

Affective Commitment and Corporate Reputation. The Effects of Attitude toward Advertising and Trust

İzlem Gözükara¹, Osman Yildirim²

¹Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Istanbul Arel University, Türkoba Mahallesi, Erguvan Sokak No:26/K 34537, Tepekent – Büyükçekmece, İstanbul, Turkey, E-mail: izlemg@arel.edu.tr

²Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Istanbul Arel University, Türkoba Mahallesi, Erguvan Sokak No:26/K 34537, Tepekent – Büyükçekmece, İstanbul, Turkey

Abstract *Affective commitment refers to the psychological attachment of an individual to an organization. It is the desire reflecting the extent to which an individual wants to be involved in an organization. It includes a sense of belonging and connection. Affective commitment influences employee/customer behaviors. In the context of higher education, affective commitment levels of students may determine student retention and affect prospective students. The objective of this study is to determine the variables that can influence the university students' affective commitment to their university. Therefore, the present study investigates affective commitment and corporate reputation based on the effects of attitude toward advertising and trust among undergraduate students in a foundation university. The study sample included 288 university students and the study data was collected using questionnaires. A structural equation model (LISREL) was used to analyze the relationships between affective commitment, corporate reputation, attitude toward advertising and trust. The study results demonstrated that all one-side relations seen in the proposed model were statistically significant and all hypotheses were confirmed with a statistical significance for all variables.*

Key words Affective commitment, corporate reputation, attitude toward advertising, trust, higher education

JEL Codes: M14

1. Introduction

A favorable corporate reputation leads organizations to gain various benefits such as customer retention, loyalty and economic growth. Corporate reputation is the collection of assessments about an organization. Such assessments can be determined by many factors from the quality of products and services to the beliefs and opinions of customers/employees. It is an attitudinal construct developed based on the interactions and experiences. Corporate reputation is associated with sustainability, enhanced performance, higher income, and employee and customer

loyalty (Fombrun *et al.*, 2004; Krueger *et al.*, 2010; Bartikowski *et al.*, 2011). This has led to a great number of studies exploring the determinants and consequences of corporate reputation (Chun, 2005).

Customers and employees preferring organizations with a strong reputation are likely to have higher levels of loyalty and commitment (Walsh *et al.*, 2009a). Commitment is an emotional attachment to an organization. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), individuals feel three types of commitment to an organization; affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment refers to a psychological connection and a sense of belonging, which causes individuals to be interested in staying with that particular organization. Prior research demonstrates that corporate reputation is significantly related with affective commitment and corporate reputation results in building affective commitment (Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Coenen *et al.*, 2010).

Commitment has a significant relation with trust, and trust is regarded as a necessary construct for building commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Trust is a critical construct for developing effective relationships (Colquitt *et al.*, 2007) and has an influence on employee/customer behaviors (Deluga, 1994). Trust is an important predictor of commitment and confidence in another party's reliability increases individuals' commitment levels. Since trust results from confidence, individuals who have confidence in an organization's reputation may lead to build customer trust (Doney and Cannon, 1997). Confidence in an organization reduces risk-related opinions about that organization, leading to perceive a more trustworthy reputation (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Trust can also be affected by advertisement. Advertisement provides information about a product/service or an organization, and influences individuals' attitudes. Attitudes are emotional reactions, and customers' trust can be affected by their attitudes toward advertising. Organizations usually use advertising to enhance their reputation. Advertising leads to build positive attitudes toward that ad (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1996). The advertisement perceived as positive motives customers to perceive that brand or organization more positive (Ang and Low, 2000).

Accordingly, the present study aims to examine affective commitment and corporate reputation through the effects of attitude toward advertising and trust.

2. Affective Commitment

Since psychological bond is a very significant motive for organizations to bind their employees, commitment has become one of the most discussed dimensions of such psychological bond (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), commitment involves three mindsets: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. Affective commitment mostly results from affirmative psychological feelings toward an organization (O'Reilly and

Chatman, 1986); normative commitment results from moralistic obligations, and continuance commitment is the need component, resulting from the side-bets (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010; Powell and Meyer, 2004). Therefore, affective commitment is one of the focus points in the present study.

Affective commitment refers to the psychological attachment of individuals to the organization in combination with their sense of identification with it (Meyer and Allen, 1991). In essence, affective commitment is a strong psychological connection of individuals that makes them want to stay with that organization (Snyder and Cistulli, 2011). Meyer *et al.* (2004) described commitment as an individual's dedication to a behavioral pattern designated within the conditions of such commitment. Mostly, it is referred as an employee attitude and desire to maintain a specific relationship (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Gundlach *et al.* 1995).

Affective commitment means a powerful emotional attachment to an organization (Meyer *et al.*, 1990; Meyer *et al.*, 2002) and it is regarded as the result of high-quality reciprocity between an employee and his/her organization (Colquitt *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2009). When employees are positively treated by an organization, they develop affirmative feelings toward that organization, which leads to high levels of commitment.

In line with Gruen *et al.* (2000), the present study discusses affective commitment as a permanent attachment, a sense of ongoing and progressive belonging or a psychological connection to an organization and its staff. As a psychological dimension of commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990), it is manifested when customers feel a sense of identification with the organization and the values it represents (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Such identification can be associated with an exchange and an individual engagement (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2005; Johnson *et al.*, 2006). According to the recent study by Joshi (2009), this attachment is enhanced by communication.

The available theoretical support suggests that affective commitment also mediates the relationship between marketing instruments and affirmative emotional assessments such as attitudes (Bolton *et al.*, 2004; Joshi, 2009). Likewise, the theoretical model of customer asset management (Bolton *et al.*, 2004) proposes a mediator role for affective commitment in the relationship between affective assessments and marketing activities, and suggests that the relationship will extend when marketing activities, affective commitment and affirmative assessment are combined.

Commitment, just like trust, is a component consisting of multiple dimensions. As previously stated, commitment can be discussed under three (affective, continuance and normative) dimensions (Meyer and Allen, 1991). However, the present study concentrates only on the affective component since it has been demonstrated that

this dimension has a positive effect on permanent behaviors (Jin *et al.*, 2010; Wang and Datta, 2006).

3. Attitude toward Advertising

Attitude toward advertising is described as "a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion" (Lutz, 1985). This concept refers to customers' exposure to a specific advertisement instead of their general attitude toward advertising or toward the respective advertisement in another time point (Lutz, 1985). Advertisements are used by organizations for directing customers toward the purchase of the respective product. Attitude toward the advertisement has been frequently used to measure the influence of advertising on customers' attitude toward the brand as their affective responses in order to determine the efficacy of such advertising (Brown and Stayman, 1992; Lutz, 1985; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Shimp, 1981). Based on the previous studies, individuals' evaluations of overall advertising have influence on their attitudes toward a particular advertisement (Bauer and Greyser, 1968; Bush *et al.*, 1999).

One of the significant purposes of advertising is to develop effective campaigns which will enhance positive attitudes toward a product. An advertisement affects an individual's attitude toward a product. A significant way of understanding the behaviors of customers is to shape their attitude toward the advertisement (Mackenzie *et al.*, 1986). The respective literature contains various studies conducted to confirm the association between attitudes toward advertisements and attitudes toward brands (Burke and Edell, 1986).

Attitude toward advertising has been systematically studied based on Bauer and Greyser's work (1968). According to these authors, there are two constructs underlying attitudes toward advertising in a general sense, which are the economic effects and the social effects. Additionally, the authors expressed that the typical basis of customers' attitudes is their beliefs about the economic and social effects of advertising.

According to the advertising researchers, advertisements affect attitudes toward the brand by developing affirmative attitudes toward that advertisement (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1986). Till and Baack (2005) also demonstrated that brand recognition and brand recall are enhanced by effective advertising. Ang and Low (2000) tried to measure the attitude toward the advertisement, brand and the intent to purchase, and established that perceptions of a brand are more positive and the intent to purchase is fostered when customers perceive the advertisement as creative and good, even though such perceptions are less than attitude toward the advertisement. Likewise, Stone *et al.* (2000) established a correlation between creative advertisements and the customers' responses to the advertisements.

The affective response of customers to advertisements and brands, and the influence of such responses on customers' buying intentions and behaviors have been a topic of investigation in the advertising literature (Gobe, 2001). Although affective commitment is mostly regarded as a part of psychology and organizational communication literature, we believe that the responses of customers to advertisements and brands may cause them to feel a sense of commitment to such brands just as the commitment of employees to their organizations.

Although there has been a progress in knowledge on belief constructs, Pollay and Mittal (1993) suggested that prior research had not discussed enough "the range of specific beliefs held by consumers and their relative importance in relation to a global attitude toward advertising and other consumer behaviors". According to the authors, a broader model is required to determine attitudes toward advertising by adding additional belief constructs. These authors suggested that beliefs could be used to describe attitudes as "being the integration of weighted evaluations of perceived attributes and consequences".

The study by Bauer and Greyser (1968) found that information is considered a significant reason for appreciating advertisements as answered by most of the participants, and attitude toward advertising is positively affected by the reasons associated with information. Moreover, advertising is regarded as a beneficial tool of getting information about a product (Mittal, 1994; Pollay and Mittal, 1993). In this sense, information on a product has been found to have a significant role in predicting attitudes toward advertising (Pollay and Mittal, 1968).

As part of marketing communication, advertising is highly valuable for organizations as reputation is believed to involve the very same element as brand equity (Jeffries-Fox Associates, 2000). In this regard, reputation has been investigated in several studies. For instance, studies on management and marketing have explored the formation of corporate reputation perceived by individuals and the influence of corporate reputation on individuals' opinions of price inequality and the executives' decision-making process (Campbell, 1999). Nevertheless, the link between corporate reputation and advertising has received relatively less attention. There are a limited number of empirical studies that have investigated the mechanisms through which advertising influences corporate reputation from an organizational perspective.

Corporate reputation is driven by multiple factors; however, advertising is believed to successfully extend corporate reputation to different groups of audiences. Organizations often depend on advertising to build and promote a strong reputation. According to Podolny (1993), an organization gains a substantial motivation to exercise activities to boost its reputation when its reputation and impressive aspects such as advertising interact positively.

According to Goldberg and Hartwick (1990), an affirmative reputation of a corporation directs prospective customers to consider the claims in its advertising more positively. These authors examined the effects of corporate reputation and advertising on evaluations of the product together and concluded that reputation is influential. Participants with a negative evaluation of the corporation due to a poor reputation considered the claims in advertising less reliable and gave a less positive rating compared to others with a positive perception of corporate reputation.

Attitudes may alter the propensity of individuals toward an organization. Attitudes mean affective responses, which are emotional reactions. Based on prior research, attitudes toward advertising can affect developing attitudes toward the advertising subject. In this sense, attitudes toward advertising can influence individuals' trust in an organization. According to Mowen and Minor (2001), there is a close association between trust, attitudes and behavior. Martin and Camarero (2008), Um *et al.* (2006), and Huang and Hsu (2009) showed that consumer attitude has an influence on consumer trust. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the present study is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: Attitude toward advertising has a significant effect on corporate reputation.

Hypothesis 1b: Attitude toward advertising has a significant effect on trust.

4. Corporate Reputation

Based on the resource-based approach, corporate reputation refers to a beneficial strategic resource with contribution to a continued competitive edge of a corporation (Capozzi, 2005). It requires long time to build a strong reputation, which makes it an intangible asset difficult to be imitated by any other corporation.

Corporate reputation is "a collective representation of a firm's past behavior and outcomes that depicts the firm's ability to render valued results to multiple stakeholders" (Fombrun *et al.*, 2000). Fombrun *et al.* (2000) indicated that reputation is an attitudinal construct involving two dimensions, affective and cognitive.

Corporate reputation is mostly discussed from an economic viewpoint it as the expectations and assessments of the internal or external individuals about particular features of an organization (Weigelt and Camerer, 1988), or from an organizational viewpoint regarding it as an overall assessment that represents the perception of a collective group of stakeholders including investors, customers and employees (Deephouse, 2000; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). In line with the organizational view, the present study discusses corporate reputation as an overall assessment of a corporation largely perceived as good or bad (Weiss *et al.*, 1999).

Corporate reputation is of importance due to multiple reasons. First, corporate reputation is a core criterion which is used by prospective customers to choose their suppliers (Walsh et al., 2009). Hence, customers tend to choose corporations that have a favorable reputation, resulting in an inclination to pay higher prices for the products of those corporations (Graham and Moore, 2007). Second, a favorable corporate reputation potentially enhances customer retention and loyalty, establishes obstacles of entrance to the market for the rivals (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001), attracts higher number of customers (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002), all of which ultimately result in a greater value at the market (Smith et al., 2010).

There is a strong theoretical background and empirical evidence suggesting a positive relationship between corporate reputation and favorable employee attitudes such as commitment. Proposing that individuals see themselves as a part of certain social groups based on group membership and that such groups have influence on individuals' self-beliefs, social identity theory, among others, is one of such theoretical approaches (Ashford and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). In this context, corporate reputation gives information on the status of an organization from others' perspectives, resulting in influence on the perceptions of that organization's employees. Individuals may identify themselves with a reputable organization more and this may result in enhanced affective commitment.

However, the literature contains a limited number of studies on the relationship between corporate reputation and affective commitment. For instance, the study by Alniacik et al. (2011) demonstrated that perceived corporate reputation is significantly positively correlated with affective commitment to the organization. Likewise, Riordan et al. (1997) and Brammer et al. (2007) also reported a positive relationship between corporate reputation and commitment. According to Carmeli and Freund (2002), affective commitment is one of the variables predicting perceived external prestige, i.e. corporate reputation. Accordingly, the second hypothesis of the present study is developed as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Corporate reputation has a significant effect on affective commitment.

5. Trust

Organizational trust refers to the eagerness degree of individuals to the exposure of the behaviors of an organization since they believe that the organization will have a positive conduct in the future (Lewicki et al., 1998). A higher organizational trust makes individuals eager to depend on an organization although there is a risk that such organization may not fulfill its obligations (Colquitt et al., 2007). One of the descriptive aspects of trust is such eagerness to be exposed to the actions of an organization (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001). Since there is risk, a higher organizational trust reflects an intensive emotional bond to an organization (Williams, 2001).

According to Mayer *et al.* (1995), organizational trust is rooted in the individuals' belief that an organization possesses some certain merits such as ability, integrity and goodness. Such merits lead individuals to embrace the future risk involved in relying on that organization. Empirical research has also demonstrated that trust eliminates the cognitive impediments which prevent improved quality in a relationship, such as the assignment of critical tasks to other people and information disclosure in full (Colquitt *et al.*, 2007).

Multiple disciplines have investigated the trust notion, resulting in several definitions (Lewicki *et al.*, 1998). For instance, trust is the reliability and goodness perceived regarding a target according to Doney and Cannon (1997). Ganesan (1994) defined trust as the degree of a customer's belief that the supplier has favorable intentions and aims for the customer. In the business literature, it has been determined that trust is a significant component for developing and keeping relationships (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998).

The respective parties' mutual trust in their business relationship reduces the possibility to exhibit opportunistic behaviors (Leonidou *et al.*, 2006) and exploit each other (Styles *et al.*, 2008). This, in turn, promotes the desire to maintain and foster that relationship (Leonidou *et al.*, 2006; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Commitment is inseparably associated with trust in the relationship management literature. Performance and productivity enhancing outcomes require both commitment and trust according to Morgan and Hunt (1994). The present study discusses trust as a customer's opinion of that an organization is credible, decent and honest (Leonidou *et al.*, 2006; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This view of trust resembles the goodwill trust description by Styles *et al.* (2008), which is "higher-order, deeper form of trust, which may be more subjective".

In relationship commitment context, it is suggested that trust is a potent predictor to describe commitment and it is characterized as "existing when one party has confidence in the exchange partner's reliability and integrity" (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Hence, the formation of individuals' commitment is facilitated by the confidence in the reliability and integrity of an exchange party. In this regard, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) conceptualized a trust model to explain the formation of trust over time. This model proposes three trust types, deterrence-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. In a more specific sense, these three phases are the constituents forming trust over time and the highest level of trust is identification-based type in relationships. In essence, identification-based trust predominantly results from a psychological bond and shared values. Given the fact that commitment to brand is also regarded as individuals' psychological bond to the brand (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005), enhanced bond and commitment to the brand may lead to increased trust in the brand over time. Commitment to brand is the same construct as organizational commitment as suggested by Burmann and

Zeplin (2005), and it can be described as an emotional connection between employees and their organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Trust is considered essential for developing customer relationships and a pioneer for building commitment in the literature (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Since trust and commitment have the potential to indirectly lead to collaborative behaviors and are associated with positive outcomes fostering productivity and performance, they are key factors contributing to successful relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). According to Styles *et al.* (2008), the association of this form of trust with affective commitment is more possible than calculative commitment due to its subjective nature. In a similar vein, Shergill and Lii (2005) analyzed the effect of trust in the brand on commitment to the brand and determined a positive effect of trust on commitment.

Due to the significance of confidence in developing relational trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), a strong reputation is likely to promote confidence of the customers and decrease their perceptions of risk in case of evaluating the performance of an organization and the quality of its products and/or services. As a result, customers may perceive organizations with a more positive reputation as trustworthy. Customers may also perceive organizations with a favorable reputation through multiple correlative aspects such as reliability, credibility, accountability and trustworthiness (Fombrun, 1996) in addition to the perceptions of quality and prestige (Rindova *et al.*, 2005), which may lead to heightened customer expectations of capability of an organization in terms of offering excellent products and/or services and honesty in terms of satisfying the terms of agreements and promises declared.

Finally, corporate reputation is commonly considered a “fragile resource” since its development is associated with substantial time and effort, yet damaged quickly (Hall, 1993). Therefore, customers expect reputable organizations to have good actions and not to be involved in adverse behaviors since this fosters customers' confidence in organizations' honesty and credibility. In this regard, Doney and Cannon (1997) reported that confidence in the corporate reputation is one of the significant psychological constructs underlying the process through which industrial customers' trust develops. The study by Esen (2012) concluded that trust is increased by corporate reputation.

Recent research also showed the significance of trust in determining commitment (Cook and Wall, 1980; Bussing 2002). Although there is limited research regarding such relationship between trust and commitment (Cook and Wall, 1980; Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997), commitment is usually believed to be the outcome of trust (Colquitt *et al.*, 2007). Wlatter *et al.* (2000) reported that trust is one of the most important determinants of commitment, which is the core component required for long-term relationships. The direct causal relationship between trust and affective commitment

has been also rarely investigated (Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997), but Bagraim and Hime (2007) demonstrated a significant relationship between trust and affective commitment scales. The studies by Bussing (2002) and Schindler and Thomas (1993) also reported a strong relationship between these two constructs. Likewise, Gutierrez *et al.* (2004) demonstrated trust as a significant antecedent of affective commitment. In light of this theoretical background, the third hypothesis of the present study is developed as follows:

Hypothesis 3a: Trust has a significant effect on corporate reputation.

Hypothesis 3b: Trust has a significant effect on affective commitment.

6. Methods

6.1. Participants and Procedure

The study sample included 288 university students. 279 (96.9%) students were at the age of 18-25 and 6 (2.1%) students were at the age of 26-29. There were 145 (50.3%) male and 143 (49.7%) female participants. 255 (91.4%) students were graduated from state high school and 24 (8.3%) students from a private high school. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the study participants regarding the four variables included in the proposed model. The questionnaires were completed manually by the students and collected over a period of six weeks.

6.2. Measures

Affective commitment to the university was measured using a scale developed by Meyer *et al.* (1993). Although this scale includes three dimensions to measure commitment, the present study included only the affective commitment dimension. The scale consisted of 5 items (e.g. "This university has a great deal of personal meaning for me") and the items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (5: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree). A high score indicates that the student feels a sense of belonging to the university and attaches great importance to it, whereas a low score indicates the opposite. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.88.

Attitude toward advertising was measured using a scale developed by Biel and Bridgwater (1990). This six-item scale measures the cognitions about the ad, i.e. the recipients' perceptions of the ad (e.g. "The University's advertisement is favorable"). The scale items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (5: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.73.

Corporate reputation perceived by the students' about their university was measured using a scale developed by Walsh *et al.* (2009b). This scale includes five interrelated dimensions to measure corporate reputation; Customer Orientation (e.g. "My university is concerned about its students"), Good Employer (e.g. "My university

seems to treat its people well”), Reliable and Financially Strong Company (e.g. “My university looks like it has strong prospects for future growth”), Product and Service Quality (e.g. “My university develops innovative services”), and Social and Environmental Responsibility (e.g. “My university would reduce its profits to ensure a clean environment”). This scale contains 27 items (minimum 5 and maximum 7 items on the dimensional basis) rated on a five-point Likert scale (5: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree). A high score indicates a positive assessment about the university for the respective reputational dimension, whereas a low score indicates a negative assessment. The Cronbach’s alpha for the scale dimensions varied from 0.82 to 0.89. The original Cronbach’s alpha of the scale varied from 0.80 to 0.93. Trust was measured using a scale developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994). The scale consisted of 5 items (e.g. “I can depend on this university to do the right thing”) rated on a five-point Likert scale (5: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree).). The Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.95.

6.3. Data Analysis

Based on the data obtained from a group of 288 university students included in the research, a structural equation model (LISREL) was used to analyze the relationships between affective commitment, corporate reputation, attitude towards advertisement and trust variables.

6.4. Findings

Table 1 presents the results of confirmatory factor analysis and the reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha coefficient) based on the data obtained within the scope of the present research.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability Coefficients

Factor	Item	Standardized Path Coefficient	
Commercial Attitude	CA18	0.86	
	CA19	0.92	
	Factor’s Cronbach Alpha Coefficient: 0.902	CA20	0.99
	CA21	0.87	
	CA22	0.93	
	CA23	0.83	
	Corporate Reputation	CR6	0.94
CR7		0.90	
Factor’s Cronbach Alpha Coefficient: 0.892		CR8	0.95
CR9		0.99	
CR10		0.83	

Factor	Item	Standardized Path Coefficient
	CR11	0.67
	CR12	0.76
Trust		
	T1	0.99
	T2	0.97
Factor's Cronbach Alpha Coefficient: 0.927	T3	0.95
	T4	0.96
	T5	0.99
Affective Commitment		
	AC1	0.93
	AC2	0.81
Factor's Cronbach Alpha Coefficient: 0.881	AC3	0.92
	AC4	0.89
	AC5	0.98
Cronbach Alpha Coefficient:0.959		

The research model (Figure 1) was tested to determine the levels of affective commitment, corporate reputation, attitude toward advertisement and trust. The goodness of fit indexes of the model and the standardized path coefficients are presented in Figure 2.

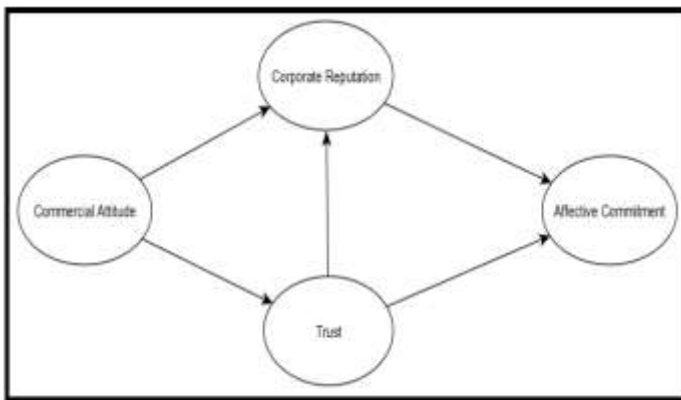


Figure 1. The Proposed Model

As seen in Figure 2, all of the standardized path coefficients calculated between the variables were found significant at the level of 0.05; in other words, all one-side relations seen in the model were statistically significant. Based on the data obtained, all study hypotheses were affirmed.

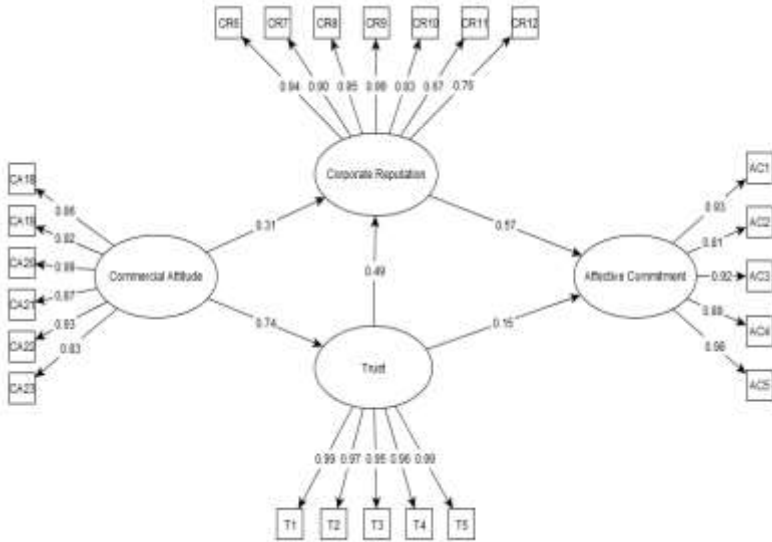


Figure 2. Goodness of fit indexes and standardized path coefficients

Table 2. The Fit Indexes

Fit Indexes	Good Index	Acceptable Index	Model
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares			
Chi-Square (χ^2)			671.01
Chi-Square Value			
Degrees of Freedom (df)			225
p value	$0.05 < p \leq 1.00$	$0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$	0.075
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	$2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 3$	2.982
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$0 < RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 < RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.075
%90 Confidence Interval for RMSEA			(0.067; 0.080)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$	0.97
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$	0.98
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	$0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 0.95$	0.86
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	$0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$	$0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$	0.83

When the goodness of fit indexes in Table 2 were analyzed, it was found that the Chi-Square/degree of freedom ratio indicated an excellent fit, and NFI and CFI > 0.95 provided an excellent fit. The RMSEA values < 0.10 indicated an acceptable fit; whereas GFI and AGFI were slightly lower than 0.90. These results suggest that these values are generally within the acceptable limits of fit.

7. Discussions and conclusions

This study examined affective commitment of university students through the influence of corporate reputation, attitude toward advertisement and trust. The first finding was that corporate reputation had a significant effect on affective commitment levels of university students. Affective commitment is one of the three types of commitment described by Meyer and Allen (1991). It refers to an emotional connection with the organization and/or its employees, which also involves a sense of identification (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Individuals who feel affective commitment to their organization usually identify themselves strongly with that organization as well as its goals and principles, and have a desire to continue their involvement in that organization. Individuals who are committed to their organization affectively want to display better performance and provide more valuable contributions compared to other types of commitment (Brown, 2003). Affective commitment is known to have a positive impact on employee behaviors (Jin *et al.*, 2010). It is associated with employee loyalty and dedication (Rhoades *et al.*, 2001), which are also considered the outcomes of corporate reputation. Corporate reputation, as defined by Fombrun (1996), is “the overall estimation in which a particular company is held by its various constituents”. Corporate reputation can be predicted by affective commitment (Carmeli and Freund, 2002), and has a significant effect on employee attitudes and behaviors toward their organization (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). In this regard, this finding is consistent with the studies by Riordan *et al.* (1997), and Carmeli and Freund (2002). Furthermore, this finding provides a valuable contribution to the literature since the literature includes limited research on the relationship between corporate reputation and affective commitment.

The second finding of the present study was that attitude toward advertisement had a significant effect on corporate reputation and trust. Attitude toward the advertising can be a beneficial tool to determine the impact of advertisement on customers' attitudes toward a corporation (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Lutz, 1985). Advertisements provide information about an organization or a product, and information can play a key role in developing attitudes. Additionally, employees' trust in an organization can be influenced by advertisement through building positive attitudes (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1996). Thus, this finding of the present study suggests that university students develop trust in their university when they have positive attitudes toward the ad about that university. This can advance the educational and

management literature since most of the studies regarding attitude toward the ad have been conducted in marketing and relationship literature.

The third finding of the present study was that trust had a significant effect on both corporate reputation and affective commitment. Trust is a multi-dimensional construct, which is considered the key in building relationships (Colquitt *et al.*, 2007). Trust is also regarded as vital to develop commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Trust, as an outcome of confidence in the reliability of another party, can be strongly influenced by the reputation of an organization since confidence is associated with less negative opinions regarding that organization (Doney and Cannon, 1997). This finding advances the literature on management, marketing and even human resources since it can be used to enhance employee trust and affective commitment, and also to build a stronger reputation due to the positive relationship between them.

In light of these findings, the present study is of importance especially for higher educational institutions. In an increasingly competitive environment, it has become a challenge for universities to attract and retain more students who are loyal and committed to their university. Since students are the core constituent of higher education institutions, such organizations can review their advertisement policies to foster their reputation and their students' attitudes, and consider different strategies to build higher levels of trust and commitment.

References

- Allen, N.J., and Meyer, J.P. (1990). The Measurement and Antecedents of Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 63, pp. 1-18.
- Alniacik, U., Cigerim, E., Akcin, K., and Bayram, O. (2011). Independent and joint effects of perceived corporate reputation, affective commitment and job satisfaction on turnover intentions. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 24 (2011) 1177–1189.
- Anderson, E., and Weitz, B. (1992). The use of pledges to build and sustain commitment in distribution channels. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29(1), 18–34.
- Ang, S.H., and Low, S.Y.M. (2000). In search of marketing imagination: factors affecting the creativity of marketing programs for mature products. *Psychology and Marketing*, 17 (10), 835-854.
- Ashforth, B.E., and Mael F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1): 20-39.
- Bagraim, J.J., and Hime, P. (2007). The dimensionality of workplace interpersonal trust and its relationship to workplace affective commitment. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 33(3), 43-48.

- Bartikowski, B., and Walsh, G. (2011). Investigating mediators between corporate reputation and customer citizenship behaviours. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(1), 39–44.
- Bauer, R.A., and Greyser, S.A. (1968). *Advertising in America: The consumer view*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Bolton, Ruth N., Lemon, K.N. and Verhoef, P.C. (2004). The theoretical underpinnings of customer asset management: a framework and propositions for future research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32 (3), 271–292.
- Brammer, S., Millington, A., and Rayton, B. (2007). The contribution of corporate social responsibility to organisational commitment. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(10): 1701-1719.
- Brown, S.P., and Stayman, D.M. (1992). Antecedents and consequences of attitude toward the ad: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19, 34–51.
- Brown, B.B. (2003). *Employees' Organizational Commitment and Their Perception of Supervisors' Relations-Oriented and Task-Oriented Leadership Behaviors*. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. PhD Thesis.
- Burmann, C., and Zeplin, S. (2005). Building brand commitment: a behavioral approach to internal brand management. *J. Brand Manag.* 12 (4), 279-300.
- Burke, M.C., and Edell, J.A. (1986). Ad reactions over time: capturing changes in the real world. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, 114-118.
- Bush, A.J., Smith, R., and Martin, C. (1999). The influence of consumer socialization variables on attitude toward advertising: A comparison of African-American and Caucasians. *Journal of Advertising*, 28(3), 13–24.
- Bussing, A. (2002). Trust and its relations to commitment and involvement in work and organisations. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 28 (4), 36-42.
- Campbell, J.Y. (1999). Asset prices, consumption, and the business cycle. In J.B. Taylor and M. Woodford, (Eds), *Handbook of Macroeconomics* (pp. 1231–1303). Vol. 1 (Elsevier, Amsterdam).
- Capozzi, L. (2005). Corporate reputation: our role in sustaining and building a valuable asset. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 45(3), 290–293.
- Carmeli A. and Freund A. (2002). The relationship between work and workplace attitudes and perceived external prestige. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 5(1): 51-68.
- Chun, R. (2005). Corporate reputation: Meaning and measurement. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(2), 91–109.
- Coenen, C., Felten, D.V., and Schmid, M. (2010). Reputation and public awareness of facilities management – a quantitative survey. *Journal of Facilities Management*, 8(4), 256-268.

- Colquitt, J.A., Scott, B.A., and LePine, J.A. (2007). Trust, trustworthiness, and trust propensity: A meta-analytic test of their unique relationships with risk taking and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 909–927.
- Colquitt, J.A., Baer, M.D., Long, D.M., and Halvorsen-Ganepola, M.D.K. (2014). Scale indicators of social exchange relationships: A comparison of relative content validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99, 599–618.
- Cook, J., and Wall, T. (1980). New work attitude measure of trust, organisational commitment and personal need nonfulfilment. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 53, 39-52.
- Deephouse, D. L. (2000). Media reputation as a strategic resource: an integration of mass communication and resource-based theories. *Journal of Management*, 26(6), 1091–1112.
- Deluga, R.J. (1994). Supervisor trust building, leader-member exchange and organisational citizenship behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 64 (4), 316- 327
- Dirks, K. T., and Ferrin, D. L. (2001). The role of trust in organizational settings. *Organization Science*, 12, 450–467.
- Doney, P., and Cannon, J. (1997). An examination of the nature of trust in buyer–seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(2), 35–51.
- Dutton, J.E., and Dukerich, J.M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3): 517-554.
- Dutton J.E., Dukerich J.M., and Harquail C.V. (1994). Organization images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39(2): 239-63.
- Dwyer, F.R., Schurr, P.H., and Oh, S. (1987). Developing buyer–seller relationships. *The Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 11–27.
- Esen, E. (2012). The role of trust on the relationship between organizational engagement and corporate reputation. *Celal Bayar University The Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences Journal*, 19(1), 47-58.
- Fombrun, C., and Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(2), 233–258.
- Fombrun, C. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Fombrun C.J., and Gardberg, N.A. (2000). Sever JW. The Reputation Quotient: A Multi-Stakeholder Measure of Corporate Reputation. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 7(4): 241-255.
- Fombrun, C., and van Riel, C. (2004). *Fame and fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. Financial Times/ Prentice-Hall, New York, NY.
- Ganesan, S. (1994). Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58, April, pp. 1-19.

- Garbarino, E., and Johnson, M.S. (1999). The different roles of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in customer relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(2), 70–87.
- Gardberg, N., and Fombrun, C.J. (2002). The global Reputation Quotient project: first steps towards a cross-nationally valid measure of corporate reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 4(4), 303-307.
- Gobe, M. (2001). *Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people*. New York: Allworth Press.
- Goldberg, M.E., Hartwick, J. (1990). The effects of advertiser reputation and extremity of advertising claim on advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17, 172-179.
- Graham, M.E., and Moore, J. (2007). Consumers' willingness to pay for corporate reputation: the context of airline companies. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 189-200.
- Gruen, T.W., John O.S., and Frank, A. (2000). Relationship marketing activities, commitment, and membership behaviors in professional associations. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 64 (3), 34-49.
- Gundlach, G.T., Achrol, R.S., and Mentzer, J.T. (1995). The structure of commitment in exchange. *The Journal of Marketing*, 59(1), 78–92.
- Gustafsson, A., Michael D.J. and Inger, R. (2005). The effects of customer satisfaction, relationship commitment dimensions, and triggers on customer retention. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69 (October), 210-218.
- Gutierrez, S., Cillan, J. and Izquierdo, C. (2004). The consumer's relational commitment: main dimensions and antecedents. *Journal of Retailing and Customer Service*, 11, 351-367.
- Hall, R. (1993). A framework linking intangible resources and capabilities to sustainable competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(8): 607-618.
- Huang, S., and Hsu, C.H.C. (2009). Effects of travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraint, and attitude on revisit intention. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48 (1), 29–44.
- Jeffries-Fox Associates (2000). *Toward a shared understanding of corporate reputation and related concepts: Phase II: Measurement Systems Analysis*. Basking Ridge, NJ: Report Prepared for the Council of Public Relations Firms.
- Jin, X.-L., Lee, M.K.O., and Cheung, C.M.K. (2010). Predicting continuance in online communities: Model development and empirical test. *Behavior and Information Technology*, 29(4), 383–394.
- Johnson, M.D., Andreas, H. and Frank, H. (2006). The evolution of loyalty intentions. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 (April), 122-132.
- Joshi, A.W. (2009). Continuous Supplier Performance Improvement: Effects of Collaborative Communication and Control. *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (January), 133-150.

- Krueger, T.M., Wrolstad, M.A., and Dalsen, S.V. (2010). Contemporaneous relationship between corporate reputation and return. *Managerial Finance*, 36(6), 482-490.
- Leonidou, L.C., Paliawadana, D., and Theodosiou, M. (2006). An integrated model of the behavioural dimensions of the industrial buyer–seller relationships. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(1/2), 145–173.
- Lewicki, R. J., McAllister, D. J., and Bies, R. J. (1998). Trust and distrust: New relationships and realities. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 438–458.
- Lewicki, R.J., and Bunker, B.B. (1996). Developing and maintaining trust in work relationships. In Kramer, R.M., Tyler, T.R. (Ed.), *Trust in Organizations: Frontiers of Theory and Research* (pp. 114-139). Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Lutz, R. J. (1985). Affective and cognitive antecedents of attitude toward the ad: A conceptual framework. In L. F. Alwitt and A. A. Mitchell (Ed.), *Psychological processes and advertising effects theory, research, and application* (pp. 45–63). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mackenzie, S. B., and Lutz, R. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *Journal of Marketing*, 53, 48–65.
- Mackenzie, S. B., Lutz, R. J., and Belch, G. E. (1986). The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: A test of competing explanations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23(2), 130-144.
- Martin, S.S., and Camarero, C. (2008). Consumer trust to a web site: moderating effect of attitudes toward online shopping. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 11 (5), 549–554.
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., and Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709–734.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., and Gellatly, I. R. (1990). Affective and continuance commitment to the organization: Evaluation of measures and analysis of concurrent and timelagged relations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 710–720.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J. (1991). A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1 (1), 64–98.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., and Smith, C. A. (1993) Commitment to organizations and occupations: extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(4), 538-551.
- Meyer, J. P., Herscovitch, L. (2001). Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 11, 299-326.
- Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., and Topolyntsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61, 20–52..

- Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., and Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee commitment and motivation: A conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(6), 991–1007.
- Meyer, J.P. and Parfyonova, N.M. (2010). Normative commitment in the workplace: A theoretical analysis and re-conceptualization. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20, 283–294.
- Mittal, B. (1994). Public assessment of TV advertising: Faint praise and harsh criticism. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 34(1), 35–53.
- Morgan, R. M., and Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *The Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 20–38.
- Mowen, J.C., and Minor, M.S. (2001). Consumer behavior: a framework. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Nguyen, N., and Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-236.
- Nyhan, R.C. and Marlowe, H.A. (1997). Development and psychometric properties of the organisational trust inventory. *Evaluation Review*, 21 (5), 614-635.
- O'Reilly, C.A. and Chatman, J. (1986). Organizational commitment and psychological attachment: The effects of compliance, identification and internalization on prosocial behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 492–499.
- Podolny, J.M. (1993). A status-based model of market competition. *American Journal of Sociology*, 984:829–72.
- Pollay, R.W., and Mittal, B. (1993). Here's the beef: Factors, determinants, and segments in consumer criticism of advertising. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(3), 99–114.
- Powell, D.M., and Meyer, J.P. (2004). Side-bet theory and the three-component model of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 157–177.
- Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., and Armeli, S. (2001). Affective commitment of the organization: The contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 825-836.
- Rindova, V.P., Williamson, I.O., Petkova, A.P., and Sever, J.M. (2005). Being good or being known: an empirical examination of the dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of organizational reputation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(6), 1033–1049.
- Riordan, C.M., Gatewood, R.D. and Bill, J.B. (1997). Corporate image: employee reactions and implications for managing corporate social performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(4): 401-412.
- Rousseau, D.M., Sitkin, S.B., Burt, R.S., and Camerer, C.F. (1998). Not so different after all: a cross-discipline vies of trust. *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 393-404.

- Shergill, G.S., and LIL, B. (2005). Internet banking-an empirical investigation of a trust and loyalty model for New Zealand banks. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 4 (4),101-118.
- Shimp, T.A. (1981). Attitude toward the ad as a mediator of consumer brand choice. *Journal of Advertising*, 10(2), 9–15.
- Schindler, P.L. and Thomas, C.C. (1993). The structure of interpersonal trust in the workplace. *Psychological Reports*, 73, 563-573.
- Smith, K.T., Smith, M. and Wang, K. (2010). Does brand management of corporate reputation translate into higher market value? *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 18(3), 201-221.
- Song, L.J., Tsui, A.S., and Law, K.S. (2009). Unpacking employee responses to organizational exchange mechanisms: The role of social and economic exchange perceptions. *Journal of Management*, 35, 56–93.
- Snyder, J.L. and Cistulli, M.D. (2011). The relationship between workplace e-mail privacy and psychological contract violation, and their influence on trust in top management and affective commitment. *Communication Research Reports*, 28, 121-129.
- Stone, G., Besser, D., and Lewis, L.E. (2000). Recall, liking, and creativity in TV commercials: A new approach. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40(3), 7-18.
- Styles, C.W., Patterson, P.G., and Ahmed, F. (2008). A relational model of export performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 39(5), 880–900.
- Till, B.D., and Baack, D.W. (2005). Recall and persuasion: Does creative advertising matter? *Journal of Advertising*, 34(3), 47-57.
- Um, S., Chon, K., and Ro, Y. (2006). Antecedents of revisit intention. *Annual of Tourism Research*, 33 (4), 1141–1158.
- Walsh, G., Mitchell V-W., Jackson, P., and Beatty, S.E. (2009). Examining the antecedents and consequences of corporate reputation: a customer perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 20(2):187–203.
- Wang, Y.K., and Datta, P. (2006). *Understanding IS continuance: A technology commitment perspective*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the ICIS 2006. Retrieved from <http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis2006/77>
- Weigelt, K. and Camerer, C. (1988). Reputation and corporate strategy: A review of recent theory and applications. *Strategic Management Journal*;9:443–54.
- Weiss, A.M., Anderson, E., and MacInnis, D.J. (1999). Reputation management as a motivation for sales structure decisions. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 74–89.
- Walsh, G., Mitchell, V.W., Jackson, P., and Beatty, S.E. (2009a). Examining the antecedents and consequences of corporate reputation: a customer perspective. *British Journal Management*, 19, 187-203.

Walsh, G., Beatty, S.E., and Shiu, E. (2009b). The customer-based corporate reputation scale: replication and short form. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 10, 924-930.

Williams, M. (2001). In whom we trust: Group membership as an affective context for trust development. *Academy of Management Review*, 26, 377–396.

Wlataer, A., Helfert, G., and Mueller, T. (2000). *The impact of satisfaction, trust and relationship value on commitment: theoretical considerations and empirical results*. 16th IPM Conference in Bath, U.K.