TITLE OF STUDY: Online Reviews Study

Data was collected from the CBA Participant Pool during FALL, 2014.

I. BACKGROUND

This study examined the impact of the responses to negative online reviews for a product. We wanted to know if customers’ loyalty and attitude toward the brand were affected (a) when they read negative reviews, (b) when other customers respond negatively toward the original poster, (c) when the company responds negatively to the original poster, and (d) when the company merely removes the original review post.

II. PURPOSE & THEORY

We hoped to show that attribution theory would explain customers’ responses to the above scenarios. If the hypothesized findings are borne out by the experiments, then we will better understand the appropriate steps for marketers to take when complaining customers take their issues to the broader social media forums.

III. STUDY DESIGN

The study involved four different scenario-based studies. Only one of these was conduced using the subject pool. Other subjects needed to be loyal brand users, so it was necessary to cast a broader net to obtain a sufficient sample size.

IV. RESULTS OR OUTCOMES FROM THE STUDY

Preliminary analysis demonstrates that customers tend to side with the firm to which they are already loyal even when other customers complain loudly, even when the firm responds unkindly to the original poster. An unexpected finding suggests that customers are even more loyal to the firm when the firm merely removes the original complaining post.

RESEARCHER(S) CONTACT INFORMATION:

Mike Breazeale (PI)  mbreazeale@business.msstate.edu  (601) 316-2134
Carol Esmark  cesmark@business.msstate.edu