

ONLINE CORPORATE BRAND IMAGES AND CONSUMER LOYALTY

Sharifah Faridah Syed Alwi*

Faculty of Business & Accountancy, University of Malaya

ABSTRACT

It has been suggested that the website of a company should be considered as a means to strengthen the image of the brand. Recent online branding literature (Supphellen and Nysveen, 2001; de Chernatony and Christodoulides, 2004; Stuart and Jones, 2004; de Chernatony et al., 2006) highlights that both the functional and emotional aspects of brand characterisation, such as corporate brand images (CBI), are important to determine online consumer responses. The impact of corporate brands on the Internet has been the object of recent study. Lack of empirical research in this subject has led to the ongoing debate on whether online corporate brand values are similar to an offline context. Recognising the importance of corporate brands in an online context and in the comprehension of consumer responses, the study investigates what the corporate brand images for online context are, and whether or not they play any role in determining the consumer responses (loyalty). Using the personification approach, the research investigates the CBI of a book retailer that sells exclusively online. The findings show that corporate brand images such as *Agreeableness, Innovation, Chic, Informality and Competence* are significant in determining the corporate brand image of the online e-tailer and are related to consumer loyalty. The practical contribution of the study and its managerial implications are in the provision of strategic directions and positioning the corporate brand in an online context.

Keywords: *Online Branding, Online Corporate Brand Images, Consumer Loyalty*

♣ Corresponding Author: Sharifah Faridah Syed Alwi, Faculty of Business & Accountancy, University of Malaya, Lembah Pantai, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. E-mail: faridah23@um.edu.my