 18 different international tourist hotels in Taiwan. That is, each of the 18 international tourist hotels nests data from supervisors, employees and customers. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was utilized to account for the nested nature of the data and to enable simultaneous estimation of impact for multilevel factors (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). Two-level HLM analyses were used to

test relationships between variables at the organizational, individual and customer levels, respectively (Chang et al. 2012). We examine how variables measured at the organizational level (i.e., brand-specific TFL) affect variables at the individual level (i.e., brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior). At the individual level, the impact of brand commitment on brand citizenship behavior is tested. After the aggregation of brand citizenship behavior, variables at the organizational level (i.e., aggregated brand citizenship behavior) were tested to see how they affect variables at the customer level (i.e., customer citizenship behavior). At the customer level, we tested the impact of customer citizenship behavior on customer-based brand equity.

Results

As reported in Table 5, brand-specific TFL is significantly related to education ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.05$) and position ($r = 0.185$, $p < 0.05$) in the organization-level relationships. Brand commitment is significantly associated with BCB ($r = 0.673$, $p < 0.01$). The results are consistent with the hypotheses. Building on these results, we investigate multilevel relationships among brand-specific TFL, brand commitment, BCB and all customer outcomes.

A null model is utilized in which no predictors are evaluated on either the individual level or organizational level. The residual variances of the intercepts of brand commitment ($\tau 00 = 0.122$, $p < 0.01$) and BCB ($\tau 00 = 0.087$, $p < 0.01$) are all significant. That is, there exists heterogeneity of relationships explored in the proposed model among different international tourist hotels. According to

Table 5 Means, standard deviation, and correlations of research constructs

Variables	Mean	S.D.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Individual level							
(1) Brand commitment	3.62	0.736	1				
(2) Brand citizenship behavior	3.98	0.667	0.673***	1			
(3) Gender	1.69	0.508	− 0.102	− 0.07	1		
(4) Age	2.01	0.96	0.129**	0.229***	− 0.149**	1	
(5) Education	2.87	0.504	− 0.077	0.016	0.184***	− 0.208***	1
Organizational level							
(1) Brand-specific TFL	3.9	0.693	1				
(2) Position	1.77	0.7	0.185**	1			

***$P < 0.01$, **$P < 0.05$, *< 0.1

the above-mentioned analytical results, it is more appropriate to investigate the relationships among brand-specific TFL, brand commitment and BCB through multiple-level analyses.

To investigate multilevel analyses, this study examines the validity of organization-level variables, including brand-specific TFL and aggregated brand citizenship behavior. Inter-rater agreement is assessed by Rwg (Kozlowski and Hults 1987). Median Rwg values for brand-specific TFL, BCB and CCB are 0.979, 0.986 and 0.991, respectively. All the Rwg values are above the acceptable level of 0.7. Furthermore, this study also measures intra-class correlation (ICC (1)) and reliability of group means (ICC (2)) for brand commitment and BCB (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). ICC (1) values for brand-specific TFL, brand commitment and BCB are 0.13, 0.192 and 0.190, which exceed the acceptable level suggested by Muthén (1994). ICC (2) values for brand-specific TFL, brand commitment and BCB are 0.5, 0.732 and 0.730, achieving the acceptable level suggested in past studies (see: Bryk and Raudenbush 1992; Bliese 2000; Schneider et al. 1998).

Multilevel analyses

In the multilevel analyses, H1 investigates the relationship between brand-specific TFL and brand commitment. H2 investigates the relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCB, and H3 investigates the relationship between brand commitment and BCB. In Table 6, model-1 shows that brand-specific TFL positively affects brand commitment (0.657, $p < 0.01$), and model-2 shows

that brand-specific TFL positively affects BCB (0.354, $p < 0.05$). Model-3 shows that brand commitment positively affects BCB (0.664, $p < 0.01$) when brand-specific TFL and brand commitment are both added as predictors. The results therefore indicate that H1, H2 and H3 are all supported.

H4 proposes that brand commitment mediates the multilevel relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCB. The PRODCLIN program was conducted to estimate the confidence interval of the indirect effect of brand-specific TFL on BCB via brand commitment. The analysis shows that brand-specific TFL positively affects brand commitment ($\gamma = 0.679$, $p < .001$), and brand commitment positively affects BCB ($\gamma = 0.657$, $p < .001$). The 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect was [0.188, 0.711], showing the mediated effect is significant. The result suggests that brand commitment mediates the relationship between brand-specific TFL and BCB, supporting H4.

In the multilevel results of customer outcomes, H5 investigates the effect of aggregated BCB on CCB. H6 investigates the effect of CCB on CBBE, and H7 investigates the mediating effect of CBBE. As reported in Table 7, model-1 shows that aggregated BCB positively affects CCB (0.522, $p < 0.01$), and model-2 shows that CCB positively affects CBBE (0.526, $p < 0.01$). Model-3 indicates that CCB positively affects CBBE (0.508, $p < 0.01$). The analysis shows that aggregated BCB ($\gamma = 0.503$, SE $= 0.237$, $p < .001$) and CCB ($\gamma = 0.526$, SE $= 0.054$, $p < .001$) significantly relates to CBBE. The 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect doesn't include 1, showing the mediated effect is significant. All hypotheses are supported.

Table 6 Multilevel effects of brand-specific transformational leadership on brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior

Models Independent variable	Model-1 Dependent variable	Model-2	Model-3
	Brand commitment	Brand citizenship behavior	Brand citizenship behavior
Individual level			
Intercept	3.647 ***	3.632 ***	3.797 ***
Brand commitment			0.664 ***
Gender	− 0.029	0.017	0.008
Age	− 0.118	− 0.155 **	− 0.074
Education	0.137*	0.1**	0.02
Organizational level			
Brand-specific TFL	0.657***	0.354**	− 0.114
Position	0.023	0.188	0.140
Deviance[a]	593.68	510.02	282.43

Organizations $n = 18$; Supervisors $n = 136$; Employees $n = 268$

[a]Deviance is a measure of model fit. Deviance $= − 2*$ log-likelihood of the full maximum-likelihood estimate

***$P < 0.01$, ** $P < 0.05$, * < 0.1

Table 7 Multilevel results of customer outcomes

Models	Model-1	Model-2	Model-3
Independent variable	Dependent variable		
	CCB	Customer-based brand equity	Customer-based brand equity
Customer level			
Intercept	2.705 ***	3.861***	3.875***
CCB		0.526***	0.508***
Gender	0.353	− 0.024	− 0.032
Age	0.182	− 0.016	− 0.025
Education	0.242	0.029	0.029
Employee level			
Brand citizenship behavior	0.522 ***		0.474***
Gender	0.061		0.053
Age	− 0.063		0.328
Education	0.008		− 0.31
Deviance[a]	254.46	127.77	125.162

[a]Deviance is a measure of model fit. Deviance = − 2* log-likelihood of the full maximum-likelihood estimate

***$P < 0.01$, **$P < 0.05$, *< 0.1

Organizations $n = 18$; Employees $n = 268$; Customers $n = 221$

Discussion and conclusions

It has been argued that when brand-specific TFLs construct a brand-related vision; this is likely to affect employees' personal values and motivation to transcend self-interests (Burmann and Zeplin 2005; Morhart et al. 2009). More specifically, it is suggested that brand-specific TFL is particularly important for strengthening brand personality, particularly in broad service sectors (Balmer et al. 2017; Heding et al. 2015). Our findings help validate the theoretical effects of brand-specific TFL in hotels, as proposed in earlier studies. We have tested a series of complex and under-researched relationships and found encouraging support for the model we present. Brand management has been viewed as one of the most strategically important issues in the service industry for decades (Berry 2000; Keller 2008). Nevertheless, more research has been called for by brand management scholars, particularly in relation to the antecedents of brand equity (Keller and Lehmann 2006). In response, we have investigated the relationship between brand-specific transformational leadership (TFL) and customer-based brand equity (CBBE), with an emphasis on the mediating effects of employees' brand commitment and brand-related citizenship behaviors (BCBs). To do this, we have used advanced multilevel statistical methods, finding support for all hypotheses. We find that brand-specific TFL is highly related to brand commitment of the frontline employees, which results in

BCBs. The aggregate BCBs of the hotels' frontline employees are highly associated with CBBE. Our findings suggest that to enhance CBBE, hotel managers can achieve this by delivering their brand promises to their customers through interactive branding activities carried out by their frontline employees. Among them, the most important activity is the employees' BCB which includes in-role and extra-role brand-building behaviors. We infer from our findings that BCB will be of greatest benefit to the organization when frontline employees identify with the values and mission of the brand (Morhart et al. 2009). Furthermore, when management adopt brand-specific TFL, employees are more likely to internalize brand-related values. Our findings suggest that brand-specific TFL is conducive to creating an inspiring and motivating environment for employees.

We make several contributions to the literature by studying both employee and customer outcomes of brand-specific TFL. We find that employee behavior, influenced by brand-specific TFL within organizations, can spill over to influence the feelings and behaviors of customers. To the best of our knowledge, these links have not yet been empirically demonstrated in the research literature. Arguably, an important purpose of brand management is to enhance CBBE—a potential source of competitive advantage. Xu and Chan (2010) developed a conceptual framework of CBBE, focusing on three major antecedents (i.e., advertising efforts, word-of-mouth and service performance). While their conceptual framework provides both researchers and practitioners with a useful model for research and practice, we have argued that more empirical research is needed on the antecedents and processes that lead to CBBE. The findings we present in this study address this, uncovering some of the antecedents of CBBE, both internal and external to the organization.

The findings presented in this study, from the Taiwanese hotel industry, contribute to a growing area of research literature exploring the applicability of Western management concepts (such as social exchange theory) in non-Western contexts. Casimir et al. (2014) note in their study of social exchange in China that some scholars have questioned the applicability of social exchange theory in non-Western settings that are relatively higher in power distance and traditionalism (Casimir et al. 2014, p. 368, 378). Casimir et al. (2014) suggest that this is because workplace attitudes and behaviors in non-Western contexts (such as Taiwan) are driven mostly by role expectations (and guanxi) rather than by the norm of reciprocity. Despite these potential differences, Casimir et al. (2014) found that attitudes and behaviors in China were based on social exchange, concluding that workplace attitudes in China may be aligning more closely with Western counties. The support we find for our hypotheses (underpinned by exchanges in brand-related behavior) provides further support for the use of social exchange theory in non-Western settings.

Finally, in relation to the hospitality industry in which our study was conducted, the results coincide with the practical experiences of some world leading luxury hotels. Several examples can be found which appear to demonstrate how brand values can become central to leadership of employees and the service provided to customers. For instance, Mr. Isadore Sharp, Founder and Chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, is quoted as saying "in all our interactions with our guests, customers, business associates and colleagues, we seek to deal with others as we would have them deal with us" (Soloman 2015). Four Seasons state that their company culture "has long been a foundational pillar of and has always been rooted in the company's guiding philosophy of the Golden Rule—to treat others as you would have them treat you" (Four Seasons Press office 2019). According to Four Season's Press Office (2019), "this simple, universal rule has allowed Four Seasons employees around the world to deliver a consistent level of service to each and every guest, while maintaining relationships marked by respect and kindness with fellow colleagues."

Another example of how brand leadership appears to resonate through the organization can be found at Marriott International, a company that has experienced major growth in their stock price during the previous 5 years, from around 50 US dollars in 2013 to 130 US dollars (as of August 19, 2019). One of Marriott's core brand values is putting "people first" (Marriott 2019a). According to Marriott (2019b), the company's founder J.W. Marriot was "a true hands-on manager," who enjoyed spending time with "the ever-growing ranks of associates who—in his eyes—were the secret of his company's success." J.W. Marriot was reported to constantly tell Marriott's managers, "take care of associates and they'll take care of your customers"—a statement that has remained the keystone of the company's culture, for over 85 years (Marriott 2019b). In 2012, after being ranked 6th on World's Best Multinational Workplaces List by *Great Place to Work,* David A. Rodriguez (Marriott's Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at that time) attributed the company's ranking to Marriott's core values, "put people first, pursue excellence, embrace change, act with integrity, and serve our world" (Marriott 2012). Mr. Rodriguez stated that "practicing these core values every day starting with the top management ensures the commitment and active participation of everyone in the company" (Marriott 2012). He went on to state that "we have observed over a long period of time that is the most powerful action we can take to ensure that our hotel guests also have great experiences. A great workplace generates the inspired customer service that builds customer loyalty and an emotional connection to our brands" (Marriott 2012). From these statements, it appears that core brand values, including "putting people first," influence the experiences of both employees and customers, producing reciprocal benefits. We argue that this form of leadership, apparent in some successful international hotels such as Four Seasons and Mariott, is driven by brand values. The findings we present in this study may be evident in such cases.

Contributions to research

Since the concept of corporate branding was introduced by Balmer (1995), this area has increasingly attracted the attention from both academics and practitioners. In recent years, interactive branding has gradually emerged as a new research area in corporate branding, emphasizing the roles of interpersonal interaction (Koporcic and Halinen 2018). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of theoretical and empirical work on this newly emerging area. Our study makes contributions by theoretically building an integrative framework linking both internal and external branding practices, as well as empirically studying the existence of both internal and external branding practices. Our analytical framework can be used to investigate interactive branding practices in service industries in general, and in the hospitality industry in particular. We have argued in this study that CBBE is a key indicator for explaining the impact of brand-specific TFL on customers' awareness of the brand image, the association of brand characteristics and employees' loyalty toward the brand. In turn, this may increase customers' intentions to repurchase or consume the services provided by the hotel brand in the future. In today's experience economy, customer experiences are highly emphasized in academic research (Pine and Gilmore 1999) and are strongly associated with CBBE (Cai and Hobson 2004). In order to enhance CBBE, a high-quality customer experience of hotel services is essential. These positive experiences may enhance the degree of CCB and loyalty, encourage CCB, and inspire positive word-of-mouth communication—all of which could enhance and reinforce CBBE (Xu and Chan 2010).

Balmer et al. (2017) suggested that future research should focus on the role of leadership in building and sustaining a strong brand. There is currently a lack of large-scale empirical research using rigorous methodologies (Balmer et al. 2017). In response to this, our study has presented a theoretical framework that emphasizes the effects of brand-specific TFL on the brand-related attitudes and behaviors of employees and customers. We have established an integrative framework that illustrates the important effects of brand-specific TFL, leading to CBBE. The framework responds to Smith (2004) call for brand management to take a holistic approach to brand equity management. In the brand equity management process, positive customer experiences have a crucial impact on forming strong CBBE. In addition to engaging in advertising and word-of-mouth, our findings suggest that service employees can play an important role in

providing superior services to their customers to help them feel highly satisfied with the services of the hotel.

Implications for practitioners

Our theoretical framework and empirical results provide some practical guidelines for managers generally (not only in the hospitality industry) to apply brand-specific TFL to build strong connections between employees, customers and the brand. It can be argued that the CBBE of most organizations depends primarily upon CCB and loyalty to the brand, which is in turn affected by the service quality provided by employees. Tsang et al. (2011, p. 481) state that it is "necessary that employees are convinced by the hotel brand prior to having confidence to "sell" the brand to customers." Thus, to enhance CBBE, we suggest that managers first articulate a compelling vision and mission of the brand and strengthen the core values behind the brand vision and mission. Secondly, managers must communicate clearly the vision, mission and core values to their subordinates in order to shape their brand-related values, attitudes and behaviors. Thirdly, managers need to serve as role models and mentor their subordinates to behave in alignment with the brand promise. Lastly, managers are advised to give their subordinates the tools required, and the motivation, to deliver the brand promise to their customers promptly and consistently.

In relation to customers, we suggest that brand-specific TFLs lead by example and provide high-quality services to their customers, increasing customer satisfaction, loyalty toward the brand, and customer citizenship behaviors. In many industries, such as the hotel industry, customer satisfaction is primarily dependent upon the quality of service delivered by employees. Therefore, it is important that managers motivate employees to display the brand-related attitudes (e.g., brand commitment) and behaviors (e.g., BCB) that can meet the needs of the hotel's customers and enhance their loyalty toward the hotel brand.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Several limitations can be identified in this study. First, data were collected from 18 international tourist hotels in one geographical area (Taiwan), potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. While we believe we have tested a series of complex and under-researched relationships and found encouraging support for the model we present, we also believe that future studies can take steps to understand the relationships further. Future studies need to utilize random samples and collect data from different industries or a broader range of organizations in the hotel industry, in order to generalize these findings with greater confidence. Second,

the cross-sectional data utilized in this study presents some limitations. In order to overcome this and provide further support for the findings, future studies could use longitudinal designs to collect data over longer time periods. Third, this study has viewed brand-specific TFL as an organization-level variable. Future studies could build on this to investigate multilevel relationships via other organization-level variables, such as branding culture and brand communication. Variables such as these were unaccounted for in this study, but their integration in future studies could provide alternative insights into the relationships explored. Fourth, to build on our work and examine these relationships in more depth, we suggest future studies investigate the relationships between BCB and psychological ownership of employees and customers, to investigate whether feelings of ownership lead to longer-term loyalty. In relation to our study design, we have used two-level HLM in this study. We suggest that future studies expand on this work using three-level HLM. Fifth, to advance understanding of corporate brand management and develop our framework further, research should take a holistic perspective that integrates multiple stakeholders (Balmer et al. 2017; Brexendorf and Kernstock 2007; Gyrd-Jones et al. 2013). In addition, we note that research on corporate brand management is currently highly fragmented, tending to focus on either internal branding or external branding (Abratt and Kleyn 2012; Biraghi and Gambetti 2015). Few studies blend the two branding practices in an integrative framework.

Finally, Anaza (2014) argue that not all customers react in the same way. Certain personalities may be attracted to the brand or particular values it represents. Anaza (2014, p. 251) note "study results demonstrate that individuals high on empathic concern feel greater satisfaction with the service provider, and display a greater propensity to help other online shoppers." Future studies may therefore consider the characteristics of brand-specific TFLs, employees and customers, in order to ascertain the generalizability of our findings and if/how organizations may need to tailor brand-centered approaches.

Compliance with ethical standards

Appendix

See Tables 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Table 8 Items for brand-specific TFL

No	Contents of items
1.	I re-examine critical assumptions of our brand promise
2.	I seek different perspectives when interpreting our corporate brand values
3.	I look at my job in terms of a branding task
4.	I suggest a brand promoter's perspective of looking at how to complete assignments
5.	I talk optimistically about the future of our corporate brand
6.	I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished to strengthen our corporate brand
7.	I articulate a compelling vision of our corporate brand
8.	I express confidence that brand-related goals will be achieved
9.	I am proud of being associated with our corporate brand
10.	I go beyond self-interest for the good of the corporate brand
11.	I live our corporate brand in ways that build my respect
12.	I display a sense of power and confidence when talking about our corporate brand
13.	I specify the importance of having a strong sense of our corporate brand
14.	I talk about our most important brand values and our belief in them
15.	I consider the moral and ethical consequences of our brand promise
16.	I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of our brand mission
17.	I spend time teaching and coaching myself in brand-related issues
18.	I treat myself as an individual rather than just one of many members of the corporate brand
19.	I consider myself as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from other members of the corporate brand
20.	I develop my strengths with regard to becoming a good representative of our brand

Table 9 Items for brand commitment

No	Contents of items
1.	I would be very happy to spend my rest of my career with the brand
2.	I really feel as if the brand's problems are my own
3.	I feel the brand is meaningful for me
4.	I have strong feelings of belongingness toward the brand
5.	Overall, the brand makes me feel satisfied
6.	Overall, I am pleased to work for the brand
7.	When other people criticize the brand, I feel like they criticize me
8.	I very care about what other people think about the brand
9.	When other people praise the brand, I feel like they praise me
10.	The success of the brand is like my success
11.	When we talk about the brand, we say "our brand"

Table 10 Items for brand citizenship behavior

No	Contents of items (employees)
1.	I regard customers as my family and solve their problems as I do mine
2.	I solve problems of customers voluntarily to foster brand value
3.	I voluntarily follow brand guidelines while servicing customers
4.	I voluntarily follow brand standard processes without organizational monitoring
5.	I voluntarily follow brand guidelines while solving customers' complaints
6.	I express aggressive behaviors to satisfy customers and enhance brand value
7.	I am willing to endorse the brand and voluntarily transmit brand value to newcomers or friends
8.	I have trust and loyalty toward the brand
9.	I tolerate inconveniencies caused by brand-related activities to satisfy customers and enhance brand value
10.	I never complain about inconveniences caused by brand-related activities
11.	I voluntarily provide new information and ideas for the brand to enhance brand value
12.	I strengthen my professional knowledge to foster brand value
13.	I voluntarily understand needs of customers without organizational requirement
14.	Regardless of positive or negative information, I voluntarily respond to customers' thoughts on my company
15.	I am willing to endlessly enhance brand-related skills

Table 11 Items for customer citizenship behavior

No	Measurement items (customers)
1.	Refer fellow students or coworkers to the business
2.	Recommend the business to your family
3.	Recommend the business to your peers
4.	Recommend the business to people interested in the business' products/services
5.	Assist other customers in finding products
6.	Help others with their shopping
7.	Teach someone how to use the service correctly
8.	Explain to other customers how to use the service correctly
9.	Fill out a customer satisfaction survey
10.	Provide helpful feedback to customer service
11.	Provide information when surveyed by the business
12.	Inform business about the great service received by an individual employee

Table 12 Items for customer-based brand equity

No	Contents of items
1.	I consider myself to be loyal to the hotel
2.	The hotel would be my first choice
3.	The physical facilities at the hotel are visually appealing
4.	The hotel performs the service right the first time
5.	Employees of the hotel are always willing to help me
6.	Employees of the hotel are consistently courteous with me
7.	Employees of the hotel understand my specific, individual needs
8.	I know what the hotel's physical appearance looks like
9.	I am aware of the hotel
10.	I can recognize the hotel among other competing brands
11.	Some characteristics of the hotel come to my mind quickly
12.	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the hotel
13.	The hotel has: very poor value for money…very good value for money
14.	The price paid for the hotel room is very acceptable
15.	The hotel appears to be a bargain is strongly agreeable
16.	I plan to revisit the hotel
17.	The probability that I would consider revisiting the hotel is high

References

Aaker, D.A. 1991. *Managing brand equity*. New York: The Free Press.

Abratt, R., and N. Kleyn. 2012. Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing* 46(7/8): 1048–1063.

Ailawadi, K.L., D.R. Lehmann, and S.A. Neslin. 2003. Revenue premium as an outcome measure of brand equity. *Journal of Marketing* 67: 1–17.

Anaza, N.A. 2014. Personality antecedents of customer citizenship behaviors in online shopping situations. *Psychology and Marketing* 31(4): 251–263.

Balmer, J.M.T., S.M. Powell, J. Kernstock, and T.O. Brexendorf. 2017. Introduction: Current state and future directions for research on corporate brand management. In *Advances in corporate branding*, ed. J.M.T. Balmer, S.M. Powell, J. Kernstock, and T.O. Bresendorf, 1–21. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baron, R.M., and D.A. Kenny. 1986. The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51: 1173–1182.

Bartikowski, B., and G. Walsh. 2011. Investigating mediators between corporate reputation and customer citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Business Research* 64(1): 39–44.

Berry, L.L. 2000. Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 28(1): 128–137.

Biraghi, S., and R.C. Gambetti. 2015. Corporate branding: Where are we? A systematic communication-based inquiry. *Journal of Marketing Communications* 21(4): 260–283.

Bliese, P.D. 2000. Within-group agreement, non-independence, and reliability: Implications for data aggregation and analysis. In *Multilevel theory, research, and methods in organizations*, ed. K.J. Klein and S.W.J. Kozlowski, 349–381. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Boo, S., J. Busser, and S. Baloglu. 2009. A model of customer-based brand equity and its application to multiple destinations. *Tourism Management* 30: 219–231.

Brexendorf, T.O., and J. Kernstock. 2007. Corporate behaviour vs brand behaviour: Towards an integrated view? *Journal of Brand Management* 15(1): 32–40.

Bryk, A., and S. Raudenbush. 1992. *Hierarchical linear models for social and behavioral research*. London, UK: Applications and Data Analysis Methods Sage Publications Inc.

Burmann, C., and S. Zeplin. 2005. Building brand commitment: A behavioral approach to internal brand management. *Journal of Brand Management* 12(4): 279–300.

Burmann, C., S. Zeplin, and N. Reily. 2009. Key determinants of internal brand management success: An exploratory empirical analysis. *Journal of Brand Management* 16(4): 264–284.

Cai, L.P., and J.S.P. Hobson. 2004. Making hotel brands work in a competitive environment. *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 10(3): 197–208.

Callaghan, J., and L. Lazard. 2011. *Social Psychology*. London: SAGE.

Casimir, G., Y.N.K. Ng, Y.K. Wang, and G. Ooi. 2014. The relationships amongst leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, affective commitment, and in-role performance: A social-exchange perspective. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 35(5): 366–385.

Chang, A., H.H. Chiang, and T.S. Han. 2012. A multilevel investigation of relationships among brand-centered HRM, brand psychological ownership, brand citizenship behaviors, and customer satisfaction. *European Journal of Marketing* 46(5): 626–662.

Chang, P.L., and M.H. Chieng. 2006. Building consumer-brand relationship: A cross-cultural experiential view. *Psychology and Marketing* 23(11): 927–959.

Chang, Y., and Y.J. Ko. 2014. The brand leadership: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Brand Management* 21(1): 63–80.

Chen, G., and R.J. Klimoski. 2003. The impact of expectations on newcomer performance in teams as mediated by work characteristics, social exchange, and empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal* 46(5): 591–607.

Chiang, H.H., T.S. Han, and D. McConville. 2018. The attitudinal and behavioral impact of brand-centered human resource management: Employee and customer effects. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 30(2): 939–960.

Chiang, H.H., A. Chang, T.S. Han, and D. McConville. 2013. Corporate branding, brand psychological ownership and brand citizenship behavior: Multilevel analysis and managerial implications. *Journal of General Management* 39(1): 55–80.

Çifci, S., Y. Ekinci, G. Whyatt, A. Japutra, S. Molinillo, and H. Siala. 2016. A cross validation of consumer-based brand equity models: Driving customer equity in retail brands. *Journal of Business Research* 69(9): 3740–3747.

De Chernatony, L. 2001. A model for strategically building brands. *Journal of Brand Management* 9(4/5): 32–44.

Eisenberger, R., R. Huntington, S. Hutchison, and D. Sowa. 1986. Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 71: 500–507.

Four Seasons Press office. 2019. Four seasons named to fortune 100 best companies to work for list for 22nd consecutive year. https://press.fourseasons.com/news-releases/2019/fortune-best-companies-to-work-for/. Accessed 23 Sept 2019.

Groth, M. 2005. Customers as good soldiers: Examining citizenship behaviors in internet service deliveries. *Journal of Management* 31(1): 7–27.

Gyrd-Jones, R., B. Merrilees, and D. Miller. 2013. Revisiting the complexities of corporate branding: Issues, paradoxes, solutions. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(7): 1–19.

Hair, J.F., W.C. Black, B.J. Babin, R.E. Anderson, and R.L. Tatham. 2006. *Multivariate data analysis*. NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Harris, F., and L. De Chernatony. 2001. Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing* 35(3/4): 441–456.

Heding, T., C.F. Knudtzen, and M. Bjerre. 2015. *Brand management: Research, theory and practice*. London, U. K.: Routledge.

Hogg, M.A., and D.J. Terry. 2000. Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. *Academy of Management Review* 25(1): 121–140.

Hsiao, C., Y.H. Lee, and W.J. Chen. 2015. The effect of servant leadership on customer value co-creation: A cross-level analysis of key mediating roles. *Tourism Management* 49: 45–57.

Keller, K.L. 1993. Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing* 57: 1–22.

Keller, K.L. 2008. *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson Prentice-Hall.

Keller, K.L., and D.R. Lehmann. 2006. Brands and branding: Research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science* 25(6): 740–759.

Kim, W.G., B. Jin-Sun, and H.J. Kim. 2008. Multidimensional customer-based brand equity and its consequences in midpriced hotels. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* 32(2): 235–254.

Koporcic, N., and A. Halinen. 2018. Interactive network branding: Creating corporate identity and reputation through interpersonal interaction. *IMP Journal* 12(2): 392–403.

Kozlowski, S.W.J., and B.M. Hults. 1987. An exploration of climates for technical updating and performance. *Personnel Psychology* 40: 539–562.

Kumar, V., and A.K. Kaushik. 2017. Achieving destination advocacy and destination loyalty through destination brand identification. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 34(9): 1247–1260.

Lee, Y.H., C. Hsiao, H.Y. Chan, and I.C. Lee. 2019. Explorations of employee-based brand equity in the banking industry from a perceived-leadership perspective. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-05-2019-0166.

Masterson, S.S., and C.L. Stamper. 2003. Perceived organizational membership: An aggregate framework representing the employee-organization relationship. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 24: 473–490.

Maas, C.J.M., and J.J. Hox. 2005. Sufficient sample sizes for multilevel modelling. *Methodology* 1(3): 85–92.

Marriott. (2012). Marriott's Core Values Translate around the World. https://marriott2.typepad.com/newsroom/workplace/page/3/. Accessed 23 Sept 2019.

Marriott. (2019a). Core Values and Heritage. https://www.marriott.com/culture-and-values/core-values.mi#. Accessed 23 Sept 2019.

Marriott. (2019b). J. Willard Marriott. https://www.marriott.com/culture-and-values/core-values.mi#. Accessed 23 Sept 2019.

Mitchell, C. 2002. Selling the brand inside. *Harvard Business Review* 80(1): 99–105.

Molm, L., and K. Cook. 1995. *Social exchange and exchange networks. Sociological perspectives on social psychology*, 209–235. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Morhart, F.M., W. Herzog, and T. Tomczak. 2009. Brand-specific leadership: Turning employees into brand champions. *Journal of Marketing* 73(5): 122–142.

M'zungu, S.D., B. Merrilees, and D. Miller. 2010. Brand management to protect brand equity: A conceptual model. *Journal of Brand management* 17(8): 605–617.

Netemeyer, R.G., B. Krishnan, C. Pullig, G. Wang, M. Yagci, D. Dean, and J. Ricks. 2004. Developing and validating measures of facets of customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Business Research* 57(2): 209–224.

Nguyen, H., M. Groth, G. Walsh, and T. Hennig-Thurau. 2014. The impact of service scripts on customer citizenship behavior and the moderating role of employee customer orientation. *Psychology and Marketing* 31(12): 1096–1109.

Pierce, J.L., T. Kostova, and K.T. Dirks. 2001. Toward a theory of psychological ownership in organizations. *Academy of Management Review* 26(2): 298–310.

Pine, B.J., and J.H. Gilmore. 1999. *The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard University School Press.

Podsakoff, P.M., S.B. MacKenzie, R.H. Moorman, and R. Fetter. 1990. Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly* 1: 107–142.

Podsakoff, P.M., S.B. MacKenzie, and N.P. Podsakoff. 2003. Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(5): 879–903.

Punjaisri, K., H. Evanschitzky, and J. Rudd. 2013. Aligning employee service recovery performance with brand values: The role of brand-specific leadership. *Journal of Marketing Management* 29(9–10): 981–1006.

Raudenbush, S.W., and A.S. Bryk. 2002. *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods*. London: Sage.

Schneider, B., S.S. White, and M.C. Paul. 1998. Linking service climate and customer perceptions of service quality: Test of a causal model. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 83: 150–163.

Shaari, H., S.M. Salleh, and Z. Hussin. 2015. The effect of brand leadership styles on employees' brand citizenship behavior. *Asian Social Science* 11(18): 86.

Smith, S.L.J. 2004. Brand experience. In *Brands and branding*, ed. R. Clifton and J. Simmons. Princeton, N. J.: Bloomberg Press.

Smidts, A., H. Pruyn, and B.M. Van Riel. 2001. The impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal* 44: 1051–1062.

Solomon, M. (2015). *Four seasons leader isadore sharp: Treat employees right so they treat customers right*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2015/08/17/four-seasons-leader-isadore-sharp-treat-employees-right-so-they-treat-customers-right/#68c92dfc3303. Accessed 23 Sept 2019.

Sun, L.Y., S. Aryee, and K.S. Law. 2007. High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: A relational perspective. *Academy of Management Journal* 50(3): 558–577.

Tsang, N.K., L.Y. Lee, and F.X. Li. 2011. An examination of the relationship between employee perception and hotel brand equity. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 28(5): 481–497.

Van Dyne, L., and J.L. Pierce. 2004. Psychological ownership and feeling of possession: Three field studies predicting employee attitudes and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 25: 439–459.

Vaughan, B.J., and R.W. Renn. 1999. Customer service citizenship behavior: Bridging the employee-customer relationship. *Advances in the Management of Organizational Quality* 4: 151–186.

Washburn, J.H., and R.E. Plank. 2002. Measuring brand equity: An evaluation of a consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 10(1): 46–62.

Xu, J.B., and A. Chan. 2010. A conceptual framework of hotel experience and customer-based brand equity: Some research questions and implications. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 22(2): 174–193.

Yi, Y., T. Gong, and H. Lee. 2013. The impact of other customers on customer citizenship behavior. *Psychology and Marketing* 30(4): 341–356.

Hsu-Hsin Chiang completed his Ph.D. at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. His research and teaching interests relate to brand-centered human resource management, marketing management and organizational behavior. He has published his research in international research journals, including: International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, European Journal of Marketing and the International Journal of Human Resource Management.

Tzu-Shian Han's research and teaching interests relate to human resource management organization theories, and industrial relations. He has published his research in international research journals, including: Human Performance, Career Development International and the International Journal of Human Resource Management.

David C. McConville's research and teaching interests relate to organizational psychology and the study of employee attitudes and behaviors. He has published his research in international journals, including the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Human Performance, International Journal of Hospitality Management and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.