

**A systematic literature review of brand commitment:
definition, perspectives and dimensions**

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RESUMEN

Aunque la importancia del compromiso del consumidor hacia la marca es claramente reconocida en la literatura, existen múltiples definiciones, perspectivas y dimensiones que hacen que este constructo sea ambiguo y confuso en su definición. Adicionalmente, generalmente se confunde compromiso con lealtad hacia la marca lo que hace aún más difícil su comprensión.

Por esta razón, se realizó un análisis sistemático de la literatura donde se estudiaron a profundidad los artículos académicos acerca de compromiso hacia la marca, teniendo en cuenta ciertos criterios de inclusión y de exclusión que ayudaron a delimitar la investigación. Se tomaron como fuente de los artículos dos reconocidas bases de datos (EBSCO y Scopus), y después de un filtro riguroso una muestra final de 97 artículos fue seleccionada para llevar a cabo la revisión.

Se presentan en este trabajo definiciones, dimensiones, antecedentes, perspectivas y evolución del concepto como resultado del análisis sistemático de la literatura desarrollado previamente. Además se realiza una comparación entre compromiso y lealtad hacia la marca con el objetivo de aclarar las diferencias entre los dos constructos.

Como última instancia se analiza la aplicación de compromiso y lealtad hacia la marca en la relación marca–consumidor a través de las posibles implicaciones empresariales de los constructos y direcciones para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: Análisis sistemático de la literatura, compromiso hacia la marca, lealtad hacia la marca.

ABSTRACT

Although the importance of consumer brand commitment is well recognized in the marketing literature, there are many different definitions that make it a fuzzy concept that is difficult to understand due to the different existing definitions, perspectives and dimensions of the construct. Additionally, the difference between brand commitment and brand loyalty is not clear in the marketing literature, which makes more complex the comprehension of the concept.

For these reasons, a systematic literature review of brand commitment was conducted, using certain inclusion and exclusion criteria. Two well-recognized databases –EBSCO and Scopus- , were selected to find the articles for the review, and after a rigorous search and filter, 97 articles were selected as the main sample.

After conducting the systematic literature review, the definitions, dimensions, antecedents, perspectives and conceptual evolution of the construct are presented. Also, a comparison between brand commitment and brand loyalty is described in order to clarify the differences between the two constructs.

Finally, the consequences of brand commitment are explained in order to identify the managerial implications and directions for future research.

Key words: Systematic literature review, brand commitment, brand loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Brand commitment is a well-known and researched concept in the marketing field, but there is not a precise and concrete definition that allows the concept to be easily understood, since the construct is sometimes confused with others such as brand loyalty. (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Danes, Hess, Story, & Vorst, 2012; Hamilton et al., 2014; Matthews, Son, & Watchravesringkan, 2014; Park, Eisingerich, Pol, & Park, 2013; Raju & Unnava, 2005; Smit, Bronner, & Tolboom, 2007; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005)

In order to present the definitions, dimensions and perspectives of brand commitment, a systematic literature review is conducted to provide a comprehensive and unbiased search, and to find the most qualified information based of some inclusion and exclusion criteria. A systematic literature review takes more time than a narrative review and it requires more attention to the details, but is the most efficient method to study extensive literature (Tranfield, 2003). The main objective of the systematic review developed in this paper is to contribute to the understanding of the literature on brand commitment.

A sample of 97 journal articles was selected based on a previous article research on two well-known databases –EBSCO and Scopus-, and a rigorous filtering based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Definitions, dimensions, antecedents, perspectives and evolution of the concept are presented and contrasted in order to understand and compare the literature of the construct. Also a comparison between brand commitment and brand loyalty is developed and an approach to the application of the two constructs in consumer-brand relationship is presented.

This research will be useful for marketing managers because it will provide them a better understanding of consumer behaviour and their purchase intentions. This knowledge will help them to create more precise and successful long-term marketing strategies that will be reflected in an improvement of the company's performance.

From an academic point of view, the research aims to contribute to the consumer behaviour theory by exploring the concept of brand commitment, its definitions, perspectives and dimensions and also the differences between brand commitment and brand loyalty.

1. PRELIMINARIES

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Brand commitment has become an important construct to explain consumer behavior, and its importance is well recognized in marketing literature (Belaid, 2011). In spite of the considerable amount of academic literature available about the concept, there are many different definitions that make brand commitment a fuzzy concept that is difficult to understand because of the different perspectives and dimensions presented.

There are many different definitions for brand commitment. Some authors state that it is the desire of the consumer to maintain a valued relationship with a brand (Fullerton, 2005), while others argue that it is a psychological disposition that includes a positive attitude toward the brand and a willingness to maintain a valued relationship with it (Albert N. & Merunka, 2013). These are only two of many different definitions that will be explained in detail later in this paper. All of the definitions may be important and useful, but there is not a consistent definition that shows what brand commitment is.

Brand commitment is often confused with brand loyalty. Traylor (1981) states that while brand commitment is attitudinal, because it shows a psychological connection with a certain brand, brand loyalty is a behavioural construct. This means that brand loyalty is necessary for brand commitment to exist, but to have brand loyalty does not necessarily mean that the consumer is committed to the brand (Traylor, 1981).

In order to clarify those differences in the definitions, dimensions and perspectives of brand commitment, and also the existing confusion of the construct with brand loyalty, some research methods were evaluated and a systematic literature review was decided to be the indicated method to conduct the investigation.

Most of the available research in management is narrative, which has a considerable risk of author's bias. This means that, although a narrative research may be meaningful, it has a high degree of subjectivity (Walker, 2010). A systematic review is usually used for medicine research because it improves the quality of the research by making it systematic, transparent and reproducible (Walker, 2010). From a management perspective, it allows to have a synthesized and high-quality information approach to the most relevant literature about the construct in study (Tranfield, 2003), in this specific case about brand commitment.

Although there is a considerable amount of literature about brand commitment, it does not exist a unique definition for the construct. The concept is usually confused with brand loyalty, and it is difficult to delimitate or to know the clear meaning and dimensions of each concept. A systematic literature review provides a methodological and systematic approach to the concept of brand commitment.

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1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 RESEARCH AIM

To execute a systematic literature review of brand commitment and to describe the differences between brand commitment and brand loyalty and their application in the consumer-brand relationship.

1.2.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

- Plan the review
- Execute the review
- Report results and conclusions
- Explain the differences between brand commitment and brand loyalty.
- Describe the application of brand commitment and brand loyalty in consumer-brand relationships.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systematic Literature Review

A systematic literature review is an explicit method to develop a complete and comprehensive academic research. It is used as a way to obtain a high-quality information from literature by performing a specific methodology (Walker, 2010).

The main objective of the systematic literature review is to improve the quality of the review process by making the methodology in a systematic, transparent and reproducible way (Walker, 2010).

The intention of the method is to give the reader an easier understanding of the available literature, different from a narrative review that usually is not organized and does not have a defined research criteria (Iglesias, 2014). Another advantage of developing a systematic literature review and not a narrative one is that the first reduces author bias and gives the reader a synthesized and organized best-quality literature (Walker, 2010).

Some key steps of the methodology are (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003):

1. Key terminology identification: selection of related terms
2. Selection of inclusion and exclusion criteria
3. Articles identification: identification of all published research in the area

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4. Quality assessment: Reduction of the size of sample by selecting the most relevant articles
5. Data extraction: It includes a standardized data extraction that reduces author subjectivity
6. Data synthesis: Narrative analysis of the concept.

These are the main steps to develop a systematic literature review, but when performing a systematic review about management and marketing literature, the steps can be changed or modified according to the objectives and intentions of the author (David Tranfield, 2003).

The methodology for the review is to select the most prominent articles in each field and then to select the articles that are most relevant to the main topic (Walker, 2010).

Brand Commitment

In the available marketing literature there are several definitions that make brand commitment a concept confusing to understand. There are different approaches and understandings of the concept that can be related or not to some other concepts like brand loyalty or brand equity.

One of the definitions explains that an individual feels committed to a brand because he feels tied to it. This statement is showing that a committed person is less willing to change the brand that is actually purchasing than a person that is not committed to it (Sekar Raju, 2009).

Brand commitment is a determinant factor for the development and maintenance of marketing relationships, because of the psychological force that links the consumer with the brand. This statement is valid for both business-to-business and business-to-consumer relationships. For companies it is important to create commitment feelings with their consumers to make sure they will purchase again (Fullerton, 2005).

Another definition states that brand commitment is a unidirectional feeling of attachment from consumer to the preferred brand, with the only intention of maintaining a long-term relationship (Fullerton, 2005). Brand commitment shows the level of importance and attachment that a consumer has with a brand (Shim, 2000)

Brand commitment has two important and different dimensions; one of them is the continuance or the rational one, which explains the psychological and economic attachments that the consumer has with a particular brand. In this dimension, the consumer has the need to continue the relation with the brand because he may not have other alternatives or have high switching costs. The other dimension is affective commitment, which explains the emotional attachment the consumer has with the brand. This occurs when the consumer feels identified with the brand. The two dimensions show

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that brand commitment has both a rational and an emotional component (Batista-Foguet, 2010).

There is an existing uncertainty between brand commitment and brand loyalty concept, where some authors argued that brand commitment and brand loyalty are conceptually the same (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Danes et al., 2012; Hamilton et al., 2014; Park et al., 2013; Smit et al., 2007) and some others states that are different concepts (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Chang & Wu, 2014; Coulter, Price, & Feick, 2003; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013; Warrington & Shim, 2000). In this paper the difference between brand commitment and brand loyalty will be studied.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a well-researched concept that is defined as a mixture of attitudinal and behavioural elements, which consequently bring an affiliation feeling with a brand. Brand loyalty is a fundamental part of relationship marketing, where the consumer has a high psychological attachment to the brand. (Fullerton, 2005). There are identified about fifty-five different definitions for brand loyalty (Veeva Mathew, 2012).

2. METHODOLOGY

The development of the systematic literature review on brand commitment had the following five stages:

1. Stage 1: Planning the review

- Identification of the need of a review: It is necessary to make a previous literature and academic research about the relevance of doing a systematic literature review and to delimit the topic. This previous study includes a brief overview of the definitions, perspectives and dimensions of brand commitment. (David Tranfield, 2003)
- Preparation of a proposal for a review: It includes the main objectives of the systematic review and a delimitation of the exclusion and inclusion criteria (David Tranfield, 2003).
- Development of a review protocol: The protocol contains the problem and the importance of making a systematic literature review and also the steps and activities that are followed in the review. It does not contain details of the activities because the steps may change during the process (David Tranfield, 2003).

2. Stage 2: Executing the review:

- Identification of research: The systematic review starts with the identification of keywords and search terms and the selection of the main sources of data that will be used for the review (David Tranfield, 2003).
- Selection of studies: From all different information that results from the main search, the output is a full listing of articles and papers on which the review is based (David Tranfield, 2003).
- Study quality assessment: Analysis of the articles that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria specified in the protocol. The main objective of this step is to do the systematic literature review based on the best-quality evidence (David Tranfield, 2003)

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- Data extraction and monitoring progress: For the data extraction, it is necessary to have a form to reduce bias. For that reason, in this research a pro-form will be used. The pro-form contains the name of the author, title, year published, journal, abstract, theories used, definitions given, method, geographic area, industry, contributions/findings and additional comments (Walker, 2010).
- Data synthesis: The main purpose on this step is to summarize and integrate the findings of the study. It will help to see the results of the systematic review in detail and in a clear way (David Tranfield, 2003).

3. Stage 3: Reporting results and conclusions

- Report of the results: The success of a systematic literature review is based on how easy will be for the reader to understand the main ideas of the extensive literature that was used. The results will be shown in a form that will include definitions, antecedents, perspectives, dimensions and evolution of the brand commitment construct.

4. Explain the differences between brand commitment and brand loyalty

Although brand loyalty has been extensively studied, the relation between this construct and brand commitment is still ambiguous. Different authors have different approaches regarding the relation between brand loyalty and brand commitment. Based on the perspectives and definitions found in the literature of brand commitment and brand loyalty, a form with the main differences will be developed.

5. Describe the application of brand commitment and brand loyalty in brand-consumer relationships

As the final step, the application of both constructs in a real consumer-brand relationship is explained. How is the behaviour of a committed customer and how is the purchase behaviour of a loyal one, the possible consequences of commitment and loyal relationships for companies and customers and implications for future research.

3. CONDUCTING A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 PLANNING THE REVIEW

The main purpose of conducting a systematic literature review is to improve the quality of literature research by making it in a systematic, transparent and reproducible way that reduce bias and subjective results and conclusions (Tranfield et al., 2003). The execution of the systematic literature review requires inclusion and exclusion criteria to delimitated the investigation in order to study only the best-quality and relevant literature about brand commitment. (Fathima & Iglesias, 2009; Tranfield et al., 2003). The systematic literature review presented in this paper was conducted including journal articles of marketing and branding, written in English and published from 1998 to 2015.

Two of the most well recognised databases – EBSCO and Scopus- were chosen to develop the articles search. The keywords “brand commitment” were the picked term to develop the search in databases. Two filters were applied in this initial step: the year (1998 to 2015) and the language (English). From the resulting articles, the ones that were published in the journals that fulfil the inclusion criteria (Table 1) were selected and then, the articles that met the exclusion criteria (Table 2) were discarded.

Table 1: Inclusion Criteria

No.	Criteria	Reasons for inclusion
1	Academic publication	Peer-reviewed journal articles
2	Articles in English	Most relevant journals in the area of research are written in this language
3	Quantitative / qualitative / conceptual	To consider empirical evidence and literature reviews
4	Brand commitment	Topic under study
5	Customer commitment	Closely related to brand commitment
6	Journals of marketing 2, 3, 4, and 4* included in the Journal Quality List, ABS 2015	Top-quality journals in the area of research
7	Journals in the area of branding	Area related to the topic under study

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Table 2: Exclusion Criteria

No.	Criteria	Reasons for exclusion
1	Pre-1998	Consider the recent articles on the topic
2	Case study	Too specific and subjective
3	Organizational commitment / Employee brand commitment / Community commitment	The review is concerned with consumer behaviour

The criteria used to determine the quality of journals was the score the journal received in the Journal Quality List, on the ABS 2015 column. Only journals with 2, 3, 4 and 4* score were selected. Also all branding journals of the list were selected in spite of their score because branding is the central area of study in the review.

Articles resulting from the search which refers to organizational commitment (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005), employee brand commitment (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010) and community commitment (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010) were excluded from the review because a consumer purchase behaviour approach was necessary in order to accomplish the purpose of investigating consumer commitment to a brand. Also case studies were excluded due to their specificity and subjective nature.(Kimpakorn & Dinnie, 2009).

3.2 EXECUTING THE REVIEW

A final sample of 97 articles were selected to be included in the review. Every article was read and analysed.

This set of articles were organized in a proforma with it respective journal, author(s), year of publication and database. All of them are shown in Appendix A.

After a conscious reading, some of the articles didn't have any useful information but most of them contain important information about the construct.

The resulting information was organized by definitions, perspectives, dimensions, antecedents and important facts to have a general view of all the information contain in the articles. The information is presented in this paper in the following way:

- Appendix B: Definitions
- Appendix C: Perspectives
- Appendix D: Dimensions

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- Appendix E: Antecedents
- Appendix F: Important facts

3.3 REPORTING RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.3.1 DEFINITIONS OF BRAND COMMITMENT

The relevance of consumer brand commitment is well recognized in the marketing literature (Belaid & Behi, 2011; Hur, Ahn, & Kim, 2011; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Raju, Unnava, & Montgomery, 2009; Royo-Vela & Casamassima, 2011), as this construct is a key element in the consumer-brand relationships, considered to promote pro-relational motivations, cognitions and behaviours (Sung & Campbell, 2009). Nine definitions of brand commitment, found when conducting the systematic literature review, are shown in Table 3. The table is organized from the greater to the lower number of citations of each definition. The references are also shown in chronological order.

Table 3: Definitions of brand commitment

<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference(s)</i>
Brand commitment is an attachment feeling resulting from a previous satisfactory interaction with a brand, which will drive the consumer to use the brand over time and withstand changes, creating an important and valuable relationship with it.	(Hsiao et al., 2015; Germann, Grewal, Ross, & Srivastava, 2014a; Kemp et al., 2014; Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014; Eisend & Stokburger-Sauer, 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Park, Eisingerich, Pol, & Park, 2013; Tsai, 2011; Aradhita, 2012; Batra et al., 2012; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Mathew et al., 2012; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Sung, Choi, & Tinkham, 2012; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; A. R. Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2011; Jones, Fox, Taylor, & Fabrigar, 2010; Raju, Unnava, & Montgomery, 2009b; Sung & Campbell, 2009; Desai & Raju, 2007; Fullerton, 2005; Escalas & Bettman, 2003)
Brand commitment is the economic, emotional and psychological connection that a consumer may have towards a brand with the expectation to create a long-term relationship.	(Chang & Wu, 2014; Kemp et al., 2014; Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Sung & Choi, 2010; Heere & Dickson, 2008; Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Warrington & Shim, 2000)
Brand commitment is an emotional investment from a customer towards a brand. It includes feelings of loyalty and the expectation to obtain emotional and functional benefits from it.	(Danes, Hess, Story, & Vorst, 2012; Hur et al., 2011; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011; Pillai & Goldsmith, 2008)
Brand commitment is a long-term relationship between a customer and a brand in which both parts believe that an effort is necessary in order to maintain the relationship.	(Louis & Lombart, 2010; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005)

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Brand commitment represents the strength of the relationship between a consumer and a brand, making the preferred brand the only acceptable choice to purchase. (Noel Albert et al., 2013; Tuškej et al., 2013; Magnoni & Roux, 2012)

Brand commitment is the link between the customer self and a brand, where the customer thinks that the preferred brand is an integral part of his/her life. (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010; Raju, Unnava, & Montgomery, 2009a)

Brand commitment is the attitudinal and behavioural disposition a consumer may have toward a certain brand, resulting in a higher probability of purchasing that brand over alternative choices. (Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002)

Brand commitment represents the degree to which the consumer is attitudinally loyal to a brand. (Srivastava & Owens, 2010)

Brand commitment is the enduring attitude or desire for a preferred brand. (Lacey, 2007)

A common definition found in the literature states that brand commitment is the desire of the customer to maintain a valued relationship with a brand due to a previous satisfactory interaction with it (e.g. Hsiao et al., 2015; Mathew et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2010). Commitment is a key relational construct that encourages each of the parties involved to work at maintaining the relationship, to avoid alternative relations with other parties, and to reduce the perception of risk (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002). Committed customers want to continue the valued relationship with the brand in the long-term by re-using, re-buying and re-patronising (Shuv-Ami, 2012), and they have the confidence that the functional and affective benefits from maintaining the relationship are greater than the benefits from ending it (Hur et al., 2011).

One of the most notorious differences in the definitions of brand commitment is its attitudinal or attitudinal and behavioural nature. While for some authors (e.g. Srivastava & Owens, 2010), brand commitment is an attitudinal disposition, others (e.g. Ashley & Leonard, 2009) consider the construct to be attitudinal and behavioural. The different dimensions and perspectives of brand commitment are discussed further ahead.

So many definitions may confuse every person who is trying to understand what brand commitment is. After analysing the literature and its different perspectives, a unique

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definition of brand commitment is given in this paper in order to clarify the concept and its usefulness.

Brand commitment could be defined as a strong attachment feeling with a brand, resulting from a previous interaction with it, where feelings of satisfaction and trust were developed. It includes both a behavioural component and an attitudinal one reflecting an emotional and a rational dimension. It's a relationship the consumer is willing to maintain in time.

3.3.2 DIMENSIONS OF BRAND COMMITMENT

On the literature, most authors identify three major dimensions where brand commitment relationships develop: affective commitment, calculative commitment and normative commitment. They represent the attitudinal and behavioural sides of the construct, being calculative commitment the cognitive and rational part and affective commitment the emotional one. The three dimensions are shown in detail on Table 4.

Table 4: Dimensions of brand commitment

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference(s)</i>
Affective	Is the emotional attachment that a customer has with a brand based on identification and shared values. When it happens, consumers will have positive advocacy intentions and will promote the brand via word-of-mouth. Customers who are affectively committed are less expensive to retain, less vulnerable to loss from competitive efforts and also are willing to pay a higher price. The relationship with the brand is broader because psychological emotions control the functional and economic factors, and deeper because the consumers identify themselves with the brand and become less sensitive to price or convenience.	(Hsiao et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2014; Kemp et al., 2014; Lariviere, L. Keiningham, Cooil, Aksoy, & C. Malthouse, 2014; Noel Albert et al., 2013; Tuškej et al., 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Aradhita, 2012; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Mason & Simmons, 2012; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Tanford, Raab, & Kim, 2012; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Iglesias et al., 2011; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011; Tsai, 2011; Jones et al., 2010; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Sweeney & Swait, 2008; Kim et al., 2008; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; M. D. Johnson et al., 2006; Fullerton, 2005; Gustafsson et al., 2005;

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		Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002; Hansen, 1999)
Calculative/ Continuance	Calculative commitment results from calculating the functional benefits. It refers to the need of a customer to maintain a relationship with a brand because there are no other alternatives, the costs of switching to other brands are too high, there are not cheaper alternatives or they develop positive brand personality judgments. Its principal motives are the consumer's belief in the superiority of a brand, the perception of the differences between brands and a notably high perceived risk during purchase.	(Hsiao et al., 2015; Kemp et al., 2014; Hamilton et al., 2014; Lariviere et al., 2014; Noel Albert et al., 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Mason & Simmons, 2012; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Tanford et al., 2012; Tsai, 2011; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011; Iglesias et al., 2011; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Jones et al., 2010; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Kim et al., 2008; Sweeney & Swait, 2008; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; M. D. Johnson et al., 2006; Fullerton, 2005; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002)
Normative	It refers to the degree of obligation a consumer has to purchase a brand. Social pressure, need for approval or motivation to comply with normative beliefs are the main characteristics of this dimension.	(Hsiao et al., 2015; Lariviere et al., 2014; Tuškej et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2010)

Affective commitment:

Refers to the psychological attachment where a self-brand connection is created (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Hamilton et al., 2014; Hsiao et al., 2015; Iglesias et al., 2011b; Kemp et al., 2014; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Tanford et al., 2012; Tuškej et al., 2013; Vivek et al., 2012). It is based on identification, loyalty, affiliation and shared values (Noel Albert et al., 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Aradhita, 2012; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Fullerton, 2005; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Tanford et al., 2012; Vivek et al., 2012). Affectively committed

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consumers can become advocates for the brand, promote it via word-of-mouth, purchase it over time and be willing to pay a premium price (Aradhita, 2012; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Kemp et al., 2014; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Magnoni & Roux, 2012). They are also less vulnerable to switch the brand and less expensive to retain (Kemp et al., 2014).

Continuance commitment:

Is the rational connection between the consumer and a brand in which the consumer studies the best alternatives to obtain economic and functional benefits. The consumer choose to stay in the relationship when there is a lack of alternatives or there is no better options, the switching costs are too high or when he/she has developed positive brand personality judgements. (Noel Albert et al., 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Fullerton, 2005; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Hamilton et al., 2014; Iglesias et al., 2011b; Kemp et al., 2014; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Mason & Simmons, 2012; Sweeney & Swait, 2008; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011)

Normative commitment:

This dimension is the less known in the literature and takes into consideration the degree of obligation that a consumer may have to purchase a certain brand. The consumer may feel obligated because of his/hers ideological beliefs, social pressure or need for approval (Hsiao et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2010a; Lariviere et al., 2014; Tuškej et al., 2013).

Even if the literature states that there are three main dimensions of brand commitment, the conclusion of this paper is that only an emotional and a rational dimensions are part of the construct. Normative commitment was left behind because is not as deeper feeling as the other two dimensions making easily for consumers to change their minds if they are purchasing the brand. Also if social trend changes, the purchase decision will change as well.

3.3.3 ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND COMMITMENT

In order to achieve long-lasting relationships between the consumer and the brand, certain preconditions must be developed. These conditions depend on the previous work of the brand to attract and capture consumers and the consumer response to these stimuli.

The antecedents of brand commitment found in the present literature review are shown in Table 5 by number of references and in chronological order.

Table 5: Antecedents of brand commitment

<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference (s)</i>
Trust	Consumer's willingness to rely on the brand to perform its stated function. It reflects assumptions about reliability, honesty and altruism.	(Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014; Kemp, Jillapalli, & Becerra, 2014; Hur, Ahn, & Kim, 2011; Louis & Lombart, 2010; Story & Hess, 2010; Lacey, 2007; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001)
Satisfaction	Refers to the experiential attachment or the evaluation of the brand-use experience, and it is considered to be greater if the outcomes resulting from the relationship with the brand are pleasing and gratifying.	(Hsiao, Shen, & Chao, 2015; Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Sung & Choi, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009; Evanschitzky, Iyer, Plassmann, Niessing, & Meffert, 2006)
Brand identification global	International recognition and position in consumers mind that the brand has	(Kemp et al., 2014; Noel Albert et al., 2013; Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013)
Brand responsibility social	Set of initiatives related to a company's stakeholders and societal obligations, in order to guarantee the long-term welfare of a community.	(Kemp et al., 2014; Eisingerich & Rubera, 2010)
Attachment to the brand	Emotional link between a brand and a consumer	(Ilicic & Webster, 2014; Louis & Lombart, 2010)
Attitude toward the brand/Attitude strength	Combining beliefs about attributes of the brand	(Kemp et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2008)
Perceived value	Customer personal perception about the product performance. It is the comparison between what he or she receives and what he or she was expecting.	(Kemp et al., 2014; M. D. Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber, 2006)

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<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference (s)</i>
Brand Love	Construct that includes multiple cognitions, emotions and behaviours and reflects consumer personal values.	(Noel Albert et al., 2013; Batra et al., 2012)
Brand affect	Positive emotional answer from the consumer after using the brand.	(Hur et al., 2011; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002)
Relationship investment	The extent to which a company devotes resources, efforts, and attention in order to maintain or enhance relationships with customers.	(Sung & Choi, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009)
Quality alternatives	of Consumers' perception about the benefits and value that the different brands have to offer.	(Sung & Choi, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009)
Involvement	It represents the degree of personal importance and relevance that a customer gives to a certain brand.	(Coulter et al., 2003; Warrington & Shim, 2000)
Service quality	Customers' perception about brand effort to deliver product efficiently.	(Hsiao et al., 2015)
Referent influence	Importance of others perceptions and opinions about the product.	(Kemp et al., 2014)
Perceived risk/Risk aversion	Possible negative consequences of switching the brand.	(Choi & Ahluwalia, 2013)
Brand passion	Extremely positive attitude toward a brand based an emotional attachment.	(Albert et al., 2013)
Brand identification	Brands ability to integrate its values with the consumers to create emotional bonds.	(Albert et al., 2013; Tuškej et al., 2013)
Performance	How the product is doing	(Shuv-Ami, 2012)

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<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference (s)</i>
	according to expectations	
Loyalty	Emotional attachment that represents a high degree of involvement and the intention to repurchase the preferred brand.	(Shuv-Ami, 2012)
Gender	Human condition. It can be male or female	(Tifferet & Herstein, 2012)
Brand credibility	Believability of products performance and the certainty that it would give customer what it promises.	(Mathew et al., 2012)
Brand personality	Characteristics of the customers personality that are reflected by the brand	(Louis & Lombart, 2010)
Resistance to change	Opposition to use other product alternatives	(Srivastava & Owens, 2010)
Brand innovativeness	Consumers' perception of the capability of the brand to provide new and useful solutions to their needs.	(Eisingerich & Rubera, 2010)
Brand customer orientation	The extent to which the company and its employees focus their efforts on understanding customers and satisfying their needs	(Eisingerich & Rubera, 2010)
Brand self-relevance/Self-connection	The perceived suitability to express oneself symbolically and socially by using certain brand	(Eisingerich & Rubera, 2010)
Economic value	Consumer perception regarding the price and value of the product on the market.	(Lacey, 2007)
Switching costs	The costs that the consumer must incur to purchase a	(Lacey, 2007)

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<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Reference (s)</i>
	different brand.	
Customer recognition	Recognition and identification that the company makes its customers feel important.	(Lacey, 2007)
Shared values	Common beliefs, goals and policies that a consumer shares with a brand.	(Lacey, 2007)
Confidence benefits	The resource relief experienced by customers due to a conviction in correct product performance, lower purchasing anxiety, and knowing what to expect.	(Lacey, 2007)
Preferential treatment	Brand efforts to give special treatment to some selected customers.	(Lacey, 2007)
Ideological position	Individual and personal interpretation of culture and social influence.	(Coulter et al., 2003)
Brand experimentation	Consumer's previous experience in the use of the brand.	(Coulter et al., 2003)

According to the main two dimensions of brand commitment described above (affective and continuance), the antecedents may be divided into the ones that respond to an emotional nature (affective commitment) or to a cognitive one (calculative commitment).

The antecedents that show the affective commitment dimension are: trust, satisfaction, customer recognition, loyalty, shared values, brand self-relevance, attachment, brand affect, attitude toward the brand, brand personality, brand love, referent influence, brand passion and identification. According to literature, the most relevant antecedents related to the affective commitment dimension are trust, satisfaction, attachment and attitude toward the brand. These four constructs are going to be explain in more detail.

The construct of satisfaction is one of the most recognized antecedent of brand commitment in the marketing literature. Customer satisfaction is a transactional driver that creates a positive emotional response to the attributes, quality and value that a certain brand is offering (Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014). It is a predictor of future consumer

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behaviour and it influences the opinion that the customer have of the brand and also his or her purchase intention in the future (Hsiao et al., 2015). A satisfied consumer is more likely to purchase the brand a second time and more likely to start building a relationship with it. (Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Story & Hess, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009; Sung & Choi, 2010).

Another important antecedent of commitment is attachment to the brand, which is considered an emotional and psychological reaction where the customer feels the necessity or obligation to purchase the brand (Ilicic & Webster, 2014). From the customers point of view, to be attached to a brand does not necessarily mean that he or she trusts it. Trust is characterized by the intention to rely on the brand because there is confidence that the brand will never disappoint him/her (Kemp et al., 2014). In this way, trust would be the result of a positive attitude towards the brand that is characterized by the desire that the brand will meet all expectations and the predisposition to answer in a positive way to a brand stimuli (Kemp et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2008).

The antecedents related to calculative commitment dimension are: perceived value, resistance to change, perceived risk, quality of alternatives, switching costs, economic value, preferential treatment, performance, brand innovativeness, brand customer orientation, brand social responsibility, relationship investment, brand global identification, ideological position, brand experimentation, brand credibility and service quality. The most relevant ones that are going to be explained in this paper are perceived value, relationship investment and quality of alternatives.

Perceived value is based on the consumer personal opinion about the product performance. It includes perceptions about the price and emotional retribution. Another way to understand it is seeing it as the result of the comparison made by the consumer between what he/she received and what he/she was expecting. When the received product exceeds consumer's expectations, the perceived value becomes a brand commitment antecedent. (Kemp et al., 2014; M. D. Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber, 2006).

The brand also has to make an effort in order to gain the biggest amount of committed customers and this is why companies invest not only in the product, but also in the relationship with customers. The relationship investment is defined as the rational customer's perception about company's devotion of efforts, sources and service strategies in order to gain or maintain the relationship with them. (Sung & Choi, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009).

Quality of alternatives is another important antecedent of brand commitment relationship. It refers to the judgement made by the customer about the brand and other similar products or substitutes. Customers tend to make an evaluation comparing the products based in multiple reference points. (Sung & Choi, 2010; Sung & Campbell, 2009).

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3.3.4 PERSPECTIVES OF BRAND COMMITMENT AND ITS RELATION WITH BRAND LOYALTY

As a result of the articles sample analysis, different approaches of brand commitment were discovered. Some of this perspectives are related to brand loyalty and its differences or similarities with brand commitment. The most relevant approaches are shown in this paper.

One of the perspectives suggests that brand commitment is an antecedent of loyalty by creating an attachment to the brand (Evanschitzky et al., 2006). Brand commitment is also a result from satisfaction and trust, as satisfaction influences trust, trust influences commitment, and commitment influences loyalty (Miquel-Romero, Caplliure-Giner, & Adame-Sánchez, 2014).

Some authors argue that only the affective dimension of brand commitment is necessary in order to achieve true brand loyalty (Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Hansen, 2004; M. D. Johnson et al., 2006), while others claim that both continuance and affective commitment are needed to develop loyalty.(Evanschitzky et al., 2006).

Other perspective presents that brand commitment is the same as brand loyalty, arguing that both constructs focus in the importance of the emotional attachment to the brand that creates a long-term relationship.(Fournier, 1998; Matthews et al., 2014; Thomson et al., 2005). But not all of the articles states that brand commitment and brand loyalty are conceptually the same, for some authors brand commitment is a similar concept to brand involvement, defining both constructs as a positive feeling of attachment to the brand. (Wolny & Mueller, 2013).

The relation of brand commitment with other constructs just as satisfaction and passion were also found in the studied literature. For some authors brand passion is an antecedent of brand commitment in order to obtain consumer intentions to pay a higher price and have a positive word-of-mouth. (Noel Albert et al., 2013). On the other hand commitment is stronger than satisfaction, as satisfaction is backward-looking and commitment is forward-looking (Wolny & Mueller, 2013).

Perhaps the most relevant approach states that commitment is an attitudinal construct while loyalty is behavioural. Loyalty is seen as a weaker construct because it reflects the repeated purchase of a brand in order to simplify the decision making process while commitment is attitudinal and reflects the emotional connection with the brand. (Tuškej et al., 2013). In other words, in the absence of the preferred brand, committed consumers will not change the brand while loyal ones will switch it and buy another brand.(Chang & Wu, 2014; Warrington & Shim, 2000).

Brand loyalty is an extensively studied construct in marketing literature (Heere & Dickson, 2008). The concept has been researched using two main perspectives:as a behavioural

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construct and as an attitudinal one (Odin et al., 2001). In the first one, loyalty is considered a merely behavioural construct where simply repeat buying is perceived (Dick & Basu, 1994; Odin et al., 2001). In the attitudinal approach, loyalty is seen as an attitude where the focus is the consumer's psychological commitment in the purchase (Odin et al., 2001).

Loyalty has been defined as "the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage" (Dick & Basu, 1994, p.99), or a deeply held intent to rebuy or re-patronize a brand in the future (El-Manstrly & Harrison, 2013; Oliver, 1999). This means that brand loyalty is a behavioural answer to an evaluative psychological process (Odin et al., 2001).

Different authors have different approaches regarding the relation between brand loyalty and brand commitment. (Kim et al., 2008). Beyond the desire of reacquiring a preferred brand, a consumer also can desire to be committed to it (Oliver, 1999).

3.3.5 CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION OF BRAND COMMITMENT

Brand commitment, viewed as an important construct in marketing literature, began to be used in the last years of the decade of 1970, when some authors such as John L. Lastovicka and David M. Gardner in 1977 started introducing the concept defining it as a psychological and emotional attachment to a brand. (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Warrington & Shim, 2000). But as brand commitment involves a psychological state (Jones et al., 2010a), there is evidence that commitment as a psychological construct was used in marketing literature before this time. In 1971 Charles A. Kiesler defined commitment as a psychological concept in marketing literature as "the pledging or binding of an individual to behavioural acts". (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Mathew et al., 2012; Pillai & Goldsmith, 2008; Raju et al., 2009b; Srivastava & Owens, 2010).

The systematic literature review was conducted with publications from 1998 to 2015, where the evolution of brand commitment concept has no significant change in definition but in perspectives.

The main definition that focus on the creation of a long-lasting and valuable relationship has remained during these 16 years, but some changes especially in the attitudinal component of the relationship have been set in the last years.

During the first years of the researched period - 1998 to 2006 – some authors argued that to create and maintain the relationship over time, an effort from the parts was necessary. This means that for both, the customer and the brand, some sacrifices were necessary in order to continue the relationship. (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Gustafsson et al., 2005). Later, since 2006 to 2010 brand commitment relationship started to be more related to customer personality, self-identification with the brand and

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shared values. (Raju et al., 2009a; Srivastava & Owens, 2010; Walsh et al., 2010). More recently – 2011 to 2015 - brand commitment is seen as an emotional investment, where the brand constitutes the only acceptable choice to purchase and the customer expects to obtain emotional and functional benefits from it. (Noel Albert et al., 2013; Danes et al., 2012; Hur et al., 2011; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Pillai & Goldsmith, 2008; Tuškej et al., 2013; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011).

Talking about perspectives, in the beginning of the century some authors began to argue that brand commitment construct was different from brand loyalty, saying that while brand loyalty refers to the behavioural side of the relationship, brand commitment is attitudinal. This statement was dead during the middle of the first decade and was retaken in 2011 and developed in the past five years. (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Chang & Wu, 2014; Coulter et al., 2003; Shuv-Ami, 2012; Tuškej et al., 2013; Warrington & Shim, 2000).

4. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

After seeing the antecedents, definitions, perspectives and dimensions of brand commitment, it is also important to know the real consequences and positive results of a brand commitment relationship.

Brand commitment relationship is a trustful predictor of customer purchase intention in the future.(Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Fullerton, 2005; Hur et al., 2011; Ilicic & Webster, 2014; Srivastava & Owens, 2010). This fact will result in an increased of sales and growth for the business. (Kemp et al., 2014)

A committed customer opinion about a brand is biased because he may be not believed in negative information he received about his preferred brand and there will not be an acceptable second choice to him.(Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Ahluwalia, 2000; Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Chang & Wu, 2014; Desai & Raju, 2007; Germann et al., 2014; Raju et al., 2009a; Raju & Unnava, 2006; Srivastava & Owens, 2010). This customer will be more resistant to change(Choi & Ahluwalia, 2013; Pillai & Goldsmith, 2008), be willing to pay a price premium (Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Mathew et al., 2012), generate a positive WOM and advocacy intentions about the brand.(Noël Albert & Merunka, 2013; Ashley & Leonard, 2009; Fullerton, 2005; Hsiao et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2011; Mathew et al., 2012; Srivastava & Owens, 2010; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Also he will become less demanding, more trusting and more vulnerable.(Story & Hess, 2010).

Some limitations can be found in the present study. Although two well-recognized databases (EBSCO and Scopus) were used to conduct the review of the brand commitment literature, this limits the number of articles for the study. Other factors considered in the inclusion criteria, such as language, the consideration of selected journals, and time delimitation, could lead to ignore relevant articles of the subject.

When conducting the systematic review of the brand commitment literature, it became clear the connexion of the construct with brand loyalty. Although brand loyalty has been extensively studied, the real relation between this construct and brand commitment is still ambiguous. Future research could focus on the causes and consequences of the relationship between the two constructs, considering different contexts and product categories. It is also important to study the similarities and differences with other constructs just as involvement, satisfaction and trust.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

- The development of the systematic literature review allows to synthesize the different definitions, dimensions and perspectives of brand commitment construct, and get to a solid definition that will help companies to understand the existing relationship the consumers have with their brands. Brand commitment is finally defined as a strong attachment feeling with a brand, resulting from a previous interaction with it, where feelings of satisfaction and trust were developed. It includes both a behavioural component and an attitudinal one reflecting an emotional and a rational dimension. It is also a relationship the consumer is willing to maintain in time.
- Three dimensions of the construct were found in the literature: affective, continuance and normative commitment. The affective dimension reflects the emotional attachment with the brand. Continuance dimension respond to the rational aspect of the purchase where the consumer is buying the brand because is used to buy it or is the alternative with the lowest price. Finally, normative commitment is the dimension that reflects the sense of obligation consumers experience to purchase the brand in respond of social preasure or religion.
- The differences between brand commitment and brand loyalty presented in the paper clarify the confusion in the definition of both constructs and make clear their limits and characteristics. Brand loyalty and brand commitment are different constructs where brand commitment implies brand loyalty, but brand loyalty does not necessarilly imply brand commitment.
- The execution of this paper opens the gate for future research where brand loyalty could also be studied and analized to find its implications on consumer-brand relationships.
- In order to understand consumer-brand relationships it is important to deeply know the antecedents and outcomes of the brand commitment and brand loyalty constructs. Between 1998 and 2015 the evolution of brand commitment concept has no significant change in definition but in perspectives.
- The antecedents found in the literature wich are necessities in order to brand commitment to exist, may be divided into the ones that respond to affective dimension of the construct and the ones that met the continuance dimension. The antecedents that show the affective commitment dimension are: trust, satisfaction, customer recognition, loyalty, shared values, brand self-relevance, attachment, brand affect, attitude toward the brand, brand personality, brand love, referent

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influence, brand passion and identification. The antecedents related to calculative commitment dimension are: perceived value, resistance to change, perceived risk, quality of alternatives, switching costs, economic value, preferential treatment, performance, brand innovativeness, brand customer orientation, brand social responsibility, relationship investment, brand global identification, ideological position, brand experimentation, brand credibility and service quality.

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