

Brand loyalty and involvement in different customer levels of a service concept brand

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Susanna Dahlgren
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Aalto University
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BRAND LOYALTY AND INVOLVEMENT IN DIFFERENT CUSTOMER LEVELS OF A SERVICE CONCEPT BRAND

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Susanna Dahlgren
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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the highly competitive environment, organizations should protect the long-term interest of the customers so that these long-lasting relationships would enhance their profitability. The purpose of this research is to study is to build a framework to link the dimensions of brand loyalty and brand involvement and to capture the differences between different customer levels of a service concept brand. More specifically, this study contributes to the understanding of what factors contribute to loyalty and involvement in different customer levels of a group fitness brand.

METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study was collected by a web-based questionnaire, targeted to the participants and instructors of a global group fitness brand in the Nordic region. The data collected included 3 348 responses. Two multivariate data analysis techniques were used to address the research questions on the basis of the data. First, factor analysis was conducted in order to identify the underlying patterns in customer loyalty and involvement. Second, cluster analysis was conducted to categorize the customers and to discover different loyalty and involvement profiles among the respondents.

FINDINGS

Several differences were found between the framework and the loyalty and involvement dimensions in practice, especially in the context of brand loyalty dimensions. The factors detected through the statistical factor analysis imply that the multi-dimensional conceptualization of brand loyalty used in theoretical framework of this study is not directly applicable to the context of a group fitness brand. Thus, further development of the conceptualization of the dimensions of brand loyalty used as measures for service concept brands should be performed. The findings of the cluster analysis suggests that making a distinction between behavioral and attitudinal loyalty is an effective segmentation and target-marketing tool.

KEYWORDS: brand loyalty, brand involvement, dimensions of loyalty, dimensions of involvement, consumer behavior, service concept brand, multivariate analysis

BRÄNDIUSKOLLISUUS JA MERKITYKSELLISYYS PALVELUKONSEPTI- BRÄNDIN ERI ASIAKASTASOISSA

TUTKIMUKSEN TAVOITTEET

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on rakentaa viitekehys linkittämään brändiuskollisuuden ja brändin merkityksellisyys ulottuvuudet palvelukonseptibrändin eri asiakastasojen eroavaisuuksien havaitsemiseksi. Tarkoituksena on erityisesti lisätä ymmärrystä siitä, mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat uskollisuuteen ja merkityksellisyyteen ryhmäliikuntabrändin eri asiakastasoissa.

METODOLOGIA

Tutkimuksessa käytetty aineisto kerättiin kansainvälisen ryhmäliikuntabrändin ohjaajille ja loppukäyttäjille suunnatun sähköisen kyselylomakkeen avulla. Yhteensä 3 348 vastaajaa täytti kyselyn. Tutkimuskysymyksiä lähestyttiin kahden monimuuttujamenetelmän avulla. Aluksi brändiuskollisuuden ja merkityksellisyys taustalla vaikuttavat keskeisimmät ulottuvuudet pyrittiin tunnistamaan faktorianalyysin avulla. Tämän jälkeen vastaajat ryhmiteltiin klusterianalyysin kautta toisistaan eroaviin mittausprofiileihin.

TULOKSET

Tutkimuksessa havaittiin useita eroavaisuuksia viitekehysten ja käytännössä havaittujen brändiuskollisuuden ulottuvuuksien välillä. Tilastollisen faktorianalyysin kautta havaittujen tekijöiden perusteella voidaan väittää, että teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä käytetyt uskollisuuden ulottuvuudet eivät ole suoraan sovellettavissa ryhmäliikuntabrändin kontekstiin. Täten brändiuskollisuuden mittaamiseen käytettäviä ulottuvuuksia tulisi edelleen tutkia, jotta voitaisiin kehittää palvelukonseptibrändeihin sovellettava ulottuvuuksien patteristo. Klusterianalyysin löydökset viittaavat siihen, että käyttäytymiseen ja asenteeseen perustuvan uskollisuuden erottaminen toisistaan voi olla hyödyllinen työkalu asiakkaiden segmentoinnissa ja kohdistetussa markkinoinnissa.

AVAINSANAT: brändiuskollisuus, brändin merkityksellisyys, uskollisuuden ulottuvuudet, merkityksellisyys ulottuvuudet, kuluttajan käyttäytyminen, palvelukonseptibrändi, monimuuttuja-analyysi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction..... | 6 |
| 1.2 Research problem and objectives | 6 |
| 1.3 Key concepts | 8 |
| 1.4 Methodology and scope | 9 |
| 1.5 Structure | 10 |
| 2. Brand Loyalty..... | 12 |
| 2.1 One-dimensional loyalty | 16 |
| 2.2 Two-dimensional loyalty | 18 |
| 2.3 Three-dimensional loyalty | 21 |
| 2.4 Four phases of loyalty | 24 |
| 2.5 Other factors influencing loyalty..... | 26 |
| 2.6 Multi-dimensional brand loyalty | 31 |
| 3. Brand involvement..... | 33 |
| 3.1 Types and levels of involvement..... | 34 |
| 3.4 Dimensions of involvement | 37 |
| 4. Connection between loyalty and involvement | 43 |
| 4.1 Conceptual Framework..... | 44 |
| 5. Research methods..... | 46 |
| 5.1 Les Mills brand..... | 46 |
| 5.2 Collecting the data | 48 |
| 5.3 Research data..... | 51 |
| 5.4 Statistical analysis methods..... | 52 |
| 5.5 Validity and Reliability..... | 56 |
| 6. Results and analysis | 60 |
| 6.1 Differences between participants and instructors..... | 60 |
| 6.2 Factor analysis | 63 |
| 6.3 Cluster analysis..... | 73 |
| 7. Summary and conclusions | 78 |
| 7.1 Discussion | 78 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 7.2 Conclusions | 80 |
| 7.3 Managerial implications..... | 83 |
| 7.4 Limitations and implications for future research..... | 84 |
| 8. References..... | 86 |

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

| | |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Figure 1: Research structure.....</i> | <i>11</i> |
| <i>Figure 2: Elements of a two-dimensional definition of loyalty</i> | <i>19</i> |
| <i>Figure 3: The behavior / attitude matrix</i> | <i>21</i> |
| <i>Figure 4: A tri-dimensional approach to brand loyalty.....</i> | <i>22</i> |
| <i>Figure 5: The trust-loyalty link.....</i> | <i>28</i> |
| <i>Figure 6: Factors influencing loyalty.....</i> | <i>30</i> |
| <i>Figure 7: Loyalty dimensions in earlier research leading to the seven dimensions of loyalty used in this study.....</i> | <i>32</i> |
| <i>Figure 8: Dimensions of involvement used in this research.....</i> | <i>42</i> |
| <i>Figure 9: The sequential process of the relationship between involvement and loyalty</i> | <i>44</i> |
| <i>Figure 10: Research framework.....</i> | <i>45</i> |
| <i>Figure 11: Les Mills customer levels</i> | <i>47</i> |
| <i>Figure 12: Visualization of the instructor factors relative to the theoretical framework.....</i> | <i>64</i> |
| <i>Figure 13: Visualization of the participant factors relative to the theoretical framework.....</i> | <i>69</i> |
| <i>Table 1: Loyalty phases and their vulnerabilities</i> | <i>26</i> |
| <i>Table 2: The consumer involvement profile scale</i> | <i>38</i> |
| <i>Table 3: Adapted measurement scale items and related sources</i> | <i>49</i> |
| <i>Table 4: Respondents by demographic variables</i> | <i>51</i> |
| <i>Table 5: The reliability of measurement scales: Cronbach's alpha</i> | <i>59</i> |
| <i>Table 6: T-test: Differences between Les Mills instructors and participants.....</i> | <i>62</i> |
| <i>Table 7: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 1.....</i> | <i>65</i> |
| <i>Table 8: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 2.....</i> | <i>66</i> |
| <i>Table 9: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 3.....</i> | <i>66</i> |
| <i>Table 10: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 4.....</i> | <i>67</i> |
| <i>Table 11: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 5.....</i> | <i>68</i> |
| <i>Table 12: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 6.....</i> | <i>70</i> |
| <i>Table 13: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 7.....</i> | <i>71</i> |
| <i>Table 14: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 8.....</i> | <i>72</i> |
| <i>Table 15: Cluster centroids of customer level of instructors.....</i> | <i>74</i> |
| <i>Table 16: Cluster centroids of customer level of participants.....</i> | <i>75</i> |

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

1. Introduction

Today, the markets are getting more and more crowded with companies competing with similar products and services (Tripathi, 2009). In the highly competitive environment, organizations should protect the long-term interest of the customers so that these long-lasting relationships would enhance their profitability (Dick & Basu, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Grossman, 1998), as many researchers argue that long-lasting customer relationships are beneficial for a company in increased sales and continuous profits, lower costs and other tangible benefits (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Berry, 1995; Bolton, 1998). This supports the calls for firms to consider this customer loyalty as a source of competitive advantage (Bharatwaj et al., 1993).

Service organizations are continually looking for ways to increase customer loyalty. The health club and fitness industry is a growing service industry that depends on the continuing relationships of its customers for continued success. It is also a long-term repeat purchase business, where a high degree of involvement from the customers is necessary. (Hurley, 2004). According to new research findings group fitness is the top service or amenity that fitness club members are interested in (Club Business International, 2009). Nevertheless, the field of group fitness services and brands in group fitness haven't had much focus in research recently. Another interesting concept that is new to research is service concept brands, such as Les Mills group fitness classes. They provide immaterial services designed and defined at one location and then repeated in other markets by authorized service providers. This study extends previous loyalty research by examining brand loyalty and involvement factors in service concepts with multiple customer levels.

1.2 Research problem and objectives

In this study, the topic of brand loyalty is approached based on previous research and literature, by building a framework to link the dimensions of brand loyalty and brand involvement. The empirical part of the thesis examines the theoretical framework from the

perspective of different customer levels of a service concept brand. The empirical analysis intends to identify differences between different customer groups as well as underlying patterns and customer profiles affiliated with brand loyalty and involvement in the context of a group fitness brand. The primary contribution of this thesis to the current knowledge on the topic stems from elaborating the current research on the dimensions of brand loyalty and involvement and discussing these concepts in the context of a service concept brand. More specifically, the research will analyze differences in the customer levels of a group fitness brand. To these ends, the study calls on the following main research question:

How does loyalty and involvement differ through different customer levels of a service concept brand?

Brand loyalty dimensions and levels of involvement are then examined in the different customer levels with the help of four additional research questions:

What are the brand loyalty dimensions?

What are the dimensions of brand involvement?

What kind of underlying patterns of loyalty and involvement can be identified for different customer levels of a group fitness brand?

What types of customer profiles of a group fitness brand can be distinguished based on loyalty and involvement dimensions?

From the managerial perspective, the main objective of this study is to capture the differences between different customer levels of a service concept brand. The research will provide insight into the unique characteristics of consumer's loyalty and involvement towards a brand and identify the dimensions of loyalty and involvement in these different

target groups. More specifically, this study contributes to the understanding of what factors contribute to loyalty and involvement in different customer levels of a group fitness brand. Knowledge regarding these factors will help managers to fully exploit the potential of these marketing concepts and provide insight to be considered in decision-making and campaign planning.

1.3 Key concepts

This section will focus on defining the central concepts of this study. In previous research these concepts have been defined in a variety of ways, often contradicting one another. The definitions presented here have drawn from diverse studies and have been modified to suit the purposes of this study. The conceptual framework and further elaborations of the concepts are discussed in the chapters to follow.

Brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is a rather complex construct, which has led to numerous definitions (Copeland, 1923; Brown, 1952). In research and literature, it would seem that two major approaches predominate. *Attitudinal loyalty* is often understood as a systematically favorable expression of preference for the brand (Morgan, 1999; Dick & Basu, 1994) and *behavioral loyalty* typically infers the loyalty status of a given consumer from an observation of repeated purchasing behavior (Morgan, 1999; Kahn, Kalwani & Morrison, 1986). The concept of brand loyalty is further discussed in the following chapter outlining the reasoning for brand loyalty as a source of competitive advantage.

Brand involvement. Involvement is a motivational state that can be used to understand consumer attitudes towards products or brands (Guthrie & Kim, 2009). Definitions of involvement vary between researchers but is most often referred to as degree or intensity of interest that a buyer shows for a certain product or brand (Park & Young, 1983). This definition is also used as the definition of involvement in this research. Involvement can be used as an analytical tool to measure the level of brand interest as well as the brand's significance to the consumer (Guthrie & Kim, 2009).

Service concept brand.

Goldstein et al. (2002) described the service concept as “the foundation upon which the components of the service delivery system are built”. The service concept is a “shared understanding of the nature of the service provided and received”. It encompasses important themes such as the idea behind a service, how it will be delivered, the customer’s experience, the outcomes sought and value from the customer’s point of view. It, therefore, links operational, marketing and customer-focused ideas into a single picture, which can be used for strategic planning and service development. (Goldstein et al., 2002).

1.4 Methodology and scope

The empirical part of the study is based on data collected in a quantitative survey in cooperation with the world’s leading group fitness service provider Les Mills. An online questionnaire was sent to 6 700 Les Mills group fitness instructors in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Poland of which 1069 filled out the questionnaire, representing an individual level response rate of 16,0%. In order to measure and compare the differences of loyalty between instructors and participants, the same questionnaire was sent to approximately 30 000 partner gyms’ members that participate in Les Mills group fitness classes. 2269 gym members answered the survey resulting in an individual level response rate of 7,6%.

In order to address the research questions stated above, two exploratory multivariate techniques are used to analyze the data. First, factor analysis is conducted in order to identify the underlying patterns of brand loyalty and involvement in the different customer levels of a group fitness brand. This statistical analysis method will divide the different customer levels into subcategories in relation to their loyalty and involvement and define the metrics included in each subcategory. Second, cluster analysis is conducted in order to categorize the customers and to discover the different profiles based on customer loyalty and involvement. Finally, the findings of the study are discussed in the light of the theoretical framework in order to evaluate the overall fit of the empirical

findings with the framework.

1.5 Structure

The structure of the study introduced here is also presented in Figure 1. The research begins with a literature review with chapters 2-4 outlining the theoretical background of the study. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the previous research on brand loyalty and an introduction to the dimensions of brand loyalty presented in previous research and literature. In the end of this chapter the loyalty dimension used in this study are defined. Chapter 3 is devoted to presenting existing research findings about brand involvement; the concept of brand involvement and its different theories are presented leading to a definition of the dimensions of dimensions of involvement used in this study. The last chapter of the literature review presents how brand loyalty and brand involvement are linked and presents and discusses the construction of a theoretical framework of loyalty and involvement for a service concept brand.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical study conducted in order to explore loyalty and involvement in different customer levels of a service concept brand. The process of collecting data, the contents of the online survey questionnaire used and the resulting database are described here in more detail. The statistical analysis methods used in conducting the study are then presented, followed by a discussion of validity and reliability.

Chapter 6 presents the empirical findings of the study, regarding both the underlying patterns of brand loyalty and involvement and the different profiles of customers based on loyalty and involvement. The results are further analyzed and interpreted on the basis of theory discussed in chapter 2.

In Chapter 7, the empirical findings and their fit with the theoretical framework are discussed. Finally, the findings of the study are summarized, drawing implications for

both managers and future research.

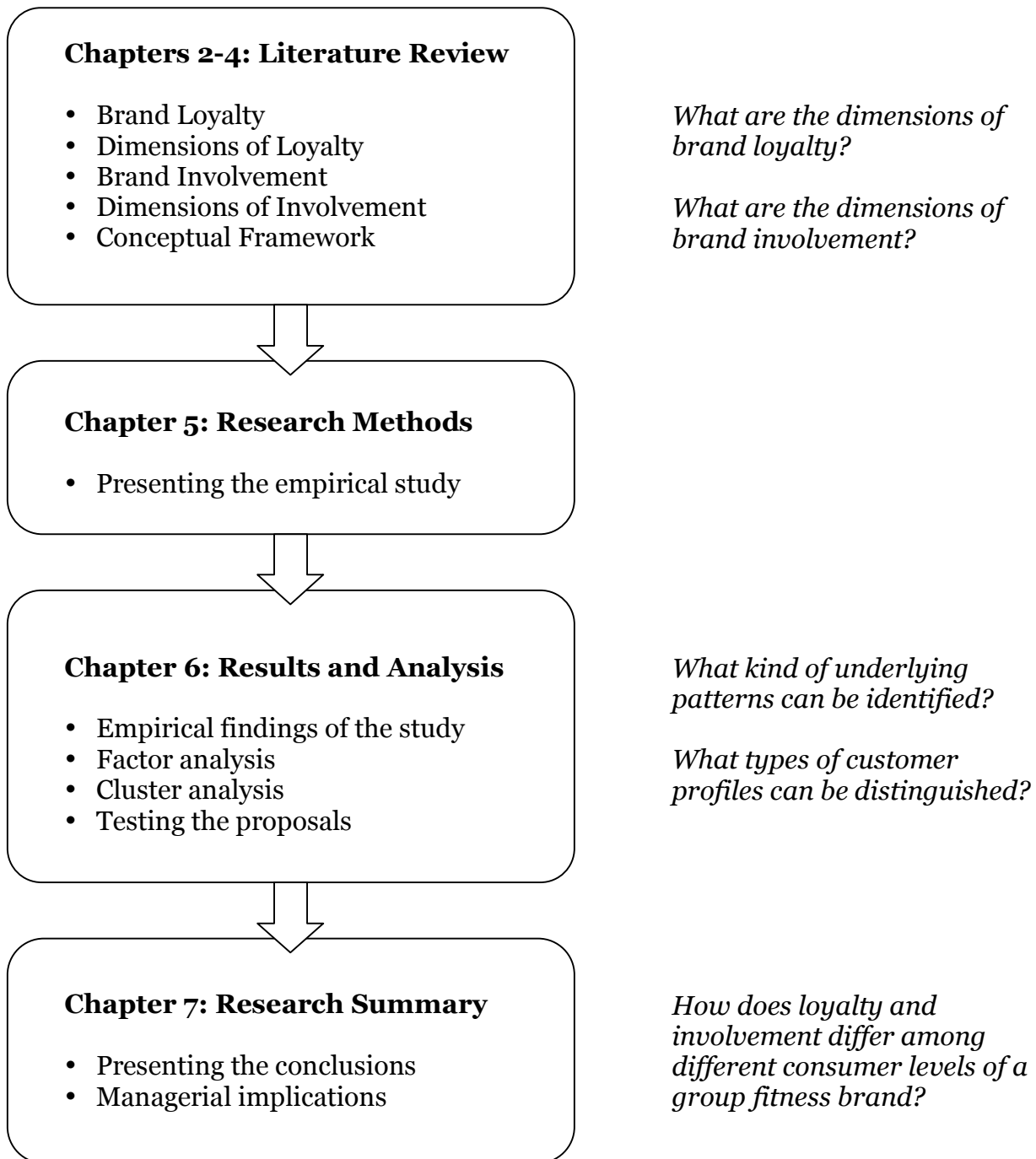


Figure 1: Research structure

2. Brand Loyalty

Several contemporary researchers have acknowledged an evolution of the concept of brand loyalty through time (Alhabeeb, 2007; Khan, 2009; Kuusik 2007; Dick & Basu 1994; Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). From the early studies, where loyalty was defined as mere repeated purchase behavior (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Cunningham, 1956; Farley, 1964) to the more recent characterization of loyalty as a multi-dimensional concept (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009) the evolution has involved various stages and interpretations. Some researchers have investigated the nature of different levels or dimensions of loyalty, while others have explored the influence of individual factors on loyalty. In this chapter the development of the loyalty concept as well as different approaches are examined.

Customer loyalty lies at the heart of marketing science. Although loyalty research has a long tradition dating back to almost a hundred years (Copeland, 1923), customer loyalty is still a very contemporary research topic. The concept of loyalty derives from the literature of customer behavior (Chegini, 2010). As stated before, brand loyalty is a rather complex construct, which has led to numerous definitions (e.g. Fournier 1998; Oliver 1999; Pritchard, Havitz, & Howard 1999; Reichheld 2003; Sirgy and Samli 1985; Copeland, 1923; Brown, 1952). In the context of branding, loyalty is one of the most widely defined words in the marketing lexicon. It is interpreted in different ways and can often be approached with greatly differing definitions by different people (Morgan, 1999).

One of the oldest and perhaps the most used definition for loyalty comes from Jacoby and Kyner (1973) who described loyalty as “a biased behavioral response expressed over time by a decision making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and being a function of psychological processes”. Oliver (1999) has developed the definition further by describing loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences or marketing efforts.”

Reichheld's (2001) definition emphasizes somewhat different aspects in defining loyalty as the willingness of someone to make a personal sacrifice or other investment for the strengthening of a relationship. One of the newest definitions of brand loyalty comes from Chegini (2010) who describes it as "theory and guidance leadership and positive behavior including, repurchase, support and offer to purchase which may control a new potential customer". Furthermore, the American Marketing Association defines brand loyalty as "the situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufacturer-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category" or "the degree to which a consumer consistently purchases the same brand within a product class" (Moisescu, 2006).

In the categorization of brand loyalty today, it would seem that two major approaches predominate. Attitudinal loyalty is often understood as a systematically favorable expression of preference for the brand, or in other words a reflection of the emotional attachment that consumers feel for brands (Morgan, 1999; Dick & Basu, 1994). Behavioral loyalty on the other hand typically infers the loyalty status of a given consumer from an observation of repeated purchasing behavior (Morgan, 1999; Kahn, Kalwani & Morrison, 1986). Mere repeat purchasing is not a sufficient indicator of loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Reichheld, 2001) viewing the fact that even unsatisfied customers might don't always switch brands, which is referred to as inertia (Kuusik, 2007). One of the reasons to this is that they feel the alternatives are just as bad as the brand they are using or inertia may also be caused by lack of information about attractive characteristics of the alternative brands (Kuusik, 2007). Apart from these two major approaches numerous other categorizations are identified in loyalty literature and they will be examined closer in the following sections.

Today, the importance of marketing managers knowing how to influence customer loyalty is constantly growing (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). With competition increasing day after day, customer maintenance and growth has become the first goal of many companies (Chegini, 2010) and loyal customers can be considered as a key to success in many service businesses (Tripathi, 2009). According to Morgan (1999), in today's

environment of one-to-one marketing, the need to understand the mechanisms that control consumers' purchasing behavior is continuously growing. This is caused by the marketers need to start identifying consumer loyalty behavior or provide signals of individuals about to defect to another brand (Morgan, 1999).

It is also important for marketers to be able to identify different kinds of loyalty. In their research of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, Dick and Basu (1994) argue that managers often overlook a type of customer commitment called spurious loyalty. This kind of loyalty consists of both strong behavioral loyalty and low attitudinal loyalty. Such a loyalty cannot benefit a firm's profit since customers with spurious loyalty do not truly identify with the firm, and they often only care about discount sales in order to buy the product at low prices. Managers who only focus on this worthless loyalty will fail to see any long-term financial result. Thus, it is important for managers to know the marketing tools that can have an impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalties, otherwise it would be difficult for managers to develop effective strategies for generating customer loyalty.

The longevity of a customer's relationship influences a company's profitability in a positive way (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Because of this, general business wisdom suggests that a company should focus some proportion of its marketing efforts on the development, maintenance or enhancement of customer loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994). According to former studies, it can cost as much as 6 times more to win a new customer than it does to keep an existing one (Rosenberg & Czepiel 1984), so increasing retention can help reduce acquisition costs. Depending on the particular industry, it is possible to increase profit by up to 60% after reducing potential migration by 5% (Reichheld, 1993). Thus, it's easy to see that the increase and retention of loyal customers has become a key factor for long-term success of the companies. The costs of attracting and establishing current customers have already been realized and because of their experience they can be served more efficiently (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Increased retention through loyalty leads to increases in market share and the benefits of having a loyal customer base become even more relevant in mature markets as increases in market share become

increasingly expensive (Pleshko & Baqer, 2008). Reichheld (2001) manages to summarize the benefits deriving from a loyal customer base:

- 1) Lower customer acquisition costs through lower customer exchange
- 2) Loyal customers usually buy more over time and possibly at a premium price
- 3) Loyal customers spread positive word-of-mouth about the company
- 4) Ability to resist marketing efforts of competitors
- 5) Lower serving costs.

On the other hand, the approach of loyalty-connected profitability also has its critics. Reinartz & Kumar (2002) have found results proving that the link between loyalty and profits is much weaker. In their study they claim that to generalize long-term clients to be more profitable is a gross oversimplification since there is a lot of contradicting evidence especially in a non-contractual environment. They claim that this is a following of low switching costs and the impact of competition. They suggest caution and deeper analysis of customer profitability since some customers are very profitable in the beginning, but turn unprofitable in the long run (Reinartz & Kumar, 2002). It has been claimed that loyal customers know their value and demand better service and spread positive word of mouth only if they feel and act loyal (Kumar & Rajan, 2009). Chegini (2010) also points out, that creating loyalty in all customers is not possible. Thus, in order to avoid serving the wrong customers the customers should be screened for profitability and served accordingly, by investing only in the most profitable relationships.

Nevertheless, today's managers should understand that they must commit to relationship management, try to develop and maintain long-term relations with customers and also regard customer loyalty as their ultimate goal in developing business strategies (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000). It's also important to notice, that loyalty can be gained but marketers should act continuously on maintaining that loyalty. The next sections will provide a closer look at the construct of consumer loyalty to give a better understanding of the different characteristics and approaches to the loyalty concept.

2.1 One-dimensional loyalty

There are multiple approaches to customer loyalty. Theories of behavioral loyalty were dominating until 1970 considering loyalty as the share of total purchases (Cunningham, 1956; Farley, 1964), buying frequency or buying pattern (Tucker, 1964; Sheth, 1968) or buying probability (Harary & Lipstein, 1962; McConnell, 1968; Wernerfelt 1991). These approaches looked at brand loyalty in terms of outcomes (repeat purchase behavior) rather than reasons, until Day (1969) introduced the two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty, which stated that loyalty should be evaluated with both behavioral and attitudinal criteria.

Even though the many early loyalty researchers considered frequent buying as loyalty, modern research shows that mere repeat purchasing is not a sufficient indicator of loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Reichheld, 2001). The buyer could instead be trapped by inertia, indifference or switching costs, due to circumstances or the company (Reichheld, 2003). Based on different kinds of repeat purchase conduct, Kuusik (2007) suggests that behaviorally loyal consumers can be divided into three sub-segments: forced to be loyal, loyal due to inertia or functionally loyal. Theories that support this division are described in the following sections.

Firstly, consumers can be forced to be loyal when they are made to buy a certain product or a brand even if they do not want to (Kuusik, 2007). Customers may have to consume certain products or services for example when the provider has a monopoly over a market or if the consumers' financial situation is limiting their selection of goods. Interestingly, Grönholdt, Martensen and Kristensen (2000) discovered that companies with a low price strategy had a much higher degree of loyalty among their customers than expected based on their customer satisfaction. On the other hand, companies that had invested heavily on branding had a high level of customer satisfaction but scored a lot lower on customer loyalty. Apart from these alternatives exit barriers created by service providers may also create forced loyalty (Kuusik, 2007).

Secondly, behavioral loyalty may also be a result of inertia when the consumer doesn't switch vendors because of comfort or relatively low importance of the particular product or service (Reichheld, 2003). If the choice has low importance, there is no point to spend time and effort on searching for alternatives. The inertia-based behavioral loyalty is in accordance to Oliver's (1999) approach of cognitive loyalty: "Cognition can be based on prior or vicarious knowledge or on recent experience-based information. If the transaction is routine, so that satisfaction is not processed (e.g. trash pickup, utility provision), the depth of loyalty is no deeper than mere performance" (Oliver, 1999). Bendapudi and Berry (1997) say that one of the reasons that customers don't switch brands when they are unsatisfied is that they feel that the alternatives are just as bad as the brand they are using or even worse. Inertia may also be caused by lack of information about attractive characteristics of the brands (Wernerfelt, 1991).

A third form of behavioral loyalty is functional loyalty that is based on a consumer's objective reason to be loyal. Wernerfelt (1991) identifies cost-based brand loyalty where the benefits of using a brand have a positive effect on brand choice. Functional loyalty can be created by functional values such as price, quality, distribution channels, convenience of use, or loyalty programs that give a reason to prefer a certain supplier (Wernerfelt, 1991). These kinds of functional values are, though, easily copied by competitive brands (Kuusik, 2007). This is why Kuusik (2007) suggests that behavioral loyalty based on functional values isn't profitable in the long run.

Jones and Sasser (1995) propose that behavioral loyalty can come up in different kinds of behavior. According to them the recency, frequency and amount of purchases can be identified as a consumer's primary behavior. A consumer's secondary loyalty behavior consists of customer referrals, endorsements and word of mouth. A third kind of loyalty behavior is a consumer's intent to repurchase – whether or not the consumer is ready to repurchase the brand in the future. (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

2.2 Two-dimensional loyalty

One-dimensional theories of behavioral loyalty were dominating until 1970 considering loyalty as the function of the share of total purchases (Cunningham, 1956; Farley, 1964). These approaches looked at brand loyalty in terms of outcomes (repeat purchase behavior) rather than reasons, until Day (1969) introduced the two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty. At the moment many researchers, such as Dick and Basu (1994), state that brand loyalty should be seen as a combination of purchase behavior and attitude.

One of the first researchers that used a two-dimensional definition of loyalty was Day (1969), who opines that brand loyalty should be evaluated on the basis of attitudinal as well as behavioral criteria. Furthermore, Traylor (1981) suggested that loyalty has an attitudinal construct and evolved the proposition further (Traylor, 1983) suggesting that brand commitment represents an emotional or psychological attachment to a brand whereas brand loyalty is a behavioral phenomenon. Although literature offers plenty of definitions of loyalty, there seem to be two basic approaches to the customer loyalty concept (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). These are described as the behavioral approach and the attitude-based approach. Morgan (1999) describes these concepts as follows: “There are those who believe that loyalty is what a customer feels - a reflection of the emotional attachment that consumers feel for brands. For others, loyalty is what a customer does - i.e. nothing more or less than repeated (purchasing) behavior.” The characteristics of a two-dimensional definition of loyalty are shown in Figure 2.

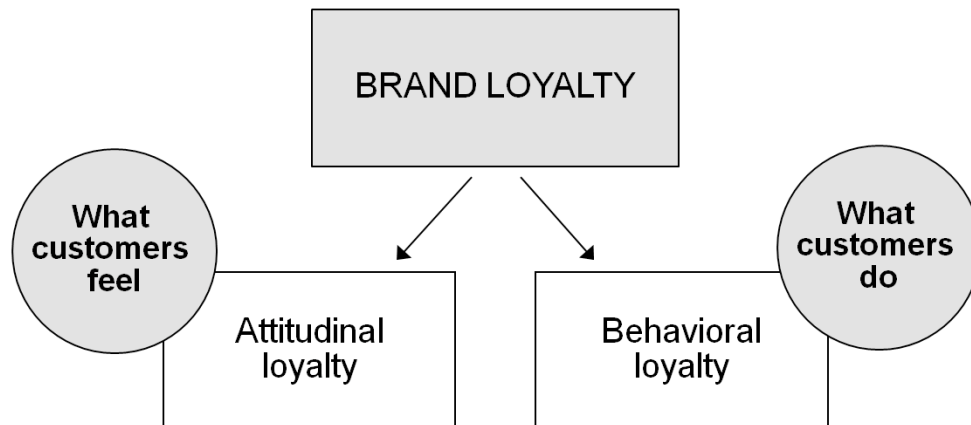


Figure 2: Elements of a two-dimensional definition of loyalty (*Adapted from Khan, 2009*)

According to the behavioral approach, customer loyalty is defined as a behavior (Cunningham, 1961; Kahn, Kalwani & Morrison, 1986). Behavioral loyalty is the degree to which a participant purchases a service or a program repeatedly (Park & Kim, 2000; Day, 1969) and is revealed through purchase and usage behavior (Mascarenhas, Kesavan & Bernacchi, 2006). This type of loyalty can be measured with shares of purchase, purchasing frequency and so on (Khan, 2009). In this theory it is assumed that the preferences of the consumer are reflected in the consumer's behavior. Hallowell (1996) states that one of the advantages of the behavioral approach is that it is a relatively objective measurement of customer loyalty. A weakness is, however, that even though the approach makes loyalty measurable, it does not offer an explanation of the existence of loyalty (Hallowell, 1996).

The attitude-based approach, on the other hand, defines customer loyalty as an attitude (Copeland 1923; Fournier & Yao, 1997). Attitudinal loyalty refers to attaching psychologically to a selected company or brand (Park & Kim, 2000; Day, 1969) and is often expressed as an ongoing long-term relationship to a brand (Mascarenhas, Kesavan & Bernacchi, 2006). The psychological (mostly attitudinal and emotional) factor of loyalty is usually considered and emphasized by contemporary researchers (Jacoby &

Kyner 1973; Oliver 1999). According to this approach, a simple description of the actual behavior of the consumer does not serve the purpose, but analyzing and describing the underlying structure of attitudes and preference of the consumer is required, for the concept of loyalty to have an explanatory value in addition to its measurability (Khan, 2009). As tools to measure attitudinal loyalty Khan (2009) suggests measures such as preference, buying intention, supplier prioritization and willingness to recommend. Similarly, Rundle-Thiele and Bennett (2001) propose attitudinal loyalty can be defined as a customer's attitudes towards the brand and measured with intention to engage in positive word of mouth or repurchase.

These two approaches separate customers as whether behaviorally or emotionally loyal. Behaviorally loyal customers act loyal but have no emotional bond with the brand whereas emotionally loyal customers do. Jones and Sasser call these two kinds of loyalty false or true long-term loyalty (Jones & Sasser 1995). Traylor (1981 & 1983) divides customers to loyal (behavioral) or committed (emotional). According to Reichheld (2003) emotional loyalty is much stronger and longer lasting than behavioral loyalty; it's a desire to maintain a valued relationship. The relationship becomes so important for the customer that he or she makes maximum efforts to maintain it (Morgan & Hunt, 1995). Highly attached customers will continue to use the brand to which they are bonded, recommend the brand to others, and strongly defend these choices to others (Butz & Goodstein, 1996).

Baldinger and Rubinson (1996) have divided loyal consumers into different groups according to their levels of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. The key concept of their behavior/attitude matrix is that a brand's loyal substance is not just its behaviorally high loyal customers but also those who show loyalty both in their actions and their attitudes. This framework that is presented in Figure 3 shows, that genuinely loyal consumers, the "real loyals" are loyal both in behaviorally and have strong positive attitudes towards the brand. According to Baldinger and Rubinson (1996) a part of the behaviorally loyal consumers that don't have attitudinal bonds to the brand are called "vulnerables". The researcher say that the real loyals with attitudinal ties to the brand are more likely to stay

loyal to a brand over time than the vulnerables. Furthermore, Baldinger and Robinson (1996) propose that vulnerables who have highly favorable attitudes toward particular competitive brands are called "prime prospects" to that competing brand. This framework highlights the importance of considering both behavioral and attitudinal aspects while examining a consumers loyalty to a brand.

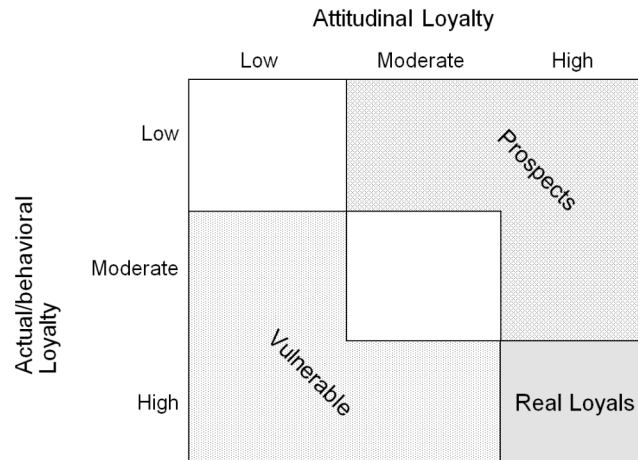


Figure 3: The behavior / attitude matrix (*Adapted from Baldinger and Robinson 1996*)

2.3 Three-dimensional loyalty

The previous chapter has shown that in both research and practice, loyalty is recognized as attitudinal or behavioral. Some marketers adopt a single dimension whereas others adopt a two-dimensional approach (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001) as described in the previous chapters. Even though the traditional two-dimensional views for understanding customer loyalty have been useful to conceptualize and measure brand loyalty, they have also generated inconsistencies and debate in the marketing literature (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). Worthington et al. (2009) claim that the behavior-attitude approaches are not fully applicable for example to the business-to-business sector or the three core marketing outcomes in a consumer context (recommendation, search and retention).

Given these circumstances it can be implied that brand loyalty is not a simple one or two-dimensional concept but, in fact, a complex construction involving multiple dimensions. According to Worthington et al. (2009) argue that all human behavior is a combination of cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral responses. In this tri-dimensional approach, brand loyalty is therefore the combination of a consumer's thoughts and feelings about a brand that are then expressed as an action (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). This way they divide attitudinal loyalty into a simple two-component structure of cognitive loyalty and emotional or affective loyalty that can be used to develop an understanding of brand loyalty as a whole. When this is included with behavioral loyalty, a tri-dimensional view of brand loyalty can be seen as in Figure 4 (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009).

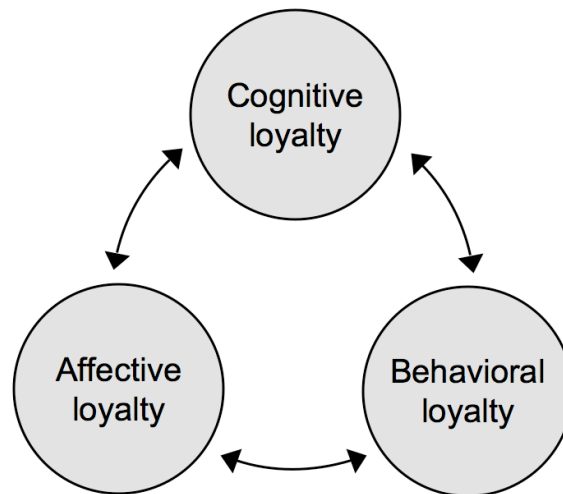


Figure 4: A tri-dimensional approach to brand loyalty (*Adapted from Worthington, Russell-Bennett and Hartel 2009*)

As attitudinal loyalty relates to a psychological commitment to a brand, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the definitions of the two components of attitudinal commitment, cognition and affection.

Worthington et al. (2009) describe cognitive commitment to a brand as the decision to stay with a brand based on the examination of switching costs and the evaluation of the brand's attributes. Oliver (1999) defines cognitive loyalty as loyalty based on information

such as price and features. This interpretation can be expanded by defining cognitive loyalty as a “psychological preference for a brand consisting of positive beliefs and thoughts about purchasing a brand on the next purchase occasion” (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009).

Modern researches emphasize the psychological element of loyalty, which consist of both attitudinal and emotional loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Oliver, 1999; Chaudury 1995; Djupe 2000; Reichheld 2003). These approaches perceive customers as either behaviorally or emotionally loyal. Behaviorally loyal customers act loyal but have no emotional bond with the brand while emotionally loyal customers feel attached to the brand on an emotional level. Jones and Sasser (1995) differentiate these two kinds of loyalty as false or true long-term loyalty. Morgan and Hunt (1995) divide customers into behaviorally loyal or emotionally committed. Researchers find that emotional loyalty is much stronger and longer lasting than behavioral loyalty; it's an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship (Reichheld, 2003). The relationship is so important for the customer that they make maximum efforts to maintain it (Morgan & Hunt, 1995; Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpande, 1992). Customers with high emotional bonds to brand will buy repeatedly the brands products or services, recommend the brand to others, and strongly defend the brand to others insisting that they have chosen the best product or service (Butz & Goodstein, 1996). Thus, emotional or affective commitment relates to the positive feelings stimulated by buying or using a brand and the feeling of emotional attachment to a brand (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). Worthington et al. (2009) define emotional loyalty as “affective commitment to a brand consisting of positive feelings about and attachment to purchasing a brand on the next purchase occasion”. Emotional loyalty can therefore be described as the degree of positive feelings triggered by purchasing a brand (Oliver, 1999).

In their three-dimensional approach to loyalty Worthington et al (2009) define behavioral loyalty as “the consumer's tendency to repurchase a brand, revealed through behavior that can be measured and which impacts directly on brand sales”. They state that behavioral loyalty can be explained as a consumer's buying preference of a particular

brand compared to other brands in the same category or as brand allegiance that indicates expenditure on a brand over time.

2.4 Four phases of loyalty

The tri-dimensional approach to loyalty presented in the previous chapter is closely connected to Oliver's (1999) conceptual framework of loyalty phases. Nevertheless, it doesn't have the same approach to attitudes but, instead, follows a two-component structure to attitude, where attitude consist of cognition and emotion (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). In contrast, Oliver's (1999) brand loyalty framework, that is the main focus of this chapter, follows the structural approach to attitudes, which includes intentions as well as cognition and emotion.

Originally, Dick and Basu (1994) developed three loyalty phases that led to a deeply held commitment. They presented cognitive, affective and conative antecedents to explain a consumer's loyalty toward a brand. Later, Oliver (1997) argued that customer loyalty involves three components, namely, cognitive, affective, and behavioral intensions. Oliver (1999) further categorized consumer loyalty into four phases and indicated that consumer loyalty is formed in a progressive manner in the order of cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action (behavioral) loyalty. This developing sequence of consumer behavior implies that attitudinal loyalty leads to behavioral loyalty. He claims a person initially becomes loyal in a cognitive way, then in an affective manner, third in a conative sense and last in a behavioral manner (Oliver, 1999). An outline of each of the loyalty phases is provided in Table 1 and the following sections:

Cognitive loyalty. In the first loyalty phase of Oliver's (1999) framework, the brand's qualities and characteristics perceivable to the consumer indicate that one brand is more advantageous than preferable its alternatives. This stage is referred to as cognitive loyalty, or loyalty based on brand image. Cognition can be based on previous or secondhand knowledge or on recent experiences about the brand and, at this stage loyalty toward the brand is based merely on this information. This kind of consumer loyalty, however, is only superficial. If the use of the brand in question is a routine and doesn't

stimulate satisfaction, the intensity of the consumer's loyalty is no more than just performance. If the consumer gets satisfaction from using the brand, it becomes a part of the consumer's experience and begins to take on emotional or affective meanings. (Oliver, 1999).

Affective loyalty. At the second stage of loyalty according to Oliver (1999), an attachment to or attitude toward the brand has developed based on increasingly satisfying experiences with the brand. The consumer's commitment to the brand at this phase is described as emotional loyalty and is planted in the consumer's mind as a combination of cognition and affect. While cognition can directly be influenced by new information, affect cannot be changed as easily. However, similar to cognitive loyalty, this kind of brand loyalty is still vulnerable to switching (Oliver, 1999), as research has shown that large percentages of brand defectors claim to have been previously satisfied with their brand (Reichheld, Markey & Hopton, 2000). Thus, it would be preferable for marketers if consumers were loyal at a deeper level of commitment (Oliver, 1999).

Conative loyalty. The next gradual loyalty phase according to Oliver (1999) is the conative stage of behavioral intention. This stage is developed by frequent events of positive emotions toward the brand. Conation is defined as a commitment or plan to repurchase a specific brand. In accordance with this description conative loyalty might at first been seen as a loyalty state that contains the deeply held commitment to buy the brand. Nevertheless, this intention to repurchase the brand, similarly to any other determination this desire may be an expected but can remain unfulfilled. (Oliver, 1999).

Action loyalty. At this stage of loyalty the desire and intention in the previous loyalty state has converted into strong eagerness to act. Oliver (1999) proposes that in this state the consumer is prepared to overcome possible obstacles that might prevent him or her from using the product or service in order to attain the preferred brand. In this phase action is perceived as a necessary result of readiness to act and the overcoming of obstacles.

Table 1: Loyalty phases and their vulnerabilities (*Adapted from Oliver 1999*)

| Loyalty phase: | Characteristics: | Vulnerabilities: |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Cognitive ↓ | Advantageous qualities and features perceived | Superficial, low intensity loyalty |
| Affective ↓ | Attachment and attitude toward brand established | Vulnerable to switching |
| Conative ↓ | Commitment or plan to repurchase | Desire may remain unfulfilled |
| Action | Strong eagerness to act | Deteriorating performance |

With this framework of loyalty phases Oliver (1999) completed the preceding cognitive-affective-conative frameworks (Dick and Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1997) with an action phase bringing the attitude-based loyalty models towards action and repurchase behavior. To summarize, cognitive loyalty focuses on the brand's perceived characteristics, affective loyalty is directed toward the brand's likeability, conative loyalty is experienced when the consumer has an intention to re-buy the brand, and action loyalty is a deep commitment to the action of repurchasing. (Oliver, 1999).

2.5 Other factors influencing loyalty

Many features contribute to brand loyalty (Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005; Kuusik, 2007). To understand the complexity of customer loyalty, it is important to understand the evaluations, attitudes, and intentions that influence consumer behavior (Oliver, 1999). This section will present the concepts customer satisfaction, brand image, trust, commitment, word-of-mouth and importance of relationship as factors influencing brand loyalty.

Satisfaction. The impact of satisfaction on loyalty has been the most popular subject of studies (Kuusik, 2007). Several studies have revealed that there is a direct connection between satisfaction and loyalty: satisfied customers become loyal and dissatisfied customers move to another vendor (Heskett, Jones, Lovemann, Sasser & Schlesinger,

1994). The American Customer Satisfaction Index, ACSI, was created with to describe the development of customer loyalty (Kuusik, 2007). In the ACSI model there are three antecedents of customer satisfaction: perceived quality, perceived value and customer expectations (Anderson & Fornell, 2000). On the other hand, the ECSI (European Customer Satisfaction Index) model divides quality into two segments. Product related attributes refer to the quality of the product or service attributes, and human related features concern the interactive elements in service, in other words the personal behavior and atmosphere of the service environment (Grönholdt, Martensen and Kristensen, 2000).

Both of these models show that increased satisfaction increases customer loyalty. When the satisfaction is low customers may turn to a competitor or express their dissatisfaction (Kuusik, 2007). Research has shown that 60–80% of customers who defect to a competitor said they were satisfied or very satisfied just prior to their defection (Reichheld, Markey & Hopton, 2000). Thus it's clear that satisfaction can't be the only factor that has an impact on loyalty (Kuusik, 2007).

Brand image. One of the most complex factors affecting loyalty is brand image. It has an effect on loyalty in at least two ways (Kuusik, 2007). Firstly, consumers express their own identity through their brand preferences, both consciously and subconsciously. Aaker (1999) clarifies how consumers prefer brands with characteristics that are in harmony with the personality traits that form their self-images. Kim, Han and Park (2001) examined the link between brand personality and loyalty and found that the attractiveness of a brand's personality indirectly affects brand loyalty.

The second way brand image can affect loyalty is that people tend to classify themselves into different social categories. This causes people to evaluate the values and symbols of others and compare them to their own (Kuusik, 2007). Consumers prefer to partner with people who share similar image and values as themselves and even consumer-brand relationships can be seen as subjects of perceived compatibility (Fournier, 1998). According to Fournier (1998) brands don't just help consumers but also to give meanings

to their lives. Oliver (1999) claims that for a consumer to be fully loyal, the brand needs to be a part of both the consumer's self-identity and his or her social-identity.

Trust. Whether or not a company stimulates feelings of trustworthiness in a consumer is a factor that definitely seems to have an impact on brand loyalty. Research shows, that trustworthiness can be used as a measure of the partner's worth and is a cornerstone of a partnership (Kuusik, 2007). According to Alhabeeb (2007), as shown in Figure 5, firms display their trustworthiness to consumers through two channels, frontline employees and management policies and practices, where the state of trustworthiness creates a counter effect of consumer trust, which then again impacts loyalty. Consumer trust can be positive or negative (distrust), but only a positive value can, however, cause the consumers to be loyal to the brand (Alhabeeb, 2007).



Figure 5: The trust-loyalty link (*Adapted from Alhabeeb 2007*)

Separately from trustworthiness, trust on the other hand, can be defined as the “extent of confidence in the exchange of partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002) define consumer trust as “the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises the customer’s problem, taking initiatives, identifying solutions, and improvising”.

As far as the relation between consumer trust and brand loyalty is concerned, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) empirically tested the effects of the two aspects of loyalty. Their findings demonstrate that consumer trust leads to both types of loyalty, where behavioral loyalty results in repeated purchases, and therefore greater market share for the company, while attitudinal loyalty results in consumer commitment to the product allowing a higher price for the brand. Also Morgan and Hunt (1994) argue that trust is an important factor

of a loyal relationship commitment – brand trust leads to brand loyalty because trust creates exchange relationships that are highly valued.

Commitment. The relationship marketing literature recognizes another potential driver of customer loyalty: relationship commitment (Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Marketing researchers have defined commitment in many ways: as a desire to maintain a relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), a pledge of continuity between parties, the sacrifice or potential for sacrifice if a relationship ends, and the absence of competitive offerings (Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005). These different sources of commitment create a bond that keeps customers loyal to a brand even when satisfaction may be low (Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005).

According to Gustafsson et al. (2005) customer satisfaction and commitment might seem to be similar concepts, so it's important to clarify the conceptual difference between them: satisfaction refers backwards whereas commitment has a stronger implication towards the future. In other words, satisfaction evaluates a brand's performance in the past, whereas commitment represents the strength of the relationship and the devotion to continue forward (Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005).

Word-of-mouth. Reichheld (2001) claims that the most important sign of loyalty is the customer's willingness to recommend the company to others. Because a person recommending is putting their own reputation on the line, the probability for referrals can be seen as a good predictor of loyalty. According to several researchers (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol, 2002; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996), brand loyalty results in positive word of mouth and repeat purchasing by the brand's existing consumers. As stated by Alhabeeb (2007), positive word of mouth plays an important role in strengthening brand loyalty and widening its reach. It acts as a free advertisement, declaring information on the satisfying experience with the brand and offering proven benefits, that can lead to an automatic recruiting of new consumers, who may do the same, and pull in more new consumers, and so on. The group of favorable consumers

gets larger and larger, and many favorable consumers may soon become loyal and committed.

Importance of relationship. Loyalty is also often characterized as a desire to preserve a valuable or meaningful relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpande, 1992). In accordance with these theories loyalty is regulated by the importance of the consumer-brand relationship. According to Kuusik (2007) the brand's importance to a consumer can be increased by importance of the product or service in question, high risks involved in the transaction or costs caused by cancellation of contracts. He adds, that the more important the relationship is to a consumer the more prepared he or she is to accept dissatisfaction or might even take action to fix the situation and vice versa.

Summarizing the discussion about factors influencing brand loyalty, Figure 6 presents the most important elements affecting loyalty:

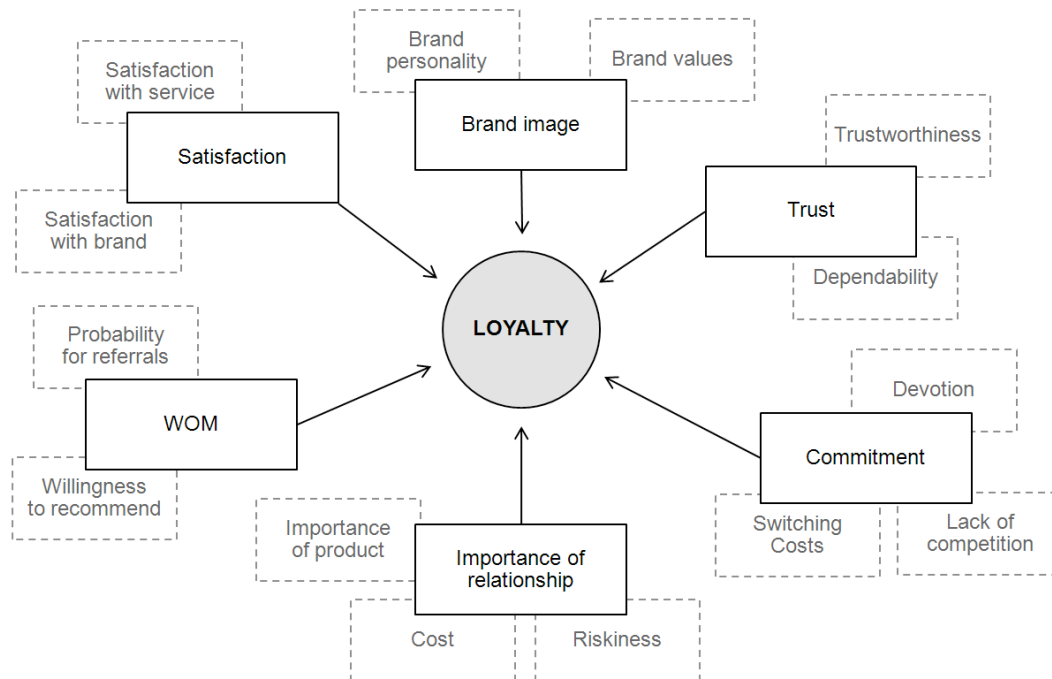


Figure 6: Factors influencing loyalty (Adapted from Kuusik, 2007)

The elements presented in this chapter are often described as factors influencing loyalty. Nevertheless, according to many researchers (e.g. Baloglu, 2002; Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Sudhahar et al. 2006, Alhabeeb, 2007) factors such as commitment and trust which were earlier defined by other researchers as factors influencing loyalty should also be included as loyalty dimensions.

2.6 Multi-dimensional brand loyalty

Based on the previous research discussed in this study it's safe to say that the concept of multi-dimensional loyalty is not a new phenomenon. There is also a lot of research (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009) indicating that the traditional two-dimensional definition may be far from the complete concept of loyalty. By now, researchers have started to identify loyalty as dimensions (Dick and Basu 1994; Khan, 2009) and have mainly identified two dimensions of loyalty: attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. In the recent past marketing researchers have expanded the traditional two-dimensional definitions of loyalty to incorporate additional dimensions of loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2009). The previous chapters suggest that there are at least four dimensions of loyalty: behavioral, attitudinal, cognitive and conative loyalty. In addition, a variety of different factors have been identified to affect a consumer's loyalty towards a brand (Kuusik, 2007).

Based on the literature readings, this study suggests that loyalty should be defined as a multi-dimensional concept. Especially, loyalty in service markets ought to be discussed as a concept with many dimensions as any customer may show different degrees of loyalty to a service provider. Customers may be highly loyal on one dimension, while at the same time show low loyalty on other dimensions. Service loyalty is conceptualized as an interaction of attitude and behavior, and further, the loyalty dimensions are to include behavioral, attitudinal cognitive and conative processes (Sudhahar et al., 2006). As stated in the previous chapter, many researchers (e.g. Baloglu, 2002; Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Sudhahar et al. 2006, Alhabeeb, 2007) claim that commitment and trust should also be included as loyalty dimensions. Although these concepts can also

be considered as antecedents to loyalty rather than components of loyalty this research will follow the example of the aforementioned researchers and include commitment and trust as dimensions of loyalty.

As already stated many times in this study, previous research has failed to establish a set of items that could be considered as general measures of loyalty. The review of the earlier studies in this research and the identified eight loyalty dimensions used as a basis of the multi-dimensional loyalty view in this study are presented in Figure 7:

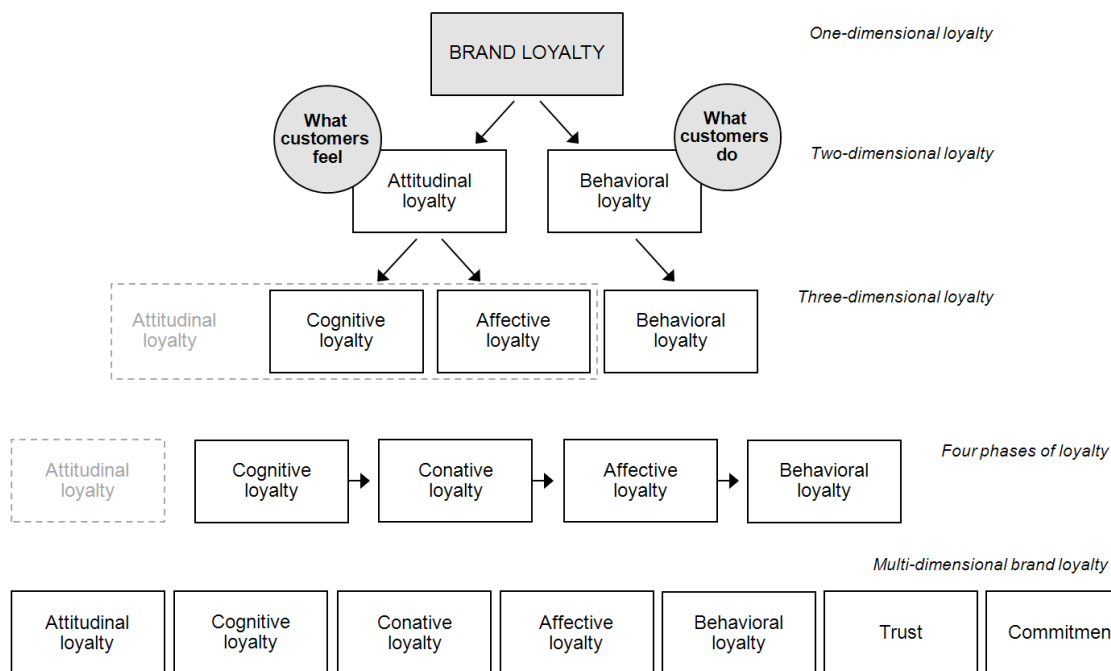


Figure 7: Loyalty dimensions in earlier research leading to the seven dimensions of loyalty used in this study

The figure presents the different conceptualizations of brand loyalty dimensions. The first level shows the one-dimensional approach adapted by early researchers such as Cunningham (1956) and Farley (1964). Day (1969) was the first one to introduce the attitudinal dimension to complement the behavioral aspect of loyalty, as shown on the second level of the figure. Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel (2009) divided the attitudinal dimension into cognitive and affective loyalty as demonstrated in the figure as

three-dimensional loyalty. The approach was also supported by Dick and Basu (1994) and Oliver (1997). Attitudinal loyalty is presented in grey since it is not a part of the conceptualization on this level but stays in the background to be presented later as one of the dimensions in the concept of multi-dimensional brand loyalty. Oliver's (1999) later conceptualization was the four phases of loyalty on the next level of the figure. Finally, all of the dimensions presented in previous literature come together in the last level named multi-dimensional brand loyalty. In addition to the previous conceptualizations of loyalty dimensions the multi-dimensional brand loyalty includes commitment and trust , that according to several researchers (e.g. Baloglu, 2002; Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Sudhahar et al. 2006, Alhabeeb, 2007) should also be included as dimensions of loyalty.

3. Brand involvement

The other major concept of this research, brand involvement, has been described as “a general construct that is more than just importance” (Zaichowsky, 1986). Involvement is a motivational state that can be used to understand consumer attitudes towards products or brands (Guthrie & Kim, 2009). Definitions of involvement vary between researchers but the concept is most often referred to as degree or intensity of interest that a buyer shows for a certain product or brand (Park & Young, 1983). This definition is also used as the definition of involvement in this research.

To understand consumers, it's important to understand the perceived personal relevance of a product, service, or brand from the consumers' perspective. According to Srivastava and Kamdar (2009) the understanding of the cognitive structures that underlie consumers' feelings of involvement are particularly important. As consumers learn about brands and acquire new knowledge, they combine it with existing knowledge in their memory and form new cognitive structures in their minds. These structures represent the interpreted meanings of a product, service or a brand. In consumer behavior literature this construct is referred to as involvement.

According to Antil (1984) involvement represents the importance of, or interest in for example a product, service, issue, situation, communication or brand and is a state or condition, which varies across individuals and circumstances. Involvement has also been viewed in terms of product meaning and consumer-product relationships. For example, Martin (1998) equated involvement with importance. Laurent and Kapferer (1985) have defined involvement as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal, or interest which is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation and is considered to have properties which influences search process, information processing, and decision making. Bowen and Chaffee (1974) defined involvement as “a relation between consumer and product”. Similarly, Bloch (1981) defined product involvement as a unique relationship between consumer and product: “an unobservable state reflecting the amount of interest, arousal or emotional attachment evoked by the product in a particular individual”. The domain of the involvement construct was specified as the “long-term interest in a product which is based on the centrality of the product to important values, needs, or the self-concept” (Bloch 1981). The concept of product involvement determines the relevance of the products and services to consumer needs, values and interests in different markets (Zaichkowsky & Sood, 1989).

As stated before, in the present study involvement refers to the degree of psychological affective and emotional ties the consumer has with a product category or specific brand. It has been established that the strength of these ties or the level of involvement determines the depth, complexity and extensiveness of cognitive and behavioral processes during the consumer choice process (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Houston & Rothschild, 1978). Therefore, product involvement is a central framework, vital to understanding consumer decision-making process, interest in advertising, brand commitment, and frequency of product usage (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Park & Young, 1986).

3.1 Types and levels of involvement

The definition and conceptualization of involvement have generated ongoing debate in the literature. A three-folded view of the construct was adopted by Houston and

Rothschild (1978) who divided it into three types: situational, enduring, and response involvement. More recently, other types of involvement have been proposed, including instrumental, communicative, affective, cognitive, brand, purchase, product and ego (Mittal & Lee, 1989) demonstrating a lack of consensus amongst researchers, many of whom have re-defined the same types of involvement in different forms and under different names.

The types of involvement by Houston and Rothschild (1977) make a distinction between enduring involvement as a mean level of involvement across situations and situational involvement provides temporary, situation-bound variation from the standard level. Thus, it is possible that for a consumer the enduring involvement for a specific product or service is low, but the situational involvement is high. Kim, Haley and Koo (2009) define situational involvement as related to a specific situation such as a purchase occasion, whereas enduring involvement is related to a general and permanent concern that affects the levels of involvement toward an object.

As stated before, some researchers define types of involvement in different forms, for example cognitive involvement and affective involvement by Park and Young (1986) and rational and emotional involvement defined by Laurent and Kapferer (1985). Affective or emotional involvement is related to the feelings or emotions caused by the interactions with a certain object, whereas cognitive or rational involvement is related to the states of reasoning used for informational processing during interaction with an object. However, Park and Young (1986) asserted that those two types of involvement are especially important in the case of advertisement involvement, which is not a focus area in this study and is will thus not be explained in further detail.

This study will use product involvement that is recognized as relatively stable and enduring, derived from past experience, and reflecting the perceived relevance of a product category to an individual. Thus, to the extent that product characteristics are associated with personal goals and values, the consumer will experience strong feelings of involvement with the product. This ongoing concern with a product may include

situational factors, and is different from an individual's involvement in the purchase process or involvement with advertising.

Zaichkowsky (1985) proposed that different people perceive the same product differently and have inherently different levels of involvement with the same product. Andrews et al. (1990) suggested that involvement was influenced by personal needs, goals, characteristics, and situational and decision factors then directed to search behavior, information processing and persuasion.

Consumers can be classified according to their degree of involvement into either low-involvement or high-involvement consumers (Srivastava & Kamdar, 2009). Low-involvement purchases are less important and have very little relevance to the consumer. There is little perceived risk associated with them and these are characterized by little motivation to expend effort and time on processing information associated with the purchase. According to Park and Mittal (1985) when a person's involvement is low their attention focus lacks direction and the level of processing is superficial, revealing different patterns in using images from memory and information organization from those at a high level of involvement. High-involvement conditions, on the other hand, generate a high level of motivation, arousal, or interest that causes greater searching, information processing, and decision making by individuals. (Sengupta, Goodstein, & Boninger 1997).

Consumers with similar involvement levels usually have similar motivational behaviors towards the product. For example, they should equally seek out information, perceive differences among brands and have favorite brands (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Srivastava and Kamdar (2009) hypothesized that consumer involvement with brands and products affects the extent of their information search, the size of the evoked set, and the nature of brand loyalty. They introduce the idea that involvement can affect the entire nature of decision processing undertaken in product or service selection. This led to the understanding that involvement is basically multidimensional in nature and any attempt

to measure it as one-dimensional may result in a misconceived idea. The dimensions of involvement will be closer examined in the next chapter.

3.4 Dimensions of involvement

A complete understanding of the concept of involvement requires an analysis of its underlying causes. Consumers' involvement with a brand cannot be directly measured, but instead must be understood through its antecedents that are argued to be able to clearly explain the nature and the consequences of involvement. However, the identification of the involvement antecedents, also referred to as involvement dimensions, has caused debate in the literature, especially in regard to whether a multidimensional or one-dimensional approach should be adopted.

As a supporter of a multidimensional approach, Rothschild (1984) concludes that "no single indicator could fully describe, explain or predict involvement; multiple facets must be measured simultaneously." Also Laurent and Kapferer (1985) developed an involvement categorization consistent with this. Their theory measures each of the antecedents of involvement separately, rather than putting together a number of items to get a single outcome of involvement. In their research Laurent and Kapferer (1985) justify their approach by presenting significant empirical data showing that involvement is not limited to a single dimension.

While the multidimensional view is shared by many researchers, there has been a clear disagreement between different studies about which dimensions should be identified (Mittal & Lee, 1988; Laurent & Kapferer, 1986). Attempting to explain the complexity of the involvement construct, researchers suggest different combinations of the following dimensions as antecedents of involvement: functional performance, symbolic or hedonic value, importance, relevance, risk probability, risk importance, and interest. For example, Bloch and Richins (1983) use a three-dimensional approach, Laurent and Kapferer (1986) identify five dimensions and Mittal and Lee (1988) eight.

Supporting an opposite approach, Zaichkowsky (1985) describes involvement as one-dimensional, developing a measurement scale that includes only one factor – relevance. While the approach has its benefits, such as simplicity and adaptability to all products, Laurent and Kapferer (1986) argue that the items on which it is based do not actually result in a one-dimensional construct and claim to identify at least three antecedents of involvement in Zaichowsky's (1985) framework. Despite these conceptual disagreements, the two most commonly used involvement scales are the ones developed by Laurent and Kapferer (1986) and Zaichkowsky (1985). They have both proven to be valid measures of involvement and choosing which one to use depends primarily on the context of the study (Quester & Smart, 1996). As this research has chosen the multidimensional approach to brand involvement the scale by Laurent and Kapferer (1986) is used as a basis for this study and is presented in Table 2. The following sections will provide a closer examination of the scale as well as present further conceptualizations of the dimensionality of involvement.

Table 2: The consumer involvement profile scale (*Adopted from Laurent and Kapferer 1986*)

| Dimensions of Involvement (CIP) | Description of dimensions |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Interest | The personal interest a person has in a product category, its personal meaning or importance |
| Pleasure | The hedonic value of the product, its ability to provide pleasure and enjoyment |
| Sign | The sign value of the product or brand, the degree to which it expresses the person's self |
| Risk importance | The perceived importance of the potential negative consequences associated with a poor choice of product or brand |
| Risk probability | The perceived probability of making such a poor choice |

3.4.1 Importance, pleasure, risk and sign

In most of the literature, categorizations of the involvement construct are based on Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) consumer involvement profile (CIP) scale. While other

conceptualizations have been suggested by for instance Zaichkowsky (1985), the significance of Laurent and Kapferer's empirical evidence supports categorizations deriving from their multidimensional interpretation (McIntyre, 1989). The CIP scale was originally developed to capture consumers' perceptions of personal relevance relating to consumer goods. Their conceptualization consists of five dimensions: importance, pleasure, risk importance, risk probability, and sign. The dimension of importance examines the compatibility between consumers' goals and the extent to which a specific product meets these goals. Laurent and Kapferer (1985) also draw from previous research suggesting that some consumer products and decisions concerning their purchase are filled with emotion. This leads to the pleasure dimension that examines to which degree consumers' get pleasure from the product. The dimension of risk probability concerns the perceived probability of making a bad choice, whereas the risk consequence dimension refers to the importance of negative consequences in case of a poor choice. Finally, the sign dimension examines the match between the perceived identity of the product and individual's own identity.

3.4.2 Attraction, centrality and self-expression

Both McIntyre (1989) and Dimanche, Havitz and Howard (1991) later adapted Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) CIP scale to measure enduring involvement. While Dimanche et al.'s version follows closely Laurent and Kapferer's scale, McIntyre's (1989) adaptation includes some distinct modifications to the original. Firstly, after testing the scale in different contexts McIntyre (1989) reveals that items measuring importance and pleasure tend to load on a single factor that he calls attraction. In later research the importance and pleasure items have repeatedly been combined into a single factor by several other researchers (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit & Jodice, 2007). McIntyre (1989) also excludes the risk items from his scale and includes a dimension called centrality, which is adapted from Wellman, Roggenbuck and Smith's (1982) conceptualization that uses a dimension called centrality to lifestyle. The items McIntyre (1989) uses to measure the centrality dimension refer to lifestyle choices and personal investments made by an individual that enable their continued association with the brand.

According to the research, the size of these investments often determines the intensity of the individual's attachment to a brand. Self-expression, the third dimension used by McIntyre (1989), is consistent with the sign dimension in Laurent and Kapferer's framework.

3.4.3 Risk

Previous analysis of different involvement scales, such as Laurent and Kapferer's CIP scale and Zaichkowsky's PII scale, have shown mixed findings (Mittal, 1995). While research has found evidence to support the validity and reliability of these scales in multidimensional conceptualizations, it remains unclear which of the dimensions are the most important. However, the most recent research conducted in several different contexts, shows that the dimensions receiving the strongest support follow McIntyre's (1989) conceptualization consisting of attraction, centrality, and self-expression (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit & Jodice, 2007). Research also shows that the risk items of Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) model have least consistency in different contexts. Studies using exploratory factor analysis show that the risk items tend to cross load on other dimensions and have low internal consistency when loading together (Havitz, Dimanche & Howard, 1993). To explain the inconsistency of the risk items, researchers suggest that risk could be a more complex construct with multiple dimensions, such as physical, social, and psychological risk) and can therefore not be measured with Laurent and Kapferer's CIP scale (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit & Jodice, 2007). The research also points out that the dimensions and items of the CIP scale were conceptualized with consumer goods in mind and suggest that in the context of leisure activities risk is a more unclear phenomenon, particularly in experiences that are enjoyed regularly. The context of group fitness, that is the focus of this research, can be categorized as an experiential and regular leisure activity.

Kyle et al. (2007) also note that there are some fundamental differences between consumer behavior related to products and services. According to them, these differences have to do with the fact that participation in services is most often naturally stimulated

and that service customers are personally involved in the production of the experience. They continue with explaining that in the context of experiential services, elements such as skills, mood and expectations that consumers bring to the experience play an important role in the production of the service. However, in case of consumer goods, consumers are seldom exposed or involved in the production process, which makes it impossible for them to be completely confident about their decision (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit & Jodice, 2007). Consequently, in the context of consumer goods, the use of risk consequence and risk probability dimensions is well-reasoned. Given these conceptual issues, this research follows McIntyre's (1989) lead to exclude the risk dimensions.

3.4.4 Social bonding

Several authors recognize an existence of potential sub-dimensions to the current components and measures of involvement (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit & Jodice, 2007). For example, Kyle and Chick (2002) propose that the social components included in the dimension of centrality should have stand-alone value as a dimension of involvement. These social items McIntyre (1989) uses to measure centrality refer to the degree to which an individual's involvement is socially driven. Kyle and Chick's (2002) research shows that consumers' social connections drive their involvement by both acting as a source of personal relevance and being the primary reason for their continued involvement. They conclude with recommending that researchers should consider including a dimension of social bonding to their involvement scales in contexts that contain social aspects in consumers' experiences. Based on this, many studies including Kyle et al. (2007) separate the construct of centrality into two distinct dimensions: centrality and social bonding. In these approaches centrality is based on the importance of the activity in the individual's lifestyle. Social bonding, on the other hand, includes items that capture the extent to which their enduring involvement derives from their social networks.

The dimension of social bonding and separating it from the centrality dimension is further justified by for instance Buchanan (1985) who notes that enduring involvement is

often affected by the investments made by the consumer that help maintain continued involvement. These investments can be for example personal relationships that bind individuals to a certain type of behavior. Gahwiler and Havitz (1998) hypothesized that in the context of enduring involvement, it is possible that consumers' enduring interest in an activity can be based on social relationships. For these individuals, the relationships they share with others are the most important component of their involvement.

3.4.5 Modified involvement scale

An involvement profile is argued to be able to clearly explain the nature and the consequences of involvement (Quester & Smart, 1996). The involvement dimensions used in this research follow the conceptualizations presented in the previous sections. They are closely connected to a modified involvement scale (MIS) proposed and tested by Kyle et al. (2007). The dimensions used in this scale differ from Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) dimensions of involvement in a few distinct ways. First, the importance and pleasure items have been fused into a single dimension of attraction consequent with for instance the framework of McIntyre (1989). Second, as per Kyle et al. (2007), social items have been separated from centrality to construct a distinct dimension called social bonding. Third, based of the fundamental differences between consumer behavior related to products and services, the risk facets have been excluded following McIntyre's (1989) example. The fourth dimension of self-expression used in this research and also by McIntyre (1989) is consistent with Laurent and Kapferer's idea of the sign dimension. Thus, the involvement scale used in this study consists of the four dimensions presented in Figure 9:



Figure 8: Dimensions of involvement used in this research

4. Connection between loyalty and involvement

Studies have shown that brand involvement can influence brand loyalty (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Park & Young, 1986; Traylor, 1981) and they are believed to explain a significant proportion of consumer purchase choices. Several studies (e.g. Traylor, 1981; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998), have examined the relationship between product involvement and loyalty. The central claim of the literature examining the relationship between loyalty and product involvement is that consumers who are more involved with a particular brand are also more committed and hence more loyal to that brand. High involvement has also been suggested to lead to loyalty. For example, in a study by LeClerc and Little (1997) it was found that brand loyalty interacted with product involvement. The authors stated that repeat purchase behavior for a high-involvement product was an indicator of brand loyalty, whereas repeat purchase for a low-involvement product was simply habitual purchase behavior. Some authors have even argued that the cognitive dimension of brand loyalty represents commitment and therefore involvement with the brand (Quester & Lim, 2003).

Nevertheless, according to Iwasaki and Havitz (1998) it hasn't been shown that involvement precedes loyalty. They found that high involvement does not necessarily translate to brand loyalty because individual characteristics and social-situational factors reduce the affects of involvement. They proposed that individuals go through sequential psychological processes in order to become loyal participants in leisure or recreational activities. The process described in their yet untested framework is illustrated in Figure 9. Also Traylor (1981), suggests that involvement is generally not directly related to brand commitment. He illustrates cases where high involvement is associated with low commitment and low involvement with high brand commitment. Traylor explains this by suggesting that product involvement and brand loyalty are consumer-defined, rather than product-defined phenomena.

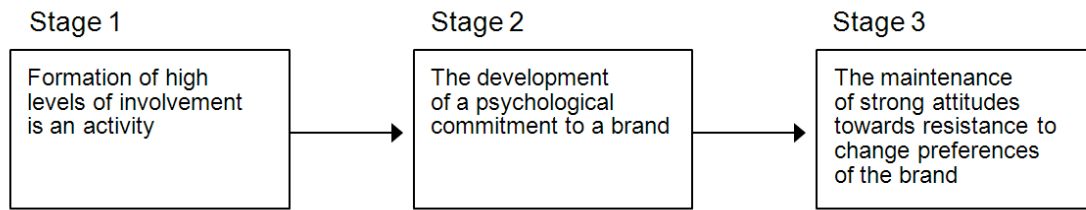


Figure 9: The sequential process of the relationship between involvement and loyalty (*Adapted from Iwasaki and Havitz 1998*)

The general convention in the literature, however, appears to be that involvement is directly related to commitment or loyalty to a brand. Furthermore, the more central a product or a service is to an individual's sense of identity, the stronger the psychological attachment will be to a particular brand. Consequently, the less important the product or service is to the individual, the lower the attachment to the brand.

4.1 Conceptual Framework

In the research framework presented in Figure 11, several dimensions of brand loyalty and brand involvement can be identified. The framework presents the different conceptualizations of loyalty dimensions from previous research leading to the multi-dimensional view to loyalty used in this research. The seven dimensions of loyalty and four involvement dimensions form the basis for evaluating these concepts in the different levels of a service concept based group fitness brand.

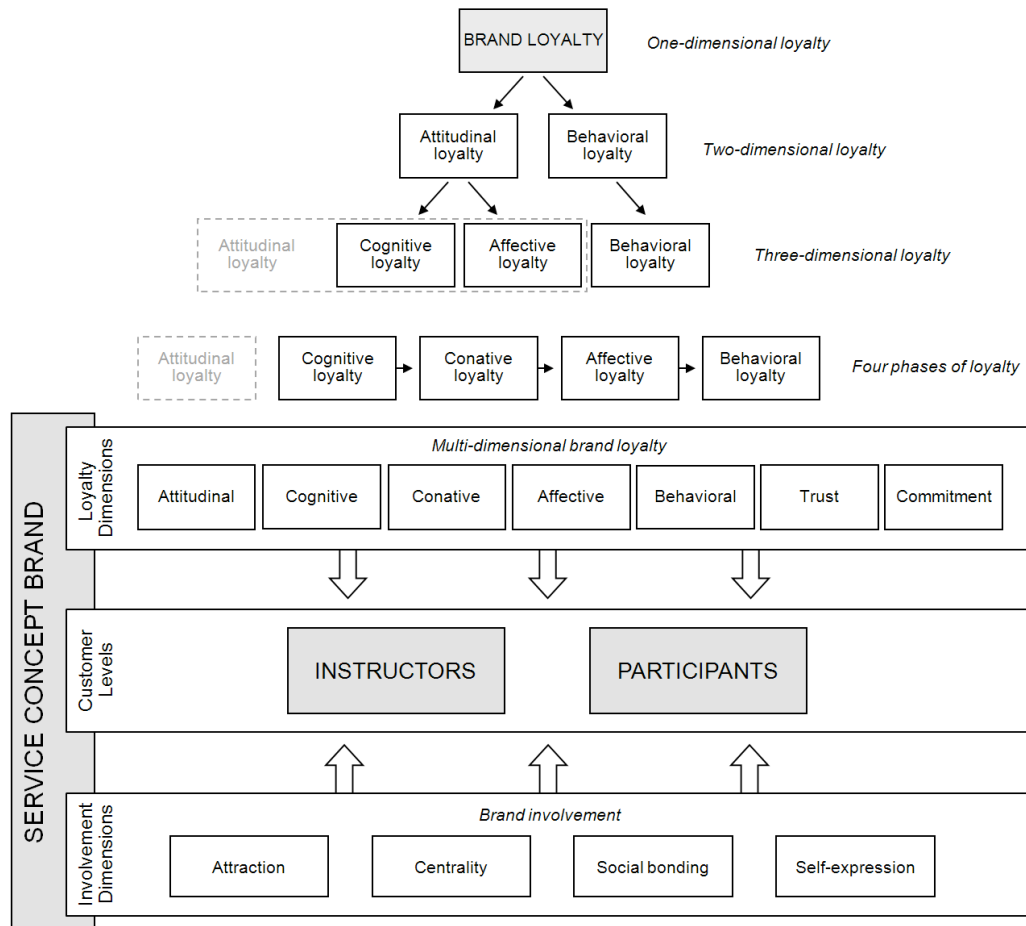


Figure 10: Research framework

In the theoretical framework presented in Figure 10, several dimensions of brand loyalty and involvement can be identified, based on previous research. The different conceptualizations of brand loyalty dimensions leading to the description of multi-dimensional brand loyalty are also presented in the figure. The service concept brand is illustrated forming the foundation for the research context. The different customer levels—*instructors and participants* – are presented in the middle of the dimensions forming a basis for evaluating loyalty and involvement.

5. Research methods

The purpose of the empirical study was to explore the characteristics and differences in two different customer levels of the Les Mills group fitness brand; to identify the underlying patterns and customer profiles among Les Mills instructors and class participants i.e. end-users of the service. Conclusive research is characterized as formal and structured and it is based on samples which are subjected to quantitative analysis (Malhotra & Birks, p. 65). To meet the requirements of a conclusive research design and to achieve an extensive overall picture of the current state of customer profiles, a quantitative research approach was chosen. The data was collected in a web-based questionnaire conducted in cooperation with Les Mills Nordic and a various health clubs in Finland and Sweden.

The data was analyzed by using two descriptive methods: factor analysis and cluster analysis. The descriptive approach was chosen according to the research problem: to identify the underlying patterns of brand loyalty and brand involvement and to group together respondents with similar loyalty and involvement profiles. This chapter will provide a closer presentation of the case company Les Mills, describe the implementation of the research, present the research data and the methods used to analyze it and evaluate the validity and reliability of the research.

5.1 *Les Mills brand*

Les Mills International (LMI) is a New Zealand-based distributor of the Les Mills pre-choreographed group exercise programs. With over 70 000 instructors at 13 000 health clubs in 75 countries worldwide, ten Les Mills exercise-to-music programs reach an estimate of over six million participants every week making Les Mills the largest pre-choreographed group fitness provider in the world. (Les Mills International, 2011).

The pre-choreographed group fitness programs are immaterial service concepts that are brought to the end user through a three-fold customer chain. The international roll-out of the Les Mills group training programs is driven by Les Mills agents who are awarded the

rights to replicate the Les Mills concept in an allotted territory, covering one or more countries. A regional agency licenses fitness clubs, maintains an instructor register, provides license training for instructors and collects fees from clubs and instructors for the services it provides.

The Finnish market is cover by a Sweden-based agency called Les Mills Nordic (LMN), which is the distributor for the markets in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Poland. All Les Mills programs are fitness club-driven and instructors must be affiliated to a club that holds an agreement with the regional agency to operate the appropriate program(s). In order for instructors to teach a Les Mills class they need to sign up for a program specific training and attain, as well as retain, a qualified instructor license that authorizes them to teach classes of a particular program. The instructors can either be employed by a fitness club or be self-employed. Thus, a Les Mills distributor has a threefold customer base of fitness clubs, instructors and participants (end-users of the service) which is demonstrated closer in Figure 11.

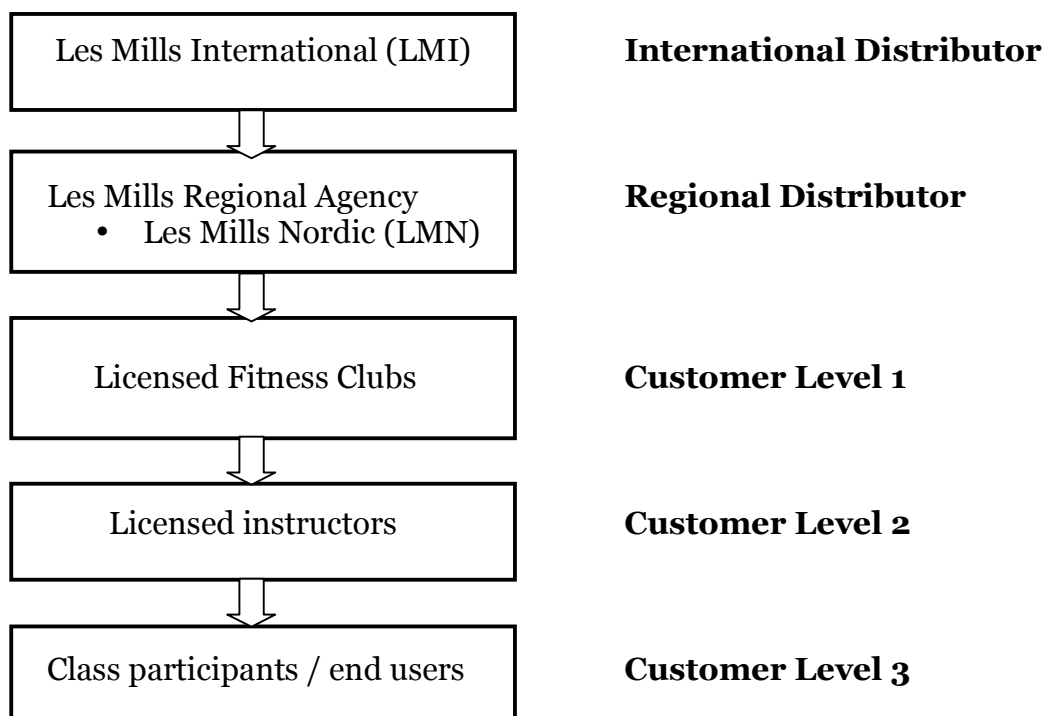


Figure 11: Les Mills customer levels

Each Les Mills program focuses on different activities in order to deliver contrasting workouts, and every three months fresh choreography and music is supplied to licensed instructors. These are known as Quarterly Releases and are issued without variation across the world, so that a class following the current BODYPUMP® release in Helsinki is the same as it is in Stockholm or Singapore. It's possible to say that Les Mills is doing for group exercise what McDonald's did for hamburgers. This arrangement has all the hallmarks of a 'license to practice' system of occupational regulation (Kleiner, 2000).

Having established a reputation as a quality brand, Les Mills is now leveraging opportunities to provide clothing, merchandise and other products associated with the programs and classes. In addition, clubs receive marketing materials to promote interest in the classes and enhance awareness of the Les Mills brand. The company is also actively involved in social media to build relationships with different levels of its customer base.

5.2 Collecting the data

The data was collected with an online questionnaire that was sent to Les Mills instructors and participants. The survey was designed to measure the constructs presented in framework of this research. To specify the target population, an address directory provided by Les Mills Nordic, a regional agency of Les Mills International, including listings of active Les Mills instructors in the regions was used as the sampling frame for the customer level of instructors. As for the end users of Les Mills services, a link to the survey was sent to the members of several partner gyms in Finland and Sweden.

The research attempted to address the measurement issue by developing a scale that included the dimensions of loyalty and involvement defined in the literature review. Normally adopting items used in previous research is used in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Therefore, previously validated items were utilized in order to ensure high quality of this empirical research. Thus, most of the items included

in the questionnaire were directly adapted from existing scales in previous research – primarily based on studies and questionnaires by Sudhahar et al. (2006); Baloglu (2002) and Kyle et al. (2007). The constructs, their corresponding scale items and related resources are presented in Table 3. For the purpose of reducing order bias, in other words the possibility that prior questions influence how latter questions are answered (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2004 p. 325), the items were not presented in the order proposed by the research framework.

Table 3: Adapted measurement scale items and related sources

| Construct | Scale items in questionnaire | Adopted from |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| BRAND LOYALTY | | |
| Behavioral | 1-4 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Attitudinal | 5-8 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Cognitive | 9-12 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Conative | 13-15 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Affective | 16-19 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Trust | 20-23 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| Commitment | 24-27 | Sudhahar et al., 2006 |
| BRAND INVOLVEMENT | | |
| Attraction | 28-31 | Kyle et al., 2007 |
| Centrality | 32-34 | Kyle et al., 2007 |
| Social bonding | 35-39 | Kyle et al., 2007 |
| Self-expression | 40-44 | Kyle et al., 2007 |

A test version of the questionnaire was sent to participants of the researchers thesis seminar group and Les Mills Nordic employees of whom 11 completed the questionnaire in March 2011. Comments and feedback were then integrated in the final questionnaire. The sampling method used for the pilot testing was convenience sampling – a type of non-probability sampling, which involves a sample population that is readily available

and convenient (Malhotra & Birks 2006, 363). In response to comments gathered during the test-phase, a couple of misspellings were corrected and a few clarifications in the wording of the questionnaire were made. As the analysis of the responses for the pilot test did not elicit a need for any particular improvements in the content, the questionnaire was considered adequate for the final data collection as such.

Three language versions of the questionnaire were made in order for the respondents to be able to answer the survey in their own language. The English, Finnish and Swedish versions were identical apart from the language and each version was pre-tested with several native speakers of each language. The Finnish version was sent to gym members in Finland, the Swedish to members of the partner gyms in Sweden and a link with all the different versions to be chosen from was sent to Les Mills instructors. The Swedish version was answered 1968 times, the Finnish version 1192 times and the English version 166 times. Less than 10 % of the respondents indicated their country of residence to be something else than Finland or Sweden (i.e. Norway or Denmark), which means that over 90 % of the respondents answered the questionnaire in their first language. The original questionnaire in all the different language versions is presented in appendix A.

Respondents were asked to indicate the variables that best corresponded their relationship with Les Mills from a 44-item listing. In order to ease the process of responding, the metrics presented in the questionnaire were divided into two subgroups of loyalty and involvement questions. The division only showed in the grouping of the questions to assist readability of the questionnaire and was not indicated with for example headings.

The final survey was conducted between March 21st and April 10th. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: general background questions (country of residence, gender, age, programs, tenure), questions addressing brand loyalty and questions addressing brand involvement. Before the background questions the respondents were to choose whether they were instructors, participants or neither. Depending on the choice, questions with different formulations in wording were shown to the respondent. The questions for different customer levels were identical apart from the words that needed to be changed

because of the type of relationship between the respondent and Les Mills (e.g. “For how long have you been participating in Les Mills classes?” vs. “For how long have you been teaching Les Mills classes?”). If a respondent chose the option of neither being an instructor or a participant the survey ended as the respondent in that case was not a part of the sampling frame.

5.3 Research data

The data collected included 3 348 responses. As the survey was sent to class participants through partner gyms some that sent the questionnaire to their members some of the respondents were not users of group fitness services and, thus, were not a part of the sampling frame. As choosing the option of neither being an instructor or a participant in the survey ended the questionnaire these 613 responses were empty and therefore excluded from the data used in this research. Consequently, the final number of full responses turned out to be 2725. As shown in Table 4, 1656 of the remaining respondents were participants in Les Mills group fitness classes and 1069 were Les Mills instructors. The demographic variables for all respondents and both of the two groups are described in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents by demographic variables

| Demographic variable | Participants | % | Instructors | % | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Responses | 1656 | 60,8 | 1069 | 39,2 | 2725 | 100 |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 1416 | 88,1 | 871 | 85,1 | 2287 | 86,9 |
| Male | 192 | 11,9 | 152 | 14,9 | 344 | 13,1 |
| Age | | | | | | |
| Under 31 | 714 | 44,4 | 370 | 36,2 | 1084 | 41,2 |
| 31-40 | 400 | 24,9 | 435 | 42,5 | 835 | 31,7 |
| Over 41 | 494 | 30,7 | 218 | 21,3 | 712 | 27,1 |
| Country | | | | | | |
| Sweden | 731 | 45,5 | 555 | 54,3 | 1286 | 48,9 |
| Finland | 862 | 53,6 | 236 | 23,1 | 1098 | 41,7 |
| Norway | 10 | 0,6 | 116 | 11,3 | 126 | 4,8 |
| Denmark | 3 | 0,2 | 111 | 10,9 | 114 | 4,3 |
| Other | 2 | 0,1 | 5 | 0,5 | 7 | 0,3 |

Even though the distribution in gender and age seems to be loading on females and younger generations, it is very similar to the factual distribution in the sampling frame. That most of the responses come from Sweden and Finland is explained by the fact that, the data from participants was collected in partnership with Swedish and Finnish gyms and gym chains. As a majority of all responses came from the participants this consequently affected the total distribution between countries. Still, a clear majority of the Les Mills Nordic instructors and participants are situated in these two countries while the other markets are significantly smaller. Therefore it can be concluded that the samples collected for this research provide an adequate representation of the demographic characteristics of Les Mills Nordic's customer base.

5.4 Statistical analysis methods

The research data was first subjected to basic analyses such as frequency distribution and t-tests. This provided insight into the differences between different customer levels and guided further data analysis. Analysis of variance was conducted to test whether statistically significant differences exist in loyalty and involvement of respondents in different countries. Followed by this, two multivariate techniques were used to analyze the data. Factor analysis was performed in order to define the underlying dimensions in customer loyalty and involvement, to divide the Les Mills customer base according to these dimensions and to identify the metrics assessing each subcategory. Finally, cluster analysis was conducted to categorize the customers and to discover different loyalty and involvement profiles among the respondents. These statistical analysis methods are described further in the following chapters.

5.4.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis denotes a class of procedures primarily used for data reduction and summarization (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 572). Factor analysis can be used to examine the underlying patterns or relationships for a large number of variables and to determine

whether the information can be condensed or summarized in a smaller set of factors (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 101, 104). The primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among variables. In marketing research, factor analysis has widely been used in e.g. market segmentation, product research and advertising and pricing studies, comprising attempts to identify underlying consumer characteristics, habits and mental models (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 573). In the present study, factor analysis is conducted in order to identify on underlying structures of loyalty and involvement in a group fitness context.

The basic idea behind the analysis is to examine relationships between interrelated variables and to group variables based on underlying dimensions, factors. Factors are formed as groups of variables that correlate strongly with each other but weakly with the variables in other groups. Mathematically, the factor model can be represented as follows:

$$X_i = \sum_{j=1}^m (A_{ij}F_j) + V_iU_i,$$

where

X_i = i th standardized variable

A_{ij} = standardized multiple regression coefficient of variable i on common factor j

F = common factor

V_i = standardized regression coefficient of variable i on unique factor i

U_i = the unique factor for variable i

m = number of common factors.

The common factors can then be expressed as linear combinations of the observed variables as:

$$F_i = \sum_{j=1}^k W_{ij}X_j,$$

where F_i = estimate of i th factor
 W_{ij} = weight or factor score coefficient of variable j on factor i
 k = number of variables.

The basic assumption preceding a factor analysis is that the underlying factors cause the detectable phenomena, not vice versa (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 572-574). The factors are assumed to represent dimensions within the data that may correspond to concepts that cannot be adequately described by a single measure (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 104). Here, the purpose of conducting a factor analysis is to discover the underlying dimensions behind customer loyalty and involvement.

Concerning the minimum number of cases required for conducting a factor analysis, as a general rule, there should be at least five times as many observations as the number of variables to be analyzed (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 575). In the data consisting of 2725 cases and 44 variables, this subjects-to-variables ratio equals 61.9, greatly exceeding the limit of 5. The findings resulting from the analysis are thus considered having sufficient explanatory power.

In order to generate a comprehensible factor matrix, the factors were rotated, which allows facets of the dataset to be viewed from different perspectives. As the most commonly used method for rotation, the orthogonal varimax method, maximizing simple structure, was applied in this study. The varimax rotation method minimizes the number of variables with high loadings on a factor, thus enhancing the interpretability of the factors (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 581- 582). Orthogonal rotation methods are also a preferred method when the goal is to reduce the data to a set of uncorrelated measures for subsequent use in other multivariate techniques, e.g. cluster analysis (Hair et al., 2006 p. 127).

In order to define the number of factors to extract, the latent root criterion, also known as the eigenvalue criterion, was chosen as the most commonly used technique. Using the eigenvalue for establishing a cutoff is most reliable when the number of variables is

between 20 and 50 (Hair et al. 2006, pp. 119-120). Considering the data of 44 variables used in this study, the eigenvalue criterion was considered a suitable choice. Each variable contributes a value of 1 to the total eigenvalue. According to the criterion, only the factors having latent roots or eigenvalues greater than 1 are considered significant and factors with eigenvalues less than 1 are disregarded.

5.4.2 Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis aims to classify objects into similar groups called clusters based on a chosen set of variables (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 596). It groups individuals into clusters so that objects in the same cluster are more similar to one another than they are to objects in other clusters, searching for a natural structure among the observations based on a multivariate profile (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 555). Cluster analysis seeks to identify a set of groups that both minimizes variation within the groups and maximizes variation between groups by examining the similarities between observations based on profiles of their scores on a number of measured characteristics (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 597). In marketing, cluster analysis can be used for example in segmenting markets, understanding buyer behavior or identifying test markets. Cluster analysis is comparable to factor analysis in its objective of assessing structure, differing, however, in that factor analysis groups variables based on patterns of variation, whereas cluster analysis groups objects on the basis of distance (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 555).

In this study, cluster analysis was used to identify groups of customers with similar loyalty and involvement characteristics and to build profiles based on the analysis. Malhotra & Birks (2006, pp. 599) state that if even one irrelevant variable is included in the analysis, it may distort an otherwise viable clustering solution. Therefore, 16 similar variables were chosen as the basis for the cluster analysis. The chosen variables consisted of the statements regarding brand loyalty and brand involvement.

As the purpose of cluster analysis is to group similar objects together, a measure is needed to assess the similarity or difference between objects (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp.

600). As the most commonly used measure of similarity, the Euclidean distance measure was chosen. The Euclidean distance measure represents the square root of the sum of the squared differences in values for each variable (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 575). It is suggested that when dealing with small samples (typically <250) hierarchical clustering should be used. Because of the relatively large data exceeding 2700 observations, a nonhierarchical clustering method was chosen as appropriate. The clustering was conducted using non-hierarchical *k*-means algorithm, which uses the Euclidean distance as measure.

The choice of the clustering procedure relies on *k*-means reassignment method, which splits a set of objects into a selected number of groups by maximizing between-cluster variation relative to within cluster variation, thus moving objects to the cluster with the closest group. In a non-hierarchical clustering such as this method, the number of clusters has to be determined in advance. The researcher specifies the number of cluster to be formed and initial cluster centers are chosen randomly during the first inspection of the data. Then each of the following iterations groups objects based on the nearest Euclidean distance to the mean of the cluster. In *k*-means clustering cluster centers change during each inspection and the process continues until there is no change in the cluster means. The *k*-means clustering method allows objects to leave a cluster and join another one if the clustering criterion is improved by doing so (Aaker, 2004 p. 577). Therefore the results of *k*-means clustering can be considered more reliable compared to hierarchical clustering.

5.5 Validity and Reliability

The accuracy of the measurements and findings of a research can be examined with the concepts reliability and validity. Research measurements do not represent the true value of the characteristic of interest but, instead, they are observations of it and therefore a variety of factors may cause measurement error. Measurement error can be broken down into two parts; systematic error and random error. Systematic error refers to stable factors that affect the observed score in the same way each time a measurement is made. Random error on the other hand is caused by factors that may change each time a measurement is made. (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 312-313).

The validity of a questionnaire assesses the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represents the concept of interest (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 137). In order to guarantee external validity, measures were taken to collect a sample that is as representative as possible. However, the sampling frame of this study was limited to those customers of Les Mills Nordic who were willing to participate in the study. When taking into consideration the resources and time constraints for this study, collecting a sample that would have represent all Les Mills Nordic customers would not have been purposeful. However, based on a confidence level of 95 % and confidence interval of +/- 4% the total sample size of 3334 respondents is considered representative of the Les Mills Nordic customer base and therefore the results of this study can be generalized to the context. Nevertheless, some care must be taken when generalizing the results of this study because all of the customers of Les Mills Nordic are not represented in this study.

Content validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire adequately covers the entire domain of what is being measured (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 314). To maximize content validity, a comprehensive literature review was done in order to get an overall comprehension of the domain of brand loyalty and involvement and more specifically these constructs in the context of a service brand. Validity was ensured by pre-testing the questionnaire in order to track obscurities and inconsistencies and using questions already validated in earlier research. All of the questions were based on well-grounded theory, and carefully worded in order to assure that the vocabulary and formulation of the questions would be correctly understood by respondents. The final questionnaire was constructed around seven dimensions of loyalty and four central dimensions of involvement, which were drawn from prior research. These dimensions are represented in the research framework.

A possible cause of concern was the pre-grouping of the metrics in order to improve the readability of the questions contained in a rather long questionnaire. Nevertheless, as the items in the present study were regrouped via factor analysis, the resulting groupings were only partly consistent with the original groups presented in the questionnaire. This

indicates that the possible effect of leading the responses would not cause serious concern. The intermediate use of factor analysis also eliminated the possible effect from further proceedings.

Reliability refers to the extent that a measure of a concept would deliver the exact same results no matter how many times it is was applied to random members of the same target group (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 313). In terms of reliability, the total error of a research design is defined as the variation between the observed mean value obtained and the true mean value of the variable in interest in the population, consisting sampling and non-sampling, including response and non-response errors (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 74). In other words, high correlation means that results are consistent and therefore they are reliable.

Reliability also assesses the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. A commonly used measure of reliability is internal consistency, which applies to the consistency among the variables in a summated scale. The most widely used measure for the consistency of a scale is the Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2006 pp. 137), measuring internal consistency as the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items (Malhotra & Birks 2006, pp. 314).

In order to measure each factor's internal consistency reliability, the Cronbach's alpha method was used. Cronbach's coefficient alpha represents the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. The value ranges between 0 and 1. In exploratory study, a value above 0.60 is generally accepted as satisfactory internal consistency, 0.70 is adequate and 0.80 represent a good scale. (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 314, Hair et al., 2006 pp. 102, 137). Thus, all factors were proved internally consistent and thus reliable. In this study each of the loyalty and involvement dimensions were measured with three to five indicator variables and the

Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each dimension. The coefficient alpha values for each dimension exceeded the generally accepted adequate level of 0.70 and in addition, 8 of the 11 dimensions had values above 0.80 representing a good scale of internal consistency. The coefficient alpha values for the scales measuring each dimension are represented in Table 5.

Table 5: The reliability of measurement scales: Cronbach's alpha

| Construct | Coefficient alpha |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| LOYALTY DIMENSIONS | |
| Behavioral | 0,799 |
| Attitudinal | 0,800 |
| Cognitive | 0,828 |
| Conative | 0,819 |
| Affective | 0,790 |
| Trust | 0,788 |
| Commitment | 0,845 |
| INVOLVEMENT DIMENSIONS | |
| Attraction | 0,840 |
| Centrality | 0,863 |
| Social bonding | 0,850 |
| Self-expression | 0,859 |

Possible causes of concern in terms of reliability stem from the way the research was conducted. In an internet survey it is impossible to check that there are an even amount of responses from every demographic group or that each respondent only answered the questionnaire once. Another risk with an internet survey is that the situational conditions of the respondent cannot be controlled. This means that a part of the respondents might for example fill in the survey in a rush, which might affect the amount of precision put into the answering process. Additionally, an internet survey doesn't allow further specification of the questions, which can be done in for example telephone interviews.

The sampling error was minimized in targeting a substantial sample size of the whole sampling frame, considered as the best available representation of the population. Still, the sampling frame was limited to potential respondents with e-mail address listed in the Les Mills and partner gyms' directories. This adds an element of convenience to the process and might twist the results. Still, the addresses compiled in the directories were considered rather comprehensive as representative of Les Mills instructors and end-users of the classes. Response errors occur when respondents give inaccurate answers or the answers are misrecorded or misinterpreted by the researcher. Given the survey method used, the researcher-based errors could be eliminated. The respondent-based errors were minimized through careful wording and design of the questionnaire. Given the simplicity of the phrasing of the individual questions used in this research study, the responses are assumed to be quite accurate.

Following the assessment of individual methods for data collection and analysis, the overall validity and reliability of the study were considered adequate.

6. Results and analysis

In this chapter, the results and findings derived from the statistical analysis discussed in previous chapter are presented and interpreted. To ease the interpretation of the data and to guide the analysis additional averages and cross-table analyses were conducted – however, these analyses served rather as to support the conclusions and are thus not presented on a detailed level.

6.1 Differences between participants and instructors

The analysis of dissimilarities began by first examining the possibility of differences due to demographic variables such as country of residence as. The results of the test indicate

that there are no differences in loyalty or involvement between Les Mills' customers in the different geographical regions.

A two-tailed t-test was performed to investigate distinctions separating different customer levels of the Les Mills group fitness brand from each other. The test revealed that clear differences between these two customer levels exist in almost all of the variables tested. The results of the t-tests are presented in Table 6. All of the variables in the table showed statistically very significant between the groups, with all but one of them attaining a significance value $p < 0.0001$. The results show that in general instructors and participants seem to have similar loyalty and involvement levels towards Les Mills. The differences come from the strength and homogeneity of their commitment with the brand. Although both of the customer groups had quite high loyalty and involvement levels, instructors still had distinctly higher loyalty and involvement (= lower scores) in all of the variables tested. Looking at the standard deviations between these groups in Table 6 it can also be seen that instructors were clearly more homogenous in their answers while the participants' answers covered a wider scale.

Table 6: T-test: Differences between Les Mills instructors and participants

| Variable | Participants | | Instructors | |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| LOYALTY | | | | |
| I will teach/participate in LM classes again in the future. | 1,67 | 0,877 | 1,42 | 0,721 |
| I will try new classes provided by LM. | 2,19 | 1,145 | 1,88 | 1,004 |
| I recommend LM classes to other people. | 2,09 | 1,263 | 1,39 | 0,647 |
| I say positive things to other people about LM classes. | 2,17 | 1,283 | 1,38 | 0,645 |
| I prefer LM classes to other group fitness classes. | 2,94 | 1,586 | 2,37 | 1,437 |
| I am more likely to train/work at a gym that offers LM classes than in a gym that doesn't. | 2,56 | 1,694 | 1,694 | 0,042 |
| I will keep teaching/participating in LM classes even if the content of the classes was changed a little. | 2,23 | 1,031 | 2,02 | 0,979 |
| If my gym stopped providing LM classes I would seriously consider changing to a gym that offers LM classes. | 3,18 | 1,861 | 2,29 | 1,593 |
| To me, LM would rank first among group fitness classes. | 2,76 | 1,566 | 2,11 | 1,324 |
| I intend to continue teaching/participating in LM classes for long. | 1,91 | 1,056 | 1,59 | 0,881 |
| I teach/participate exclusively in LM classes whenever possible. | 3,50 | 1,794 | 3,07 | 0,060 |
| I think of LM as my favorite group fitness brand. | 2,86 | 1,660 | 1,91 | 1,190 |
| I find LM classes better than other group fitness classes. | 2,99 | 1,531 | 2,43 | 1,380 |
| LM classes are repeatedly of better quality than other classes. | 3,04 | 1,462 | 2,35 | 1,339 |
| I am sure I will keep on teaching/participating in LM for a long time. | 1,90 | 1,019 | 1,59 | 0,883 |
| I like the classes provided by LM. | 1,83 | 0,928 | 1,52 | 0,661 |
| I have a positive attitude toward LM. | 1,88 | 0,967 | 1,47 | 0,658 |
| I am satisfied with my decision to teach/participate in LM classes. | 1,75 | 0,939 | 1,30 | 0,557 |
| I always find LM classes better than other group fitness classes. | 3,25 | 1,592 | 2,74 | 1,549 |
| LM instructors/employees do their best for me.* | 2,12 | 1,037 | 2,07 | 1,023 |
| LM instructors/employees are filled with professionalism & dedication. | 2,00 | 0,951 | 1,85 | 0,906 |
| I trust LM will continue to provide great classes. | 1,88 | 0,960 | 1,48 | 0,670 |
| The communication I see from LM is credible. | 2,63 | 1,243 | 1,79 | 0,824 |
| My continued association with LM classes is important to me. | 2,40 | 1,440 | 1,79 | 0,938 |
| Even if I hear negative things about LM classes, I still stick with LM. | 2,74 | 1,399 | 1,84 | 0,987 |
| I feel like I'm a part of LM. | 3,91 | 1,723 | 2,32 | 1,166 |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to teach/participate in LM classes. | 2,92 | 1,581 | 2,20 | 1,399 |
| INVOLVEMENT | | | | |
| I really enjoy LM classes. | 2,28 | 1,301 | 1,68 | 0,848 |
| Teaching/participating in LM is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | 3,17 | 1,722 | 2,16 | 1,242 |
| LM classes are very important to me. | 3,10 | 1,726 | 2,12 | 1,224 |
| What group fitness classes I do is extremely important to me. | 2,65 | 1,630 | 1,73 | 0,945 |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around LM classes. | 4,46 | 1,957 | 3,31 | 1,727 |
| Teaching/participating in LM classes has a central role in my life. | 3,84 | 1,926 | 2,47 | 1,448 |
| To change my preference from LM to another group fitness class would require major rethinking. | 3,71 | 1,838 | 2,49 | 1,498 |
| I enjoy discussing LM classes with my friends. | 3,49 | 1,868 | 2,17 | 1,264 |
| Most of my friends are in some way connected with LM. | 4,89 | 1,831 | 4,05 | 1,827 |
| Teaching/participating LM gives me an opportunity to be with friends. | 4,27 | 1,921 | 2,99 | 1,664 |
| I follow LM in social media. | 5,58 | 1,774 | 3,88 | 2,125 |
| I often discuss LM with my friends in social media. | 5,45 | 1,754 | 4,02 | 2,000 |
| You can tell a lot about a person from the classes they do. | 3,95 | 1,820 | 2,93 | 1,447 |
| LM classes are a part of who I am. | 4,55 | 1,909 | 2,72 | 1,537 |
| I identify with the people and image associated with LM. | 4,64 | 1,801 | 2,81 | 1,497 |

All of the variables above are significant at 95 % confidence interval with Significance 0,0001 except for * with a 0,236 significance

6.2 Factor analysis

The factor analysis was conducted separately for participants and instructors to be able to compare the resulting factors for different customer levels with each other. In order to determine whether the sample is suitable for factor analysis the first task was the performance of the appropriate tests. The data for participants had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), measure of sampling adequacy, value of .983 and Bartlett's test of sphericity value of .000, both of which are characterized as extraordinary. The corresponding values for instructors were KMO .972 and Bartlett's test .000, also outstanding values. Thus the data set was considered suitable for the performance of factor analysis and it was expected that the items would form specific factors.

To begin, all the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted. The four factors extracted by the principal components analysis of the participants explain 62.59% of the overall variance. The corresponding value for the five factors extracted of the instructor data was 57.22%.

The factor analysis revealed 8 underlying patterns of loyalty and involvement in the different customer levels of Les Mills. Five different patterns were found for instructors and three for the participants. The five factors derived from the analysis of the instructor data are distinctive by their essence and in sum demonstrate the underlying dimensions of loyalty and involvement of Les Mills group fitness instructors. As a basis for interpreting the factors, the relation of these structures with the loyalty and involvement dimensions presented in the theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 12.

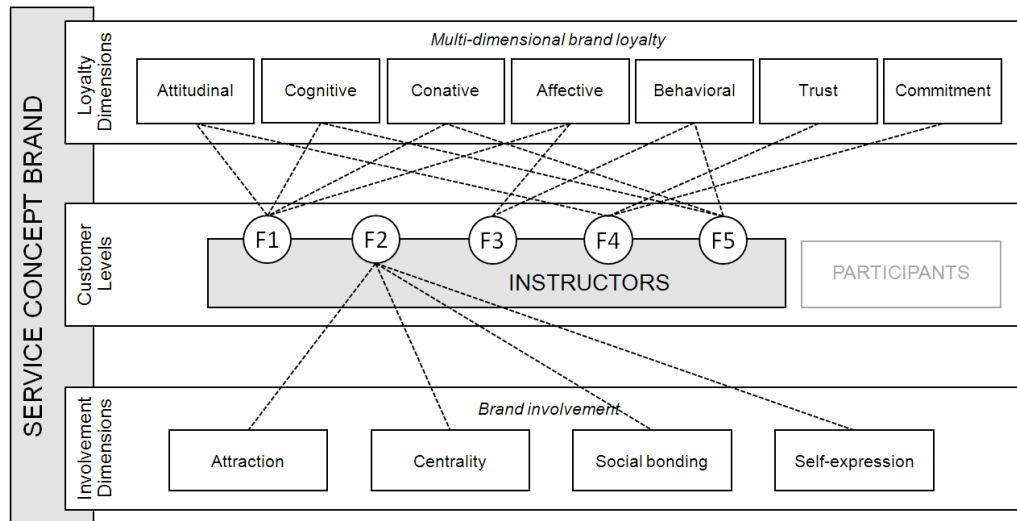


Figure 12: Visualization of the instructor factors relative to the theoretical framework

As demonstrated in the figure, several correspondences emerge between the theoretical framework and the actual dimensions of loyalty and involvement in the group fitness context. For example, factor 2 addressed directly all the dimensions of involvement and none of the other factors had meaningful correlations with the involvement dimensions. Thus, as presented in previous research in the framework of this study involvement dimension are clearly different in nature from the dimensions of loyalty. On the other hand, when examining the factors that correlate with the brand loyalty dimensions, distinct differences can be detected between the theoretical framework and the actual dimensions formed by the analysis. For example, factor 1 addressed several different dimensions in the framework, capturing elements from both the attitudinal, cognitive, conative and affective dimensions. Factor 3 presented a more focused fit with the framework, still addressing both the affective and the behavioral dimensions and, specifically the word-of-mouth elements in the behavioral dimension. Factor 4 correlated with the behavioral, trust and commitment dimensions whereas factor 5 included elements of the behavioral, cognitive and conative dimensions in the theoretical framework.

Tables 7-11 display the results of the instructors' factor analysis followed by further analysis of the similarities and differences between the factors and the theoretical framework.

Table 7: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 1

| F1 Metrics | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | 0,815 |
| I always find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 0,802 |
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 0,796 |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to teach Les Mills classes. | 0,756 |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | 0,705 |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | 0,664 |
| I teach exclusively Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | 0,640 |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | 0,623 |
| To change my preference from LM to another group fitness class would require major rethinking. | 0,575 |
| If my gym stopped providing LM classes I would seriously consider changing to a gym that offers LM. | 0,494 |
| I am more likely to train/work at a gym that offers Les Mills classes than in a gym that doesn't. | 0,454 |

Factor 1: High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference

The first factor is the biggest factor group for the customer level of instructors. The variables in this factor all represent strong brand preference and high brand loyalty. This factor included variables correlating with the following loyalty dimensions: attitudinal, cognitive, conative and affective loyalty. The fact that this factor has high loadings in all of these loyalty dimensions corresponds with Day's (1969) approach of two-dimensional loyalty, that divides loyalty into behavioral and attitudinal dimensions without the distinction of cognitive, conative and affective dimensions as separate from the attitudinal dimension of loyalty. As the framework of this research chose the multi-dimensional approach to brand loyalty instead it can be said that the results of this factor do not support the seven dimensions described in the theoretical framework of this study.

Table 8: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 2

| F2 | |
|---|----------------|
| Metrics | Loading |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | 0,699 |
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | 0,696 |
| Teaching Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | 0,676 |
| I often discuss Les Mills with my friends in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). | 0,630 |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | 0,615 |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | 0,608 |
| Teaching Les Mills classes gives me an opportunity to be with friends. | 0,604 |
| Most of my friends are in some way connected with Les Mills. | 0,591 |
| I follow Les Mills in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn). | 0,566 |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | 0,538 |
| Teaching Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | 0,523 |
| What group fitness classes I do is extremely important to me. | 0,416 |
| You can tell a lot about a person from the group fitness classes they do. | 0,414 |

Factor 2: High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding

The second factor clearly focuses only on involvement variables, especially highlighting elements of social bonding and self-expression. The highest-ranking variable in this factor measured centrality of the brand in the respondents' life. Even the fourth involvement dimension of attraction was included in this factor. Therefore it can be said that all the involvement dimensions are equally represented supporting the involvement dimension framework of McIntyre (1989) used in this study that presents attraction, centrality, social bonding and self-expression as dimensions of involvement.

Table 9: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 3

| F3 | |
|---|----------------|
| Metrics | Loading |
| I recommend Les Mills classes to other people. | 0,733 |
| I say positive things to other people about Les Mills classes. | 0,657 |
| I am satisfied with my decision to teach Les Mills classes. | 0,591 |
| I trust Les Mills will continue to provide great classes. | 0,575 |
| I have a positive attitude toward Les Mills | 0,556 |
| I like the classes provided by Les Mills. | 0,521 |
| I really enjoy Les Mills classes. | 0,499 |
| My continued association with Les Mills classes is important to me. | 0,395 |
| Even when I hear negative things about Les Mills classes, I still stick with Les Mills. | 0,382 |

Factor 3: High affective loyalty with positive WOM-behavior

The third factor emphasized behavioral loyalty variables concerning word-of-mouth behavior but none of the other variables of behavioral loyalty dimension. This supports Baloglu's (2002) idea of using word-of-mouth as one of the measures of customers' loyalty. In this research, WOM was not identified as an independent dimension of loyalty but instead, as in majority of previous research (e.g. Sudhahar et al., 2006; Reichheld, 2001; Alhabeeb, 2007), the WOM variables were included in the behavioral dimension. Nevertheless, the results of this factor imply that in the context of group fitness WOM could be examined as a distinct dimension. The results of factor 3 presented in Table 9 also show high correlation with the affective and commitment loyalty dimensions. This finding does not directly support any of the conceptualizations in the theoretical framework. However, because of the factor correlated with several dimensions in the framework it could be seen as supportive to the analysis of factor 1, which suggested that the seven dimensions described in the theoretical framework are not suitable for measuring loyalty in this context.

Table 10: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 4

| F4 Metrics | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| Les Mills employees do their best for me. | 0,693 |
| Les Mills employees are filled with professionalism and dedication. | 0,590 |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | 0,555 |
| The communication I see from Les Mills (promotional material, advertising) is credible. | 0,466 |
| I will keep teaching Les Mills classes even if the content of the classes was changed a little. | 0,349 |

Factor 4: Committed loyalty with strong elements of brand trust

Most of the variables in the fourth factor represent elements of the loyalty dimension of trust. It also correlated with the dimension of commitment and attitudinal loyalty, although the latter was the least significant variable in this factor. The fact that this factor found high correlation with the dimensions of trust and commitment support the conception of several researchers (e.g. Baloglu, 2002; Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Sudhahar et al. 2006, Alhabeeb, 2007) stating that these factors which by

other researchers are defined as factors influencing loyalty should also be included as loyalty dimensions.

Table 11: Factor metrics and their loadings for instructor factor 5

| F5 Metrics | Loading |
|--|----------------|
| I am sure I will keep on teaching Les Mills classes for a long time. | 0,752 |
| I intend to continue teaching Les Mills classes for a long time. | 0,701 |
| I will teach Les Mills classes again in the future. | 0,531 |

Factor 5: Determined behavioral loyalty

The last instructor related factor strongly correlated with the behavioral elements, excluding the word-of-mouth variables. As did the analysis of factor 3, this finding supports Baloglu's (2002) idea of using word-of-mouth as one of the measures of customers' loyalty. Factor 5 also included a variable from the conative, i.e. behavioral intention dimension. Thus, it can also be seen that the variables in this factor support the existence of the behavioral dimension commonly agreed on by all the research on loyalty dimensions examined for this study. On the other hand, they contradict with Oliver's (1999) denotation of conative loyalty as an independent measure of loyalty and instead suggests conation could be integrated in the dimension of behavioral loyalty.

Tables 12-14 present the results from the factor analysis in the sample group of Les Mills group fitness class participants. The results are quite similar to those of the customer level of instructors, although only three factors could be identified. The three participant factors derived from the analysis of the data are distinctive and demonstrate the underlying dimensions of loyalty and involvement of Les Mills participants. As a basis for interpreting the factors, the relation of these structures with the loyalty and involvement dimensions presented in the theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 13.

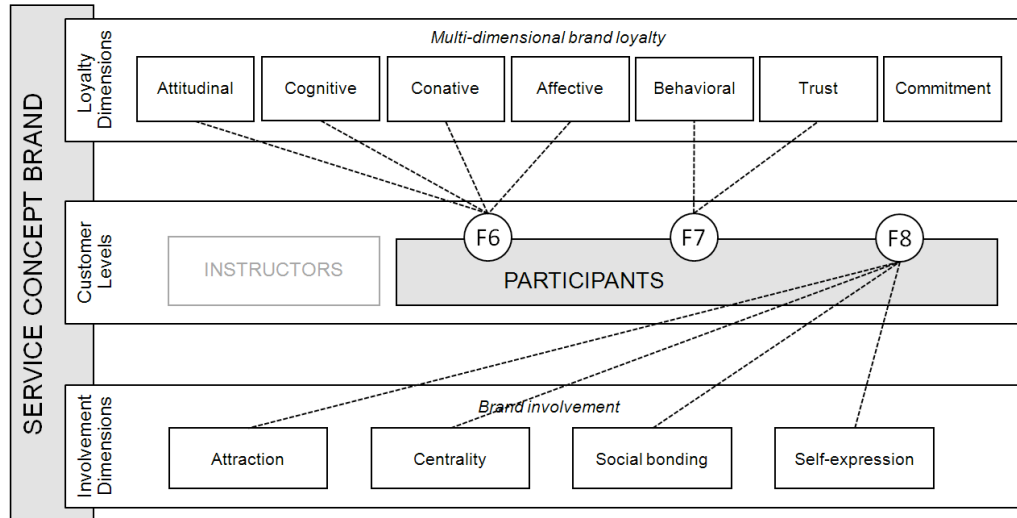


Figure 13: Visualization of the participant factors relative to the theoretical framework

Similarly to what was noticed in the sample group of instructors, Figure 13 demonstrates both correspondences and differences between the theoretical framework and the actual dimensions of brand loyalty and involvement for the participants. Even for this sample group, a factor addressing variables only from the involvement dimensions was found, this factor was numbered 8. The two remaining factors both correlated with several different loyalty dimensions presented in the theoretical framework. Factor 6 addressed the attitudinal, cognitive, conative, affective and commitment dimensions while factor 7 was slightly more focused addressing the loyalty dimensions of behavior, trust, affection and conation.

Table 12: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 6

| F6 Metrics | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 0,788 |
| I always find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 0,775 |
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | 0,773 |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to participate in LM classes. | 0,746 |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | 0,733 |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | 0,722 |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | 0,713 |
| If my gym stopped providing LM classes I would seriously consider changing to a gym that offers LM. | 0,676 |
| I am more likely to train/work at a gym that offers Les Mills classes than in a gym that doesn't. | 0,640 |
| I teach/participate exclusively in Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | 0,632 |
| To change my preference from LM to another group fitness class would require major rethinking. | 0,568 |
| Even when I hear negative things about Les Mills classes, I still stick with Les Mills. | 0,498 |

Factor 6: High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference

Very similarly to the factor 1 in the sample group of instructors, this participant factor represents strong brand preference and high brand loyalty. This factor included variables correlating with most of the loyalty dimensions: attitudinal, cognitive, conative, affective and commitment. In the same way as in factor 1, the fact that this factor has high loadings in all of these loyalty dimensions corresponds with Day's (1969) approach of two-dimensional loyalty. Thus, it can be said that the results of this factor do not support the seven dimensions described in the theoretical framework of this study.

Table 13: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 7

| F7 | |
|--|----------------|
| Metrics | Loading |
| I intend to continue participating in in Les Mills classes for a long time. | 0,729 |
| I will participate in Les Mills classes again in the future. | 0,724 |
| I am sure I will keep on participating in Les Mills classes for a long time. | 0,698 |
| I trust Les Mills will continue to provide great classes. | 0,695 |
| I have a positive attitude toward Les Mills | 0,694 |
| I am satisfied with my decision to participate in Les Mills classes. | 0,693 |
| I like the classes provided by Les Mills. | 0,672 |
| Les Mills instructors are filled with professionalism and dedication. | 0,663 |
| Les Mills instructors do their best for me. | 0,657 |
| I say positive things to other people about Les Mills classes. | 0,605 |
| I really enjoy Les Mills classes. | 0,586 |
| I recommend Les Mills classes to other people. | 0,573 |
| I will keep participating in LM classes even if the content of the classes was changed a little. | 0,567 |
| My continued participation in Les Mills classes is important to me. | 0,522 |
| The communication I see from Les Mills (promotional material, advertising) is credible. | 0,448 |

Factor 7: Solid behavioral loyalty with affective and trusting elements

This factor represented variables from several loyalty dimensions, focusing on elements of the behavioral, trust and affective dimensions. This finding does not directly support any of the loyalty conceptualizations from previous research described in the literature review. All of the other dimensions of the theoretical framework (cognitive, conative, attitudinal and commitment) are also represented in this factor. As all of the dimensions have significant loadings in one factor it can be said that the results, once again, do not support the multi-dimensional conceptualization described in the theoretical framework of this study.

Table 14: Factor metrics and their loadings for participant factor 8

| F8 Metrics | Loading |
|---|----------------|
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | 0,741 |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | 0,685 |
| I often discuss Les Mills with my friends in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). | 0,673 |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | 0,659 |
| Participating in Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | 0,646 |
| Most of my friends are in some way connected with Les Mills. | 0,627 |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | 0,613 |
| Participating in Les Mills classes gives me an opportunity to be with friends. | 0,603 |
| I follow Les Mills in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn). | 0,594 |
| You can tell a lot about a person from the group fitness classes they do. | 0,563 |
| Participating in Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | 0,539 |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | 0,529 |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | 0,518 |
| What group fitness classes I do is extremely important to me. | 0,469 |

Factor 8: High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding

This factor clearly focuses on involvement variables, just as factor 2 for the instructors. It evenly includes variables from all the involvement dimensions. Thus, it can be seen to support the involvement dimension framework of McIntyre (1989) used in this study that presents attraction, centrality, social bonding and self-expression as dimensions of involvement.

To summarize, the factor analysis revealed an underlying structure of 5 instructor and 3 participant factors interpreted as follows:

Instructors:

- F1: High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference
- F2: High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding
- F3: High affective loyalty with positive WOM-behavior
- F4: Committed loyalty with strong elements of brand trust
- F5: Determined behavioral loyalty

Participants

- F6: High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference
- F7: Solid behavioral loyalty with affective and trusting elements
- F8: High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding

6.3 Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis was used to identify homogeneous groups of Les Mills' customers based on their loyalty and involvement towards the brand. Altogether 15 variables measuring the concepts were chosen as a basis for the k-means cluster analysis. In non- hierarchical cluster analysis, the number of clusters is determined in advance. In order to define the appropriate number of clusters the analysis was performed using 3-5 clusters and the pseudo F statistic was compared. The pseudo F statistic reached its culmination at three clusters and therefore this solution was chosen. The final cluster centroids, representing the mean values of the observations contained in each cluster are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 15: Cluster centroids of customer level of instructors

| | Cluster 1 (N = 428) | Cluster 2 (N = 371) | Cluster 3 (N = 141) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I will teach in Les Mills classes again in the future. | 1,11 | 1,50 | 1,97 |
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | 1,37 | 2,61 | 4,33 |
| I always find LM classes better than other group fitness classes | 1,61 | 3,13 | 4,75 |
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | 1,72 | 3,05 | 4,63 |
| Teaching Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | 1,54 | 2,77 | 4,19 |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | 1,91 | 3,15 | 4,43 |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | 1,61 | 2,26 | 3,50 |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | 1,17 | 2,00 | 3,60 |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | 1,43 | 2,61 | 4,05 |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | 1,74 | 2,47 | 3,35 |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to teach Les Mills classes. | 1,29 | 2,36 | 4,09 |
| Teaching Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | 1,48 | 2,34 | 3,56 |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | 1,36 | 2,28 | 3,77 |
| I teach exclusively Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | 1,70 | 3,72 | 5,21 |
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 1,45 | 2,75 | 4,19 |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | 2,19 | 3,69 | 5,37 |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | 1,26 | 2,35 | 3,72 |

The explanation of the cluster centroids for instructors can clearly be seen in Table 15. Cluster centroids in cluster 1 have the lowest values for all the tested variables. Similarly, all the highest cluster centroid values can be represented in the column for cluster 3.

Values for cluster 2 are consistently in between the other two for all of the tested variables.

Table 16: Cluster centroids of customer level of participants

| | Cluster 4 (N = 598) | Cluster 5 (N = 297) | Cluster 6 (N = 500) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I will participate in Les Mills classes again in the future. | 1,69 | 2,49 | 1,17 |
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | 3,02 | 4,87 | 1,60 |
| I always find LM classes better than other group fitness classes. | 3,43 | 5,00 | 1,86 |
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | 4,96 | 6,44 | 2,75 |
| Participating in Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | 4,05 | 6,13 | 2,12 |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | 4,97 | 6,26 | 3,14 |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | 3,67 | 5,47 | 2,03 |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | 2,91 | 4,94 | 1,47 |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | 3,18 | 4,64 | 1,78 |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | 4,11 | 5,81 | 2,43 |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to participate in Les Mills classes. | 2,99 | 4,85 | 1,60 |
| Participating in Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | 3,24 | 5,08 | 1,80 |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | 3,16 | 5,09 | 1,68 |
| I participate exclusively in Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | 3,73 | 5,42 | 2,01 |
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | 3,10 | 4,80 | 1,69 |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | 4,78 | 6,42 | 2,71 |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | 2,81 | 4,67 | 1,45 |

Equally, the explanation of the cluster centroids for participants can clearly be seen in Table 16. Cluster centroids in cluster 5 have the highest values, cluster 6 the lowest values and cluster 4 sits in the middle of these two for each variable tested. The difference between the instructor and participant clusters is, that instructors had clearly lower values in the cluster with the lowest scoring cluster centroids.

The cluster centroids serve as a basis for interpreting and further profiling the clusters (Malhotra & Birks, 2006 pp. 606). Based on the cluster analysis three different attitude profiles can be identified for both Les Mills instructors and participants, altogether creating 6 clusters. The analysis of the cluster centroids in tables 15 and 16 enable the characterization and naming of the clusters.

The clusters were named and interpreted on the basis of tables 15 and 16 and the following loyalty and involvement profiles of the Les Mills customers were formed. The clusters are presented in their size order, when the amount of respondents has been scaled to be comparable – the biggest cluster is presented first and the smallest last:

Cluster 1 – Extremely loyal and highly involved instructors

The consumers in this cluster are Les Mills instructors who have a very strong preference for the brand. Their high involvement shows in their attraction towards the brand and it's centrality in their lives. As Table 15 shows, the truly loyal instructors had more trust and emotional commitment to the brand than any of the other groups.

Cluster 4 – Brand positive participants with relatively low involvement

The cluster centroids of the brand positive participants were very close to those of the brand positive instructors (Cluster 2). The exception between these to being that this cluster scored slightly higher on brand involvement than the respective instructor cluster.

Cluster 2 – Brand positive instructors with medium involvement

The instructors in this cluster are slightly positive in loyalty towards Les Mills and their involvement levels are average to slightly positive.

Cluster 6 – Highly loyal and moderately involved participants

This cluster consists of class participants who show high levels of loyalty towards Les Mills. They also show higher than average involvement levels but still clearly lower values than on the loyalty variables.

Cluster 5 – Brand negative participants with low involvement

The customers in this group participate in Les Mills classes but have low loyalty and even lower involvement towards the brand.

Cluster 3 – Brand neutral and instructors with mediocre involvement:

The lowest cluster centroid scores for instructors were found in this cluster. These instructors are very indifferent in loyalty towards Les Mills and their involvement varies from average to low, depending from the variable.

The cluster analysis provided results that were somewhat expected. It is not surprising that the biggest cluster consist of instructors that have high values in both loyalty and involvement. Neither is it unexpected that the least loyal instructors rate quite high on both loyalty and involvement compared to all of the respondents nor that they are the smallest group. It could also be expected that the majority of the participants are positively loyal and involved with the brand. The fact that could have been expected to be the contrary was that the group consisting of participants with low loyalty levels was bigger than the group of highly loyal participants.

An interesting finding is that on the behavioral-loyalty variable semi-loyal customers recorded almost the same values as the truly loyal customers. The clusters with high values on the attitudinal, cognitive, conative, affective and commitment dimensions are seen as attitudinally (opposed to behaviorally) loyal and, thus, truly loyal (e.g. Baldinger & Robinson, 1996; Day, 1969; Dick & Basu, 1994). In the customer group of instructors even the least loyal group had values in the behavioral variable very close to those of the highly loyal instructors. This means all of the groups displayed a high level of behavioral

loyalty to the brand. It should also be noted that both highly and semi-loyal customers exhibited similar visit frequencies per week. The findings demonstrating a clear difference between behavioral and attitudinal loyalty are in line with the findings of Baldinger and Robinson (1996) who divided customers to vulnerables and real loyals depending on their positive attitude towards the brand. According to their theory, managers should understand the differences between attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty, and distinguish those who are truly loyal to the brand from those who are loyal only measured by their behavior.

The literature review also presented a concept by Dick and Basu (1994) who argued that managers often overlook a type of customer commitment called spurious loyalty. This kind of loyalty consists of both strong behavioral loyalty and low attitudinal loyalty. According to the researchers such a loyalty cannot benefit a firm's profit since customers with spurious loyalty do not truly identify with the brand. The most important implication of this finding is that it is important for managers to know the marketing tools that can have an impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalties, otherwise it would be difficult for managers to develop effective strategies for generating customer loyalty.

7. Summary and conclusions

This study has looked into brand loyalty and involvement in the concept of a group fitness brand. The primary purpose of this research was to determine the dimensions of loyalty and involvement in the field of sport and leisure and based on them identify differences among different consumer levels of a group fitness brand. The study strived to achieve this by reviewing past research, viewing the constructs from a multidimensional perspective and employing multivariate analytical procedures to examine empirical data.

7.1 Discussion

The contribution of this research for the field of consumer behavior lies in the fact that it is among the first studies to focus on different consumer levels of a service concept

brand, that provides an immaterial service repeated in different markets. The findings provide unique information on dimensions of brand loyalty used to measure loyalty in the context of a group fitness brand. The results of the study highlight the importance of segmenting the target market into loyalty and involvement profiles to allow tailoring the brand marketing to better suit the strategic needs concerning each customer group. The results of this study indicate that the multi-dimensional brand loyalty measures deriving from previous research are not fully congruent to be used as measures in the context of a group fitness brand. This implies that further research should be conducted in order to define a measurement scale to better suit the sports and leisure service setting. The findings of the study support the idea of using a modified involvement scale as a measure of brand involvement and substantiates the theoretical findings of a strong connection between loyalty and involvement.

The theoretical part of the study concentrated on finding the dimensions of loyalty and involvement to be used as measures of the contexts in the empirical study. The theoretical section began by discussing brand loyalty from the basis of previous studies in consumer behavior research. Based on literature from the research stream, brand loyalty was defined as a multidimensional construct. Next, the different approaches to multidimensional brand loyalty from previous literature were discussed and finally, the dimensions used in this research were presented. In the second part of the literature review the concept of brand involvement was introduced to support and deepen the theory discussed in the brand loyalty section. Brand involvement is seen to influence brand loyalty and, together with loyalty explain a significant proportion of consumer purchase decisions. The different scales to measure brand involvement were presented concluding with the presentation of the dimensions of involvement used as a modified involvement scale in this research. In the third and final part of the literature review the connection between loyalty and involvement was presented. It was established that these constructs are closely related and that consumers who are more involved with a particular brand are also more committed and hence more loyal to that brand.

7.2 Conclusions

Based on the literature review a research framework was constructed to represent the research problem at hand. The research framework represents the constructs central to the study and their relationships. Several correspondences were found between the framework and the loyalty and involvement dimensions in practice, suggesting at least some consistency between the theory and the actual patterns found in the empirical data. On the other hand, remarkable differences were also found, especially in the context of brand loyalty dimensions. The purpose of the research framework was to guide statistical analysis to answer the research questions introduced in the beginning. To get back to and answer the main research question as well as the additional research questions, following conclusions are drawn from the study.

How does loyalty and involvement differ through different customer levels of a group fitness brand?

Generally, the instructors and participants seem to have similar loyalty and involvement levels towards Les Mills. Nevertheless, a two-tailed t-test showed some differences between the different customer levels that stemmed from the strength and homogeneity of their commitment with the brand. Although both of the customer groups had quite high loyalty and involvement levels, instructors still had distinctly higher loyalty and involvement levels in almost all of the variables in the survey. This could mean that the further away from the brand the customer level is the weaker the loyalty and involvement with the brand gets. Looking at the standard deviations between these groups in the t-test it can also be seen that instructors were clearly more homogenous in their answers while the participants' answers covered a wider scale of different loyalty and involvement levels.

What are the brand loyalty dimensions?

Previous research failed to establish a set of items that could be considered as general measures of loyalty. Based on the literature readings, this study suggested that loyalty, especially in service markets, should be defined as a multi-dimensional concept. Service

loyalty was conceptualized as an interaction of attitude and behavior and, in addition, the loyalty dimensions are to include behavioral, attitudinal cognitive and conative processes as well as commitment and trust. The 8-dimensional loyalty scale was used in the empirical part of this research and the results were compared to the dimensions used in the theoretical framework.

Some inconsistencies were found between the actual empirical dimensions deriving from the statistical factor analysis and the theoretical framework. These differences imply that the 7-dimensional scale might not be the appropriate scale for measuring loyalty in the context of a group fitness brand. Instead of correlating with the dimensions chosen for the theoretical framework the some of the factors found to be related with several different dimensions. Parts of the inconsistencies (factor 1) implied partial consistency with Day's (1969) two-dimensional view of brand loyalty recognizing only the behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of loyalty. The findings in factor 3 suggested the possible need to separate word-of-mouth as an independent dimension of loyalty as some previous research has suggested (Baloglu, 2002). Factors 4 and 7, on the other hand, demonstrated significant correlation with the dimensions of trust and commitment, supporting the conviction of several researchers (e.g. Baloglu, 2002; Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Sudhahar et al. 2006, Alhabeeb, 2007) that these factors should also be included as loyalty dimensions.

The inconsistencies between the dimensions revealed by the factor analysis and the dimensions of loyalty in the theoretical framework imply, that the dimensions used in the framework might not serve as consistent measures of loyalty in the context of group fitness. Instead, the seven discovered factors could be helpful in future research as a basis for forming a more compatible set of loyalty dimensions to be used in the context of group fitness.

What are the dimensions of brand involvement?

This research followed the conceptualizations of involvement dimensions deriving from previous research. The chosen dimensions of involvement were closely connected to a

modified involvement scale (MIS) proposed and tested by Kyle et al. (2007). The dimensions used in this scale differ slightly from the most commonly used involvement scales and have been modified to better suit the context of leisure services. The dimensions identified and used in this research were attraction, centrality, social bonding and self-expression. The empirical findings of a factor analysis conducted in the empirical part of this research support the use of the dimensions attained from the literature review.

What kind of underlying patterns of loyalty and involvement can be identified for different customer levels of a group fitness brand?

In the study, eight factors of loyalty and involvement were identified as underlying the different customer levels of group fitness brand. These underlying structures were interpreted as representing:

- High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference
- High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding
- High affective loyalty with positive WOM-behavior
- Committed loyalty with strong elements of brand trust
- Determined behavioral loyalty
- High attitudinal loyalty with strong brand preference
- Solid behavioral loyalty with affective and trusting elements
- High brand involvement with elements of self-expression and social bonding

The factors detected through the statistical factor analysis imply that the multi-dimensional conceptualization of brand loyalty used in theoretical framework of this study is not directly applicable to the context of a group fitness brand. Thus, further development of the conceptualization of the dimensions of brand loyalty used as measures for service concept brands should be performed. On the other hand, the factor analysis showed that the modified involvement scale used in the theoretical framework is very well suited to be used in the context of leisure and sports.

What types of customer profiles of a group fitness brand can be distinguished based on loyalty and involvement dimensions?

Six segments of consumers of relatively equal size were identified based on different loyalty and involvement. These consumer segments were labeled as:

- Extremely loyal and highly involved instructors
- Brand positive participants with relatively low involvement
- Brand positive instructors with medium involvement
- Brand negative participants with low involvement
- Highly loyal and moderately involved participants
- Brand neutral and instructors with mediocre involvement

The findings of the cluster analysis showed that customers with low or medium values in the attitudinal loyalty and involvement variables recorded reasonably high values in the behavioral loyalty variables. This means, that some customers that frequently use the services of the brand do not feel emotionally attached or committed to the brand. Managers should understand the differences between attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty, and distinguish those who are truly loyal to the brand from those who are loyal only due to their convenience or because they lack an alternative.

7.3 Managerial implications

Research has repeatedly shown that one of the best marketing strategies is to maintain and increase participants' level of loyalty and involvement to the respective service. Participants' loyalty can be nurtured effectively by differentiated marketing strategies with compatible market segmentation. That is, participants with different degrees and types of loyalty and involvement may require differentiated program, pricing, promotion, and distribution.

Loyalty is very important to marketers because it provides the basis for future profits. Neither brand loyalty of brand involvement is a single construct but a complex multi-faceted concept. It is not enough to know that consumers are or are not highly loyal or involved with the brand; marketers also need to know the antecedents or dimensions of

that loyalty or involvement. Brands fulfill different functions for the consumer in terms of self-image and self-perception. Consumers do use their consumption to communicate to those around them what type of person they are.

The findings of the cluster analysis support the idea that making a distinction between behavioral and attitudinal loyalty is an effective segmentation and target-marketing tool. It provides managers with information to articulate strategies for building both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty and to target distinct loyalty segments. Managers could benefit from measuring not only repeat usage but commitment in form of loyalty and involvement as well, so that they will understand the nature of their customers' loyalty. Management should focus on emotional and attitudinal attachment and trust to help build brand loyalty. As a tool in building loyalty managers could focus on the factors affecting loyalty presented in chapter 2.5. Companies should strive to ensure their customers' satisfaction better do to enhance their customers' experience and create a positive image of the brand relative to the competition.

In sum, the findings of this research provide information for the managers and executives to better examine and manage the experiences of their participants. Segmenting the group fitness market using loyalty and involvement profiles may provide a unique market analysis on which to base marketing strategies. However, the measurement of involvement and loyalty is still in the exploratory stages and is in need of continued conceptual development and refinement within leisure and sport settings.

7.4 Limitations and implications for future research

Lack of consensus and various conceptualizations and definitions in relation to loyalty and involvement have led to confusion in operationalization and measurement of the two constructs. The results of this paper suggest that there may be other measurement sets or even other dimensions of loyalty in a service market and especially in the context of group fitness, and this is an avenue for further research.

In sum, the findings of this research provide information for the researchers and managers to better understand and manage the different levels of their group fitness customer base. Segmenting the different group fitness customers using loyalty and involvement profiles may provide a unique market analysis on which to base marketing strategies. Knowledge regarding these factors will help managers fully exploit the potential of these marketing concepts and provide insight to be considered in decision-making and campaign planning for different customer segments.

However, despite some potentially important implications of this study, the findings should be viewed under some limitations.. First, concerning the quantitative method chosen for conducting the study, the implications of the findings in explaining actual loyalty and involvement are rather limited. A qualitative study would be needed in order to confirm the assumptions concerning the underlying dimensions emerging from the analysis. Second, the present study is considered to provide a quite adequate description of the loyalty and involvement in the group fitness context in the Nordic market. However, there might be significant country-specific differences in the loyalty and involvement contexts – therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the Nordic region only and any international generalizations must be treated with caution. This emerges a further interest for making international comparisons of the constructs of underlying dimensions of loyalty and involvement. Third, similar to other constructs in leisure behavior and marketing research, loyalty and involvement are complex constructs. The measurement of loyalty and involvement is still in the exploratory stages and is in need of continued conceptual development and refinement, especially within leisure and sport settings. Research efforts should be made to measure the dimensions of loyalty and involvement constructs in order to more accurately explain the behavior of a group fitness brand's customers.

8. References

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Appendix A: The Les Mills Questionnaire in English

Language choice page:



Please choose a language:

[På svenska](#) | [Suomeksi](#) | [in English](#)

Page 1:



Hello and welcome to the Les Mills Survey!

There are 4 sections in this survey with questions in the following areas:

- General background questions
- What Les Mills programs you do
- What kind of attitudes and feelings you have towards Les Mills
- How to enter the prize draw

The survey should take around 6-8 minutes to complete.

1. Please choose one option *

- ☐ I participate in Les Mills classes
- ☐ I'm a Les Mills instructor
- ☐ None of the above

20% completed (1 of 5 pages)

Next -->

Page 2 participants:



General background questions

2. Please indicate your country of residence *

- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ Norway
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Other

3. Please indicate your gender *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

4. Please indicate your age *

- ☐ under 21
- ☐ 21-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ over 50

5. Do you use Les Mills branded clothing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Which of the following Les Mills classes do you currently participate in?

| | at least once a week | ≈ once in two weeks | ≈ once a month | more seldom / never |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| BODYATTACK® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYBALANCE™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYCOMBAT® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYJAM® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYPUMP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYSTEP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYVIVE® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| RPM™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. For how long have you been participating in the following Les Mills classes?

| | less than a year | 1-2 years | 2-3 years | 3-4 years | 4-5 years | over 5 years | I don't participate in this program |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| BODYATTACK® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYBALANCE™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| BODYCOMBAT® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYJAM® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYPUMP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYSTEP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYVIVE® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| RPM™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

40% completed (2 of 5 pages)

<-- Previous Next -->

Page 2 instructors:



General background questions

2. Please indicate your country of residence *

- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ Norway
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Other

3. Please indicate your gender *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

4. Please indicate your age *

- ☐ under 21
- ☐ 21-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ over 50

5. Do you use Les Mills branded clothing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Which of the following Les Mills programs do you currently teach?

| | more than 3 a week | 3 per week | 2 per week | 1 per week | less than 1 a week | I don't teach this |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| BODYATTACK® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYBALANCE™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYCOMBAT® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYJAM® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYPUMP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYSTEP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYVIVE® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| RPM™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. For how long have you been teaching the following Les Mills programs?

| | less than a year | 1-2 years | 2-3 years | 3-4 years | 4-5 years | over 5 years | I don't teach this |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| BODYATTACK® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| BODYBALANCE™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYCOMBAT® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYJAM® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYPUMP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYSTEP® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| BODYVIVE® | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| RPM™ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

40% completed (2 of 5 pages)

<-- Previous Next -->

Page 3 participants:



8. Please choose an option

| | I strongly agree | I agree | I somewhat agree | I don't know | I somewhat disagree | I disagree | I strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am sure I will keep on participating in Les Mills classes for a long time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I always find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If my gym stopped providing Les Mills classes I would seriously consider changing to a gym that offers Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I trust Les Mills will continue to provide great classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am more likely to get a gym membership in a gym that offers Les Mills classes than in a gym that doesn't. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to participate in Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills instructors do their best for me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I recommend Les Mills classes to other people. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will keep participating in Les Mills classes even if the content of the classes was changed a little. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My continued participation in Les Mills classes is important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The communication I see from Les Mills (promotional material, advertising) is credible. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Even when I hear negative things about Les Mills classes, I still stick with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I intend to continue participating in Les Mills classes for a long time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a positive attitude toward Les Mills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills instructors are filled with professionalism and dedication. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I like the classes provided by Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am satisfied with my decision to participate in Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will try new classes provided by Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I say positive things to other people about Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will participate in Les Mills classes again in the future. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I participate exclusively in Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

9. Please choose an option

| | I strongly agree | I agree | I somewhat agree | I don't know | I somewhat disagree | I disagree | I strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| To change my preference from Les Mills to another group fitness class would require major rethinking. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You can tell a lot about a person from the group fitness classes they do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often discuss Les Mills with my friends in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Participating in Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I use Les Mills clothing because they are practical. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I follow Les Mills in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I use Les Mills clothing to express my belonging to the brand. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I really enjoy Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Most of my friends are in some way connected with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| What group fitness classes I do is extremely important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in Les Mills classes gives me an opportunity to be with friends. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

60% completed (3 of 5 pages)

<-- Previous Next -->

Page 3 instructors:



8. Please choose an option

| | I strongly agree | I agree | I somewhat agree | I don't know | I somewhat disagree | I disagree | I strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I recommend Les Mills classes to other people. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The communication I see from Les Mills (emails, promotional material, advertising) is credible. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will teach Les Mills classes again in the future. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I prefer Les Mills classes to other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To me, Les Mills would rank first among group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a positive attitude toward Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I teach exclusively Les Mills group fitness classes whenever possible. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am sure I will keep on teaching Les Mills classes for a long time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am satisfied with my decision to teach Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think of Les Mills as my favorite group fitness brand. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I always find Les Mills classes better than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will keep teaching Les Mills classes even if the content of the classes was changed a little. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I trust Les Mills will continue to provide great classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel like I'm a part of Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Even when I hear negative things about Les Mills classes, I still stick with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I like the classes provided by Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are repeatedly of better quality than other group fitness classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My continued association with Les Mills is important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills employees are filled with professionalism and dedication. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills employees do their best for me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am more likely to work for a gym that offers Les Mills classes than for a gym that doesn't. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Although there are other group fitness class alternatives, I still prefer to teach Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I will try new classes provided by Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If my gym stopped providing Les Mills classes I would seriously consider changing to a gym that offers Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I intend to continue teaching Les Mills classes for a long time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I say positive things to other people about Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

9. Please choose an option

| | I strongly agree | I agree | I somewhat agree | I don't know | I somewhat disagree | I disagree | I strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I find a lot of my life is organized around Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teaching Les Mills classes gives me an opportunity to be with friends. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You can tell a lot about a person from the group fitness classes they do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I enjoy discussing Les Mills classes with my friends. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teaching Les Mills classes is one of the most enjoyable things I do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I use Les Mills clothing to express my belonging to the brand. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To change my preference from Les Mills to another group fitness class would require major rethinking. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teaching Les Mills classes has a central role in my life. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often discuss Les Mills with my friends in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I really enjoy Les Mills classes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I identify with the people and image associated with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are a part of who I am. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Les Mills classes are very important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I use Les Mills clothing because they are practical. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Most of my friends are in some way connected with Les Mills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| What group fitness classes I do is extremely important to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I follow Les Mills in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

60% completed (3 of 5 pages)

<-- Previous Next -->