2013

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ABSTRACT

Building consumer loyalty remains a key priority but is also problematic for managers, since many loyalty improvement programs based on corporate associations investments regularly fail to deliver intended results. A possible explanation for this unpleasant situation likely relates to managers' focus in maximizing rather than optimizing investments in loyalty improvement programs. Building on the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and trust literatures this study conceptualizes and empirically examines the non-linear effects of multiple loyalty and trust determinants, including values-driven CSR motivations, service quality, benevolence and trust. Results suggest the hygiene role of values-driven CSR-induced attributions, the motivator role of consumer benevolence and the bivalent mechanisms of perceived service quality and trust. Furthermore, the study recognizes consumer trust as an important mediating mechanism through which the postulated curvilinearities affect loyalty intentions. The study contributes to the study of consumer loyalty and trust mechanisms, by recognizing these mechanisms as being non-linear and complex.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Social Responsibility, Benevolence, Service Quality, Loyalty, Curvilinear Mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary marketing thought seems to converge on that consumer loyalty has a powerful impact on a firm's performance (Agustin and Singh, 2005). Furthermore, slow growth, overcapacity, and intense competition in most industries increases the need for firms to use strategies focused on increased consumer retention (Sirohi, Mclaughlin, and Wittink, 1998; Ellen, Webb, and Mohr, 2006). In such hostile business markets, recent research by many marketing scholars and practitioners elevate the importance of corporate associations in building important relational corporate outcomes like consumer trust and consumer loyalty (Brown and Dacin, 1997). However, building consumer loyalty though a key priority seems to be problematic for managers (Yim, Che, and Chan, 2008). Disappointed from the impact of corporate associations programs managers have even argued for abandoning these programs as a means for attaining important corporate outcomes such as consumer loyalty (Anderson and Mittal, 2000; Rust and Chung, 2006; Falk, Hammerschmidt and Schepers, 2010; Karnani, 2010). A possible explanation for this unpleasant situation likely relates to the often disregarded step of taking into account for non-linearities in the corporate associations-loyalty linkage (Falk *et al.*, 2010). We examine non-linearities in the corporate associations-loyalty linkage specifically examining the question of whether managers should optimize or maximize investments in corporate association improvement programs. This is managerially important for cost-minded managers, increasingly being evaluated on how efficiently they allocate resources in the effort to build consumer loyalty (IBM, 2011; Rust, Lemon, and Zeithaml, 2004).

One type of corporate association increasingly receiving attention in the literature and in practice is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Brown and Dacin,

1997; Ellen *et al*., 2006). Recent CSR research (e.g. Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, and Avramidis, 2009) indicates the importance of consumers' CSR-induced attributions in building consumer loyalty, specifically suggesting the attainment of "values-driven" CSR-induced attributions as an important corporate goal. Moreover, cumulative insights from the relationship marketing literature (e.g. Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol, 2002), provide sufficient evidence that trust matters for attaining critical relational outcomes namely consumer loyalty. Notwithstanding the importance of corporate associations and trust in influencing consumer loyalty, limited attempts have been made in the literature so as to model these individual loyalty predictors simultaneously and most importantly little attempts have been made so as to account for more complex, non-linear relationships linking CSR associations, consumer trust and loyalty.

Drawing on the relationship marketing and CSR literatures (e.g., Sirdeshmukh and Singh, 2002; Ellen *et al*., 2006) and following Agustin and Singh (2005) the study contributes to the literature by simultaneously examining the effects of important non-linear trust and loyalty antecedents. Specifically, the study investigates curvilinear mechanisms that affect loyalty intentions, involving: a) the curvilinear effects of values-driven CSR-induced attributions, b) the curvilinear effects of perceived consumer benevolence and perceived service quality on trust, and c) the curvilinear effect of consumer trust on loyalty.

THE PROPOSED MODEL: HYPOTHESES

As mentioned above, we develop hypotheses for the curvilinear mechanisms that affect loyalty intentions and trust perceptions by focusing on three variables: values-driven attributions, consumer benevolence and perceived service quality.

Values-driven motives underlying CSR actions are those other-centered attributions defined by a sincere moral interest in helping causes, even at the expense of better economic performance (Ellen *et al.*, 2006). Consumer benevolence is defined as *"…a genuine concern and care [for the consumers] through sacrifices that exceed a purely egocentric profit motive"* (Ganesan and Hess, 1997: 440). Benevolence relates to the relationship between the consumer and the firm, whereas values-driven attributions relate to consumers' perceptions pertaining to motives underlying the firm-cause relationship.

Moreover, we develop hypotheses for the curvilinear effects of service quality perceptions on trust and for the curvilinear effects of consumer trust on loyalty intentions. In this study perceived service quality is defined following Oliver (1996: 145), who posits service quality perceptions as a cognitive assessment of excellence. Finally we examine whether trust fully or partially mediates these effects on loyalty intentions, recognizing trust as a crucial exchange mediator.

Linear Effects

Figure 1 depicts the proposed model. There is evidence in the literature that consumers are not simplistic in their appraisals of CSR actions. Recent research indicates that consumer response to CSR is complex: Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006) find four types of motives that consumers may attribute to companies that engage in cause-related activities. Specifically, consumers seem to distinguish between self-centered motives, (i.e., strategic and egoistic-driven motives) and other-centered motives, (i.e., stakeholder-driven and value-driven motives).
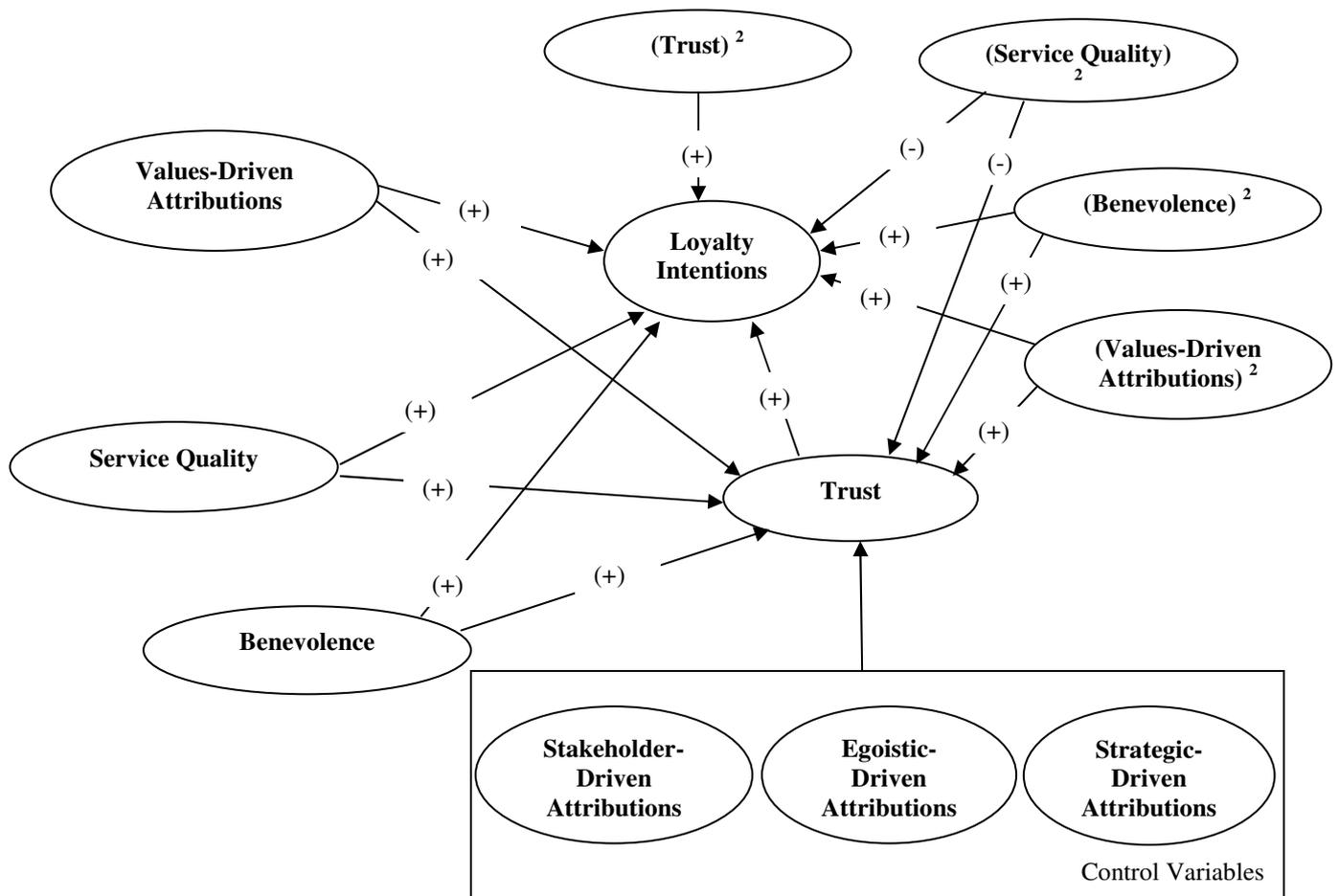
Figure 1. The Research Model

In the proposed model these four types of motives each have different effects on company-favoring outcomes: values-driven attributions, help companies build trust and loyalty, whereas stakeholder-, strategic-, and egoistic-driven attributions may deteriorate trust and loyalty (see Vlachos *et al.*, 2009 for a formal discussion on these effects).

Moreover, the proposed model postulates service quality perceptions as well as consumer benevolence as directly influencing consumer trust and loyalty intentions. Mainly building on the social psychology literature, organizational theorists (e.g. McAllister, 1995) and marketing researchers (e.g., Johnson and Grayson, 2005) seem to agree that trust is a multidimensional construct consisting of a cognitive and an affective component. Cognition-based trust refers to decisions to trust based on available knowledge and "good reasons", while affective-based trust or benevolence refers to the development of emotional bonds between the exchange partners and the expression of genuine care and concern for the welfare of the trustor on part of the trustee (McAllister, 1995). The present study uses perceived service quality and perceived benevolence as antecedents of trust (i.e., trustworthiness facets) in order to operationalize in a formative manner the cognitive and affective components of trust.. There seems to be evidence in the popular business press relating service quality perceptions to trust. Edelman's annual trust barometer survey, suggest that, in six out of eight countries investigated, service quality is the most prominent driver of the trust outcome (Edelman. 2005). In the same vein the literature recognizes the construct of benevolence as directly influencing trust (e.g. Ganesan and Hess, 1997; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000).

The reader should note that the present study does not focus on these linear effects. Rather, the study aims at investigating the curvilinear mechanisms that may

affect loyalty intentions and consumer trust (for a formal theoretical discussion of these effects interested readers should see Ellen *et al.*, 2006; Vlachos *et al.*, 2009). In what follows, we lay the theoretical foundations for these curvilinear effects.

Curvilinear Effects

Agustin and Singh (2005), mainly building on Oliver's (1997) need-gratification model suggest that human needs can be characterized as either monovalent or bivalent. Monovalent needs present increasing (concave upward) or decreasing returns to scale (concave downward), whereas bivalent needs present monotonically increasing returns to scale. Growth needs and hygiene needs (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959) are posited as monovalent, with the former having incrementally increasing returns to scale on goal pursuit and the latter having decreasing incremental returns to scale. Hygiene factors tap the economic/utilitarian side of exchanges whereas motivation factors tap the relational/emotional side of exchanges.

Drawing on content theories of motivation (e.g., Herzberg *et al.,* 1959) and the satisfaction literature (e.g., Vargo, Nagao, He, and Morgan, 2007), the study postulates service quality perceptions as presenting decreasing incremental returns to scale on the trust outcome. Specifically, we hypothesize that the relationship between perceived service quality and trust is characterized by negative asymmetries (i.e., a reduction in perceived service quality is more consequential on trust than an increase). Perceived service quality is conceptualized as a lower-order, hygiene, trust-maintaining variable, mainly tapping the economic rather than the relational aspects of an exchange. Arguably, perceived service quality is taken for granted when fulfilled, but result in distrust when not fulfilled. In the words of Swan and Combs (1976), perceived service quality is an instrumental rather than an expressive factor,

since instrumental factors refer to those aspects of a product that are means to a set of ends (Vargo *et al.,* 2007). Arguably, if a company wishes to incrementally increase trust and loyalty levels, then it should convince consumers about the ethics that it brings into the exchange (Gundlach and Murphy, 1993). Service quality perceptions mostly convey signals of competence and professionalism to consumers and do not provide guarantees against corporate opportunistic behavior. This means that perceived service quality meets the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic needs of an individual.

On the other hand, we expect benevolence as well as values-driven CSR attributions to present incrementally increasing returns to scale on consumer trust and loyalty (i.e., we expect a positive asymmetry). Positive asymmetry is suggested to occur in situations when the determinant variable is unanticipated or unusual, relative to what customers normally envision a service product to entail (Anderson and Mittal, 2000). Benevolence is conceptualized as a motivator, higher-order monovalent need that mostly relates to the social and psychological aspects of a market exchange (Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner, 1995). The factor of benevolence likely causes positive consumer outcomes when fulfilled, but its absence does not result in negative consumer outcomes.

Arguably, when consumers shop for services they are not expecting provider behaviors that are highly benevolent-namely market behaviors exhibiting that the provider is willing to always act as if the customer is always right and with a caring and warm attitude. Therefore, it is likely that higher-levels of benevolent perceptions would substantively convince consumers for the ethicality of the corporation and would ultimately reassure consumers that opportunistic behaviors on behalf of the firm are unlikely to occur.

9

Similarly, our expectations are that the factor of CSR-induced values-driven attributions, constitute an expressive rather than an instrumental factor. Consumers' beliefs that the company is engaging in CSR out of sincere interest and altruistic intentions likely satisfy their higher-order, expressive needs, rather than their lower-order, instrumental needs. Arguably, the presence of values-driven CSR-induced attributions is likely not expected, so they have satisfying consequences when fulfilled. On the other hand their absence will not cause negative consumer responses and dissatisfaction.

At this point the reader should note that we develop curvilinear hypotheses only for values-driven CSR-induced attributions and not for the remaining three types of attributions. Based on our empirical findings, including in the model quadratic terms for egoistic-driven and strategic-driven attributions is probably theoretically inappropriate and managerially not that appealing. First, we have no reason to expect the effect of egoistic- driven attributions on trust to become positive or insignificant from a point on. Similarly, it makes no sense to expect a positive effect of strategic-driven attributions on trust after a turning point. Possibly, a case could be theoretically supported for the negative effect of stakeholder-driven attributions, hypothesizing for a U-shaped effect on trust perceptions. However, according to Ping (2003) detecting several significant non-linear terms is difficult, and including one non-linear term may amplify or suppress the significance of other non-linear terms. Based on these methodological suggestions we have chosen to focus only those non-linear terms for which theoretical rationale is stronger, and for which a "too much of a good thing effect" appears to be tenable (Pierce and Aguinis, 2011).

Finally, we test for the positive curvilinear effect of trust on loyalty intentions as hypothesized and empirically evidenced by Agustin and Singh (2005) as a way to replicate their findings.

Based on this discussion we hypothesize:

H1: Consumers' perceptions of service quality present a negative quadratic effect on trust and loyalty perceptions (decreasing returns to scale) meaning that in higher levels for these perceptions each additional unit will bring less in incremental trust and loyalty than the previous unit did

H2: Consumers' perceptions of a) benevolence and b) values-driven CSR attributions present a positive quadratic effect on trust and loyalty (i.e. incremental increasing returns to scale) meaning that in higher levels for these perceptions each additional unit will bring more in incremental trust and loyalty than the previous unit did

DESIGN

Context

We have selected the mobile services industry as the empirical context for this study. This selection has a three-fold justification. First, consumers' use of mobile telecommunication services is now commonplace (Nysveen, Pedersen, and Thorbjørnsen, 2005). The mobile services industry is characterized by intensified competition and relatively low switching costs, making the attainment of consumer loyalty an imperative strategic goal. Second, the factor of trust is of topical importance to this industry. Presumably, it seems that consumers have many reasons to feel at the mercy of mobile operators' practices (e.g., suspiciousness generated by recent wiretapping scandals, the relationship between mobile-phone usage and health e.t.c.). These characteristics entail significant consequentiality for consumer and

therefore relational rather than transactional characteristics are important (Sirdeshmukh *et al*., 2002).

Sample

The final sample consisted of 830 randomly selected respondents residing in major metropolitan areas in Greece. Data were collected using a proportionate stratifying probability sampling technique with the aid of a specialized marketing research call center. The research agency used Greece's national telephone directory as the sampling frame, and employed the Random Digit Dialing (RDD) technique, steps resulting in a probability sample. The response rate was 15%. Overall, 64% of the respondents were women and more than half (52%) were married. Almost half of the respondents are in the 25-44 age group (47%), more than half (53%) have a college degree, and the majority (68%) earns less than €24,000. Overall, discussions with managers of mobile telecommunications companies indicate that the sample is representative of the mobile-phone user population in Greece in terms of the abovementioned demographics.

Measurement

Construct operationalizations, are rooted in the extant marketing literature. Appendix A provides the scales used for this study. Loyalty intention measures were drawn from the work of Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). Trust and Benevolence measures were drawn from the writings of Sirdeshmukh *et al*., (2002). Measures of consumer attributions were drawn from the work of Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006). Service quality measures were adapted from the work of Brady and Cronin (2001) as well as from the writings of Sirdeshmukh *et al*., (2002).

Scenario: The research hypotheses were tested using a scenario approach. The realism of the scenario was ascertained using two ten-point Likert scales (Dabholkar and Bagozzi, 2002): "The situation described was realistic" and "I had no difficulty imagining myself in the situation". The scenario was judged to be highly realistic (receiving a rating of approximately 8 on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most realistic). All participants were asked to imagine that their current mobile network operator executed a cause-related marketing program during Christmas. The mobile network operator promised its subscribers that a large percentage of the income generated from the text-messages exchanged during Christmas would be donated to a non-profit organization supporting orphans and helpless children. Consumers were then asked to express their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements providing possible explanations (i.e., attributions) for this offer (Ellen, Webb, and Mohr, 2006) (see Appendix A). The specific cause was selected from a list of the 14 most important causes Greek consumers believed that companies should support (Globe Scan-MRB 2006).

Analytical Method

In estimating and testing the proposed research model we follow the two-step procedure suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). We use the bootstrap method to estimate the standard errors of the model parameter estimates (Nevitt and Hancock, 1998). To estimate the parameters for the hypothesized curvilinear effects, we use the two-step version of Ping's (1995) single-indicant estimation method (2SI) for latent continuous variables. Based on criteria such as model-to-data fit, convergence problems and ease of use, he suggests using this approach.

RESULTS

Altogether, our results demonstrate adequate unidimensionality, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for the linear-only terms model. Results are shown in Table 1. The measurement model fits reasonably well, establishing unidimensionality (χ^2 (377) = 1791, p < .00), RMSEA=.067-confidence interval (Low90-Hi90) =.064-.070, CFI=.93). All estimated loadings are significant (i.e., smallest t-value=8.7, p<.01, two-tailed). Composite Reliability exceeds the .7 threshold for all involved constructs, since the minimum reliability is .82 (see appendix A). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than the .50 benchmark (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), establishing convergent validity. The smallest AVE is .61. The data for the linear-only terms model suggest discriminant validity. We examined pairs of constructs using the constrained and unconstrained models in a series of chi-square difference tests (i.e., in constrained models correlation values were set to be 1.0). The results indicate that in all tests the unconstrained model fit better than the constrained one, indicating discriminant validity.

Table 1. Structural Model Results (Unstandardized Coefficients)

Constructs[a]		Linear Model	Non-Linear Model
Dependent	*Independent*		
Loyalty (R^2)		.25**	.25**
	Trust	.20**	.20*
	Benevolence	-.01	-.01
	Service Quality	.04	.07
	Egoistic-Driven	-.36**	-.37**
	Stakeholder.-Driven	-.30**	-.30**
	Values-Driven	.16*	.17*
	Strategic-Driven	-.13	-.12
	(Service Quality)^2	n/a	.01
	(Benevolence)^2	n/a	.00
	(Values-Driven)^2	n/a	.00
	(Trust)^2		.00
Trust (R^2)		.28**	.31**
	Service Quality	.30**	.31**
	Benevolence	.30**	.42 **
	Egoistic-Driven	-.11**	-.15**
	Stakeholder.-Driven	-.16**	-.18**
	Values-Driven	.16**	.15**
	Strategic-Driven	.00	.02
	(Service Quality)^2	n/a	.02
	(Benevolence)^2	n/a	.23*
	(Values-Driven)^2	n/a	-.10*
Fit Indices			
χ^2 (df)		1791 (377), p <.000	2013 (465), p<.000
RMSEA (90% CI)		.067 (.064-.070)	.063 (.061-.066)
CFI		.93	.93

Notes:

* Significant at p<.05 (two-tailed test), ** Significant at p<.01 (two-tailed test), n.s. (not significant)

    a. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. To avoid multicollinearity problems, a mean-centering procedure was employed. As reported by Ping (1998), standardized coefficients for quadratics may be misleading to the process of mean-centering the manifest variables. Statistical significance is evidenced by employing the 1000 bootstrap samples and the bias-corrected percentile method.

15

Hypotheses Testing

Following a hierarchical procedure (Ping, 1998) we entered the hypothesized higher-order terms to the linear-only terms model. Results are reported in table 1. The proposed model provides meaningful explanation of the dependent variables (R^2 for loyalty intentions equals .25 (p-value=.002) and R^2 for trust equals .31 (p-value=.002). The quadratic effect of service quality on consumer trust is not- significant (b=.020, p-value=.16). The same stands for the quadratic effect of service quality on loyalty intentions (b=.013, p-value=.48). These results indicate that increasing fulfillment of service quality needs does not have decreasing incremental effects on trust. In contrast to hypothesis 1, service quality is not a lower-order, hygiene need but rather a bivalent need that is has a monotonically increasing relationship with consumer trust. The curvilinear effect of benevolence and CSR-induced values-driven attributions on consumer trust is significant (b=.23, p-value=.015 and b=-.095, p-value=.017 correspondingly). Note that in contrast to hypothesis 2, values-driven attributions have a negative rather than a positive quadratic effect on consumer trust. Moreover, the curvilinear effect of values-driven attributions on loyalty intentions is not significant (b=-.-003, p-value=.98). The same stands for the curvilinear effect of benevolence on loyalty intentions (b=-.007, p-value=.88). These results partially support hypothesis 2. However, though no indirect effects were hypothesized, we tested for the indirect effect of these two higher-order terms on loyalty intentions through the trust mechanism, using the bootstrapping framework (Shrout and Bolger 2002). The results indicate that both indirect effects are significant. It seems that the benevolence quadratic term indirectly influences loyalty intentions (b=.045, p-value=.04) and the same stands for the values-driven attributions quadratic term (b=-

16

.02, p-value=.04). Altogether these results indicate benevolence as well as values-driven attributions as monovalent needs. Beyond some point of values-driven attributions, increasing consumers' beliefs in such motivations has decreasing incremental effects on consumer trust directly and to loyalty intentions indirectly through the trust mechanism. Moreover, increasing benevolence perceptions beyond some point has increasing incremental effects on consumer trust directly and on loyalty intentions indirectly through the trust mechanism. Finally we further test the significance and the directionality of the quadratic effect of consumer trust on loyalty. Agustin and Singh (2005) hypothesize trust as a monovalent higher-order need and find empirical evidence for this effect. Our results are different. The quadratic effect of consumer trust is not significant rendering the construct of trust as having a monotonically increasing effect on loyalty intentions (b=-.001, p-value=.87).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Aside from contributing to the extant trust literature, the present study postulates and empirically investigates simultaneous non-linear effects of multiple loyalty intentions determinants in the context of a service business. The study results add to the scarce literature investigating the complex functional relationships linking corporate associations like CSR-induced attributions, service quality and benevolence on outcomes like consumer trust and loyalty intentions. The results seem to support the hygiene role of values-driven CSR-induced attributions, the motivator role of consumer benevolence and the bivalent mechanisms of perceived service quality and trust.

The study investigates curvilinear effects of an important corporate social responsibility goal namely the attainment of values-driven attributions on behalf of consumers. Contrary to our hypothesis, the results identify values-driven attributions

17

for CSR activities as presenting direct negative curvilinearities on trust and indirect negative curvilinearities on loyalty intentions through the trust mechanism. The linear-only terms model suggests (among others) that clever managers should invest resources at increasing values-driven motivations. However, it seems that from a point on[1] increasingly investing in values-driven motivations may not pay-off. Findings indicate that values-driven CSR-induced attributions seem to be a necessary but not sufficient mechanism for building consumer trust and loyalty.

Assuming that firms can convey to consumers a character with high altruistic intentions, then our findings indicate that this will bring back lowered trust perceptions. Arguably one can explain these consumer reactions using three different types of mechanisms. The first mechanism arguably suggests that consumers will have second thoughts about these beliefs; they will resist internalizing them; "too good to be true" beliefs will dominate and they will finally consider the company as being dishonest and manipulative. The assumption behind this mechanism is that firms are in the business of making profits and persuasion efforts that signal behaviors in deep contrast with this principle, may be perceived as exploitative . Consequently, these perceptions will bring back lowered trust perceptions. The second mechanism, again building on the a priori for-profit nature of firms, suggests consumer perceptions of firm naivety, which are consequently harmful for the development of trust perceptions. Consumers likely interpret companies' investments in CSR due to excessive values-driven motives as something that will render more dividends for the firm. However, such company actions might be perceived as naïve and inappropriate since they build on the assumption of consumers being truly ethical. On the contrary, a growing body of research has provided significant evidence on the so-called "myth

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[1] Relevant calculation (see Figure 2) suggest an optimal point of 6.4 on a 10-point Likert scale

of the ethical consumer". Central to this research stream is the notion that not all consumers care equally about company CSR initiatives (Devinney, Auger, and Eckhardt, 2010).

Finally, beliefs of increased, unexpected firm altruism may also signal to consumers that firms highly performing on altruistic motives are doing so through sacrificing performance on core utilitarian factors[2] (e.g., service quality, value for money) namely. Core commercial factors are likely more relevant to consumers than CSR initiatives (Oberseder, Schlegelmilch, and Gruber, 2011). Such a mechanism is further consistent with the concept of "CSR-CA beliefs" (i.e., the extent to which consumers believe that CSR is at odds with Corporate Abilities (CA) (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001)[2]. Based on this reasoning consumers may believe that too much of altruistic engagement in social actions is likely a misguided priority and a compromise for better servicing customers.

Arguably, the negative curvilinear effect of values-driven attributions on trust points to one more important implication. Although we did not directly test for the effect of values-driven corporate communication efforts (i.e., our test involve consumer beliefs) a claim can be made about their effectiveness. Specifically, assuming that corporate communication practices influence consumer beliefs, one may logically conclude that consumers will not be convinced from exaggerated corporate claims, denoting values-driven motivations for CSR activities. Therefore, communication efforts trying to convince consumers for the virtuousness of corporate motives underlying CSR initiatives should not go too far. Again the assumption is that consumers believe that firms are still in the business of maximizing shareholder wealth rendering highly altruistic-motivate giving as hypocritical or at best naïve (i.e.,

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[2] We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this point

quixotic). Again, all these are conjectures that need to be further empirically tested using thorough mediation analyses.

In all, managers should recognize that managing consumers' values-driven beliefs is important. They should design and communicate CSR initiatives in a manner that will not exaggerate altruistic-motivated giving. Such consumer beliefs will likely backfire, rendering lowered trust perceptions.

On the other hand, we find a positive curvilinear mechanism linking benevolence perceptions directly to consumer trust and indirectly to loyalty intentions. Therefore, these results support the enhancing role of benevolence, indicating it as both a necessary and sufficient mechanism for building both consumer trust and loyalty. Managerially these results indicate that investing in moving benevolence scores above 5 (i.e., the inflection point) on a 10-point evaluation scale[3] may be a good idea, since in each additional unit of benevolence perceptions the returns on trust are disproportionately greater. Especially in parity markets managers are in need of strategies that will render positive results faster than competitors. It seems that increases in benevolence increase trust faster than proportionate increases in service quality and/or values-motivated corporate social responsibility.

To highlight the simultaneity in curvilinear effects of trust determinants we have graphically portrayed these effects. Figure 2 plots predicted trust levels against the observed scores of benevolence and values-driven CSR attributions. This plot reveals that, in a mobile telecommunications setting, benevolence and values-driven CSR attributions are associated with opposite influences on trust levels. Values-driven attributions depict a significant decreasing rate of return, whereas benevolence is associated with an increasing rate-of-return. Therefore, these two strategic marketing

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[3] Relevant calculation (see Figure 2) suggest an inflection point of 5.0 on a 10-point Likert scale

levers yield differential effects on trust. The strategic implication for practicing managers is straightforward: To maximize trust levels and (indirectly loyalty intentions), managers should optimize and not maximize values-driven attributions. Instead, they should strive to maximize benevolence perceptions.
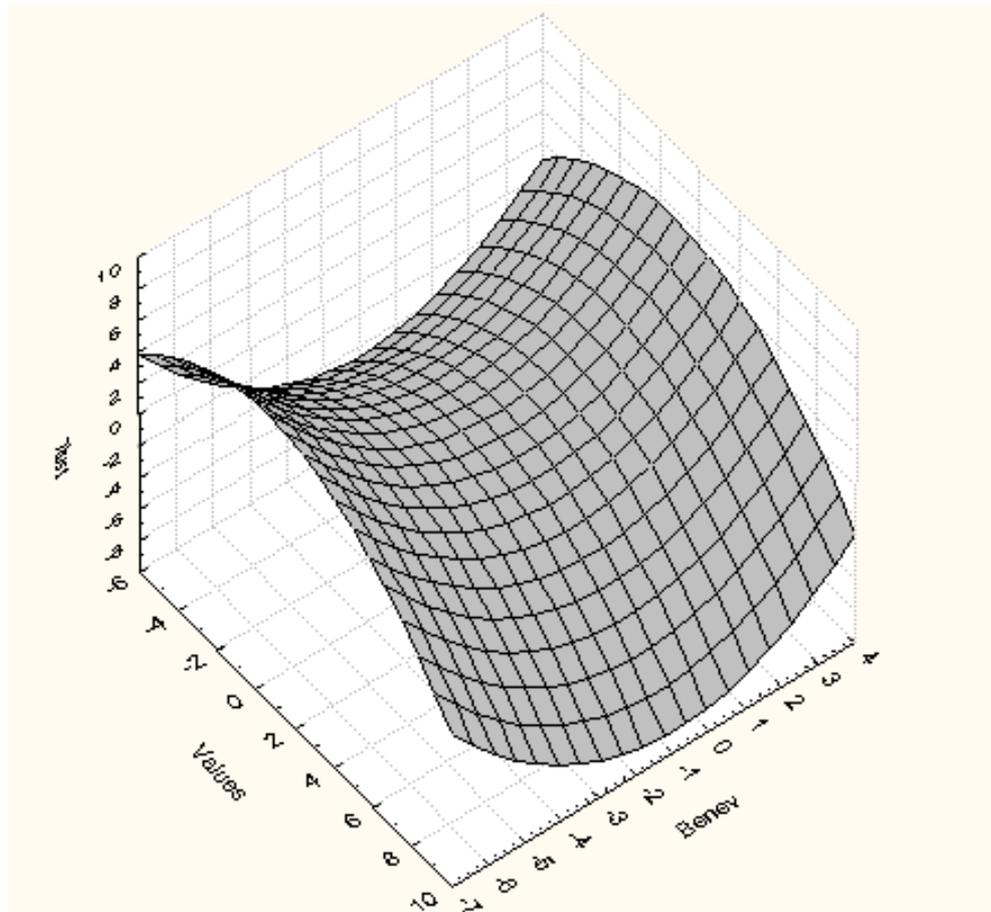

Figure 2. Curvilinear Effects of Benevolence and Values-Driven Attributions on Trust.
Notes: The optimal point for Values-Driven Attributions is $-b_1/2b_2=0.57$ scale points above the mean namely 6.4 on a 10-point scale. The inflection point for Benevolence is $-b_1/2b_2=-1.83$ scale points below the mean namely 5.0 on a 10-point scale.

Additionally contrary to the results of Agustin and Singh (2005) data do not support the motivator role of consumer trust on loyalty intentions. Rather the results support consumer trust as a bivalent mechanism, meaning that increases in consumer trust analogously increase loyalty intentions.

21

Finally, an important finding of the present study is the mediating role of consumer trust in building loyalty intentions. Consumer trust seems to be an important process mediating the curvilinear effects of multiple loyalty determinants.

So as to make the results practically meaningful we build on the writings of Agustin and Singh (2005). Let's assume that a manager faces two consumer segments: one that is loyal to the service and one that occasionally uses the service brand. For the first segment, our results indicate that managers should invest in benevolence-building factors while holding their current investments in values-driven CSR-induced attributions and service quality. Building on benevolence will incrementally increase consumer trust and through consumer trust it will incrementally increase loyalty intentions. For the second segment, managers should get the basics right: they should invest resources in carefully building values-driven CSR-induced attributions and service quality perceptions without necessarily investing more resources in benevolence-building factors.

Moreover, if one accepts nowadays consumers as giving their loyalty to more than one service providers (i.e., their loyalty is divided (Brown, 1952), then our results indicate that managers may be able to get undivided loyalty through the benevolence mechanism. Arguably, since from a point on benevolence incrementally increases consumer trust and loyalty, it is a more efficient way for building loyalty. Smart managers able to act on this finding may be able to turn their customers from being divided loyal to undivided loyal.

LIMITATIONS

This study is not without limitations. However these limitations offer opportunities for further research. The study uses a cause-related marketing scenario, but corporate social responsibility can take many forms. Therefore we call for more

research that will try to replicate the finding in other corporate social responsibility contexts as well (e.g., fair employment practices, environmental friendliness). Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of our study precludes any conclusions about causality between the constructs utilized. Another limitation is that we cannot claim generalizibility of the results beyond the mobile services industry. This industry has its own idiosyncrasies limiting the generalizibility of the results produced by this study. However, the results of the study may be relevant to services that offer standardized service, moderate customer contact, and low customization (Bowen, 1990).

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Appendix A: Measurement Model (Standardized Estimates)

Item	Loadings	CR	AVE	Description (*Consumers were first asked to answer the following question: Which is your preferred mobile service provider (MSP)?Then the researcher collected the data with reference to the specific mobile service provider*)
Loyalty		.77	.53	
LOYAL1	.75			The likelihood of complaining to_____ employees' is
LOYAL2	.77			The likelihood of doing more business with_____ is
LOYAL3	.65			The likelihood of doing more business with other MSP is_____
Trust		.94	.79	
TR1	.95			Very undependable/Very dependable
TR2	.94			Very incompetent/Very competent
TR3	.85			Of very low integrity/ Of very high integrity
TR4	.81			Provider_____ is generally honest and trustworthy
Benevolence		.89	.62	
BEN1	.80			_____ respects the customer
BEN2	.79			_____ acts as if the customer is always right
BEN3	.83			_____ favors the customer's best interests
BEN4	.71			Employees of _____ can be relied to give you honest advice even if they won't make a sale
BEN5	.80			_____ displays a warm and caring attitude towards the consumer
Service Quality		.93	.71	
SQ1	.86			Employees at ____ are knowledgeable about their services
SQ2	.91			Overall, I would say the quality of my interaction with ____'s employees is excellent
SQ3	.70			I would rate ____'s physical environment highly
SQ4	.89			____ employees approach their work with professionalism and dedication
SQ5	.85			____ is organized so as to make it easy to get a good service when problems occur
Egoistic-Driven		.85	.66	
EG1	.50			They want it as a tax write-off
EG2	.93			They are taking advantage of the nonprofit organization to help their own business
EG3	.94			They are taking advantage of the cause to help their own business
Values-Driven		.95	.86	
VA1	.87			They feel morally obligated to help
VA2	.96			They have a long-terms interest in the community
VA3	.96			They are trying to give back something to the community
Strategic-Driven		.82	.61	
STR1	.70			They will keep more customer by making this offer
STR2	.72			They will get more customer by making this offer
STR3	.90			They hope to increase profits by making this offer
Stakeholder-Driven		.88	.72	
ST1	.91			They feel their employees expect it
ST2	.82			They feel their customers expect it
ST3	.80			They feel their stockholders expect it
ST4	.60			They feel society in general expects it