

# Does It Pay Off? Brand Knowledge Dissemination and Its Effects on Corporate Brand Pride, Brand- and Service Behaviour of Frontline Personnel

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the effects of brand knowledge dissemination and its influence on corporate brand pride as well as subsequent brand- and service behaviour of service personnel. To achieve this aim, a survey was carried out on a sample of 325 frontline employees with direct customer contact in Germany. The results show that brand knowledge dissemination, as a central aspect of internal brand management (IBM), positively affects corporate brand pride of employees, which in turn influence brand- and service supporting behaviour (e. g. dissemination of service complaints). In addition, moderation analysis revealed that perceived management support for corporate social responsibility (CSR) positively influence the relationship of corporate brand pride and specific brand- and service behaviour. The findings of this study highlight how corporate brand pride of employees can be fostered and how employees can become service champion.

**Keywords:** affective events theory, brand knowledge dissemination, brand supporting behaviour, corporate brand experience, corporate brand pride, internal branding, internal brand management, service behaviour

## 1. Introduction

Success of service organization depend heavily on the interaction between service employee and customer (Lüthendorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014, Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak, 2009). Here, frontline personnel play a central role as they are responsible for delivering high quality service and shaping customer brand perceptions (Morhart et al., 2009). Keller (2003) emphasize the relevance of service employee behaviour by stating that each contact with the service employee influence the way the consumer experience the brand. For this reason, many studies try to answer the question how corporation can foster positive attitudes of frontline employees – which in turn shall induce profitable customer or brand interactions (e. g. Jung, Yoo & Arnold, 2021; Garas, Mahran & Mohamed, 2018; Lages & Piercy, 2012). However, service firms only have partly control over the employee/customer interactions (Baker, Rapp & Meyer, 2014). Thus, service firms often focus on IBM – as they do have direct control over their brand positioning and advertising. In general, IBM refers to focussed corporate actions to promote a brand to employees, thereby motivating them to strengthen the corporate brand and become brand ambassadors (Morhart et al., 2009). Empirical research on IBM in a service-context often highlight job satisfaction, organizational or brand commitment and identification as central drivers of service success (e. g. Garas et al., 2018; Du Preez, Bendixen & Abratt, 2017). Interestingly, (corporate brand) pride has been widely neglected, which depicts a research gap. Even though corporate brand pride is found to be a strong intrinsic motivator and reliable predictor of brand supporting and customer-oriented behaviour (Egeler, Abed & Böttgen, 2022; Abed & Böttgen, 2022, Kraemer, Weiger, Gouthier & Hammerschmidt, 2020; Verbeke, Belschak & Bagozzi, 2004). Similarly, service research often focusses on either brand supporting or service behaviour (e. g. Taku, Saini & Abratt, 2022; Jung et al., 2021; Bravo, Pina & Tirado, 2021). However, this distinct differentiation might be not adequate as for example service brands strive for excellence in their business and at the same time want to establish a strong service brand. In addition, IBM studies often times use unidimensional measures as a meta-analysis of Afshardoost, Eshaghi and Bowden (2021) lately revealed. Here, specificity regarding particular IBM measures is missing. These limitations depict an avenue for further exploration. Therefore, this research makes a number of contributions. First, this study further investigate how corporate brand pride of frontline employees can be stimulated through particular IBM actions, namely brand knowledge dissemination. In doing so, this paper

responds to calls of further research (e. g. Kraemer et al., 2020). As service corporation need to ensure that their service personnel “both understand the brand promise and are able to deliver it in a consistent manner”, we choose brand knowledge dissemination as one way in doing so, “is to communicate brand information directly to employees” (Baker et al., 2014, p. 642). Literature provides support for this approach, as brand communication is a key dimension of IBM (Deepa & Baral, 2021) and it can represent a central source for employee corporate brand experience (Egeler et al., 2022). Second, the present research overcomes previous limitations in scope and highlight the influence of corporate brand pride on specific customer-oriented behaviour (service orientation and dissemination of service complaints) as well as specific brand-supporting behaviour (participation in brand development and participation in online brand community) of service personnel. Third, according to Du Preez et al. (2017) most of the IBM studies in the service sector are often limited to the hotel or banking industry. As this research comprise frontline employees from various service sectors (e. g. retail), we add value to existing research supporting and enriching findings in case of generalizability. Fourth, moderation analysis highlights the importance of perceived management support for CSR with regard to brand- and service behaviour.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

The affective-events-theory (AET) developed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) provide a macro structure for this study. In general, AET provides an explanation for the interaction of work-events, work-environment features, emotions, attitudes and behaviour (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Besides the primary structure of the AET, which highlight “the structure, causes, and consequences of employees’ affective experiences at work” (Matta, Erol-Korkmaz, Johnson & Bicaksiz, 2014, p. 922), theory illustrate the interplay of work-environment features (e. g. dissemination of brand knowledge) and it’s direct effect on work-related attitudes (e. g. corporate brand pride), which in turn affect judgement driven behaviour (e. g. participation in brand development).

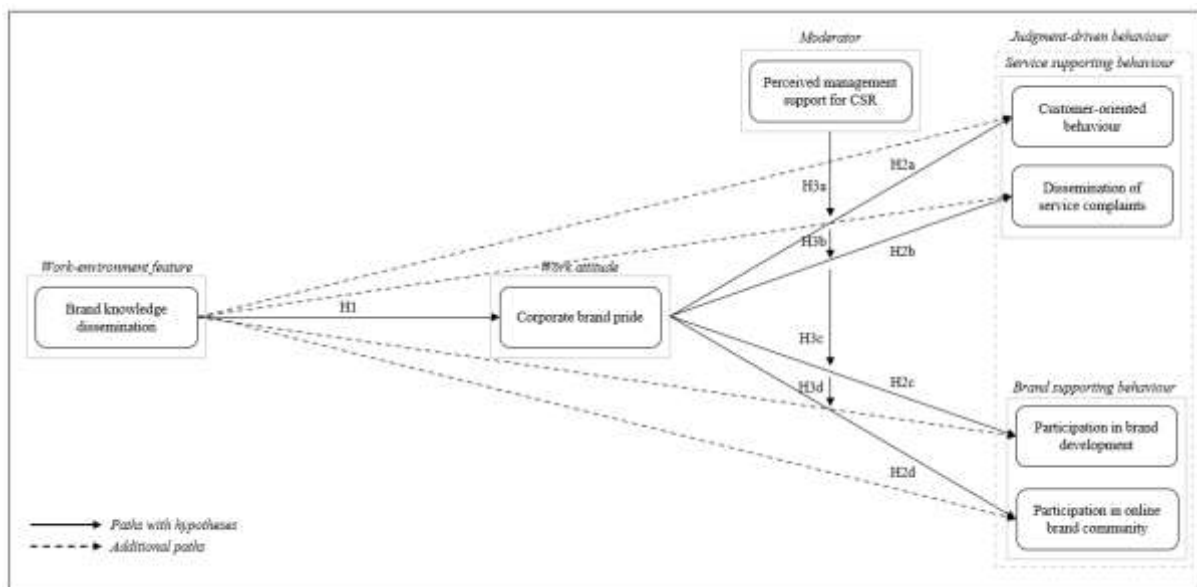


Figure 1. Theoretical model

### 2.1 Linking Brand Knowledge Dissemination and Corporate Brand Pride

As a central part of IBM brand knowledge dissemination can be defined as the transmission of “meaningful and relevant brand information to employees in order to aid in the provision of higher levels of customer service” (Baker et al., 2014, p. 643). In doing so, brand values, brand goals or more general information that helps the employee in understanding the brand and his/her role in delivering the brand message can be part of the employee focussed brand knowledge dissemination. Previous research found a variety of desirable attitudinal outcomes, for example: brand identification (Ngo, Nguyen, Huynh, Gregory & Cuong, 2019), brand involvement (Biedenbach, Biedenbach, Hultén & Tarnovskaya, 2022), organizational identification (Bravo et al., 2021), customer identification (Bravo et al., 2021), brand commitment (King & Grace, 2010). Moreover, direct positive effects on role clarity (King & Grace, 2010) have been found. Focusing on more general IBM measures, job satisfaction (Du Preez et al., 2017), brand awareness (Taku et al., 2022) and brand loyalty (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011) are positively influenced, too.

Hence, the communication of brand related information (e. g. brand goals) is an “attempt to influence employee beliefs about the brand” (Baker et al., 2014, p. 646) aiming to enhance the identification with the corporation. In

doing so, a brand or corporation communicate positive status-related information. For example, by using brand books (Burmam & König, 2011). These information or experience in turn should elicit pride of the employees as prior studies reveal that feelings of pride are directly interconnected to firms' achievements and successes (Abed & Büttgen, 2022; Boons, Stam & Barkema, 2015; Salerno, Laran & Janiszewski, 2015; Helm, 2013; Decrop & Derbaix, 2010) and work-environment features directly influence employees' attitudes (e. g. corporate brand pride) according to AET. Moreover, the disclosing of goals, values or achievements of a brand can help the employee to better understand the distinct identity of the corporation establishing a mutual understanding what values bind the corporation and recognizing "*the clear boundaries that differentiate the own organization from others*" (Löhdorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014, p. 314). Based on social identity theory this aspect should lead to a higher social identification and therefore to higher levels of corporate brand pride (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Hence, the following hypothesis were proposed:

*Hypothesis 1: Brand knowledge dissemination will positively affect employees' corporate brand pride*

### *2.2 Linking Corporate Brand Pride and Brand/Service Supporting Behaviour*

Previous research on brand supporting behaviour identified multiple antecedents, e. g. brand passion (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2013), positive emotions (Lovett, Peres & Shachar, 2013; Ladhari, 2007), satisfaction (Hagenbuch, Wiese, Dose & Bruce, 2008; Wagenheim & Bayón, 2007), brand commitment (Albert et al., 2013), product (Wolny & Mueller, 2013; Wangenheim & Bayon, 2007) or brand involvement (Wolny & Mueller, 2013) and corporate brand pride (Egeler et al., 2022; Abed & Büttgen, 2022). Even though, these latter studies focusing on corporate brand pride revealing positive effects of corporate brand pride on word-of-mouth in a brand context – the influence of corporate brand pride on more specific service behaviour still remains unclear.

Drawing on earlier findings (e. g. Egeler et al., 2022; Abed & Büttgen, 2022; Kraemer et al. 2020; Lythreatis, Mostafa & Wang, 2019; Baer, Dhensa-Kahlon, Colquitt, Rodell, Outlaw & Long, 2015; Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014; Verbeke et al. 2004), we suppose that corporate brand pride is a powerful intrinsic motivator leading to higher levels of brand- and service-oriented behaviour due to various reasons. First, employees with a high level of pride have an intense affiliation with the corporate brand leading to exceptional inner motivation (e. g. Kraemer et al. 2020; Lythreatis et al. 2019). Findings of Verbeke et al. (2004) support this view stating that emotions of pride lead to greater effort of sales personnel. According to Gouthier and Rhein (2011) pride (emotion) positively influence the (attitudinal) commitment to customer service. So, it can be assumed that service personnel with higher levels of corporate brand pride should try to serve the customer best and forward potential customer complaints. Therefore:

*Hypothesis 2a: Corporate brand pride has a positive effect on customer-oriented behaviour*

*Hypothesis 2b: Corporate brand pride has a positive effect on the dissemination of service complaints*

Besides the findings mentioned above, pride (emotion) has a positive influence on the creativity of service employees (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011), which is obviously important with regard to the participation in brand development. Moreover, Baer et al. (2015) showed that proud employees show enhanced reputation maintenance concerns, which should lead to an increased participation in online brand community actions. This leads to

*Hypothesis 2c: Corporate brand pride has a positive effect on the participation in brand development*

*Hypothesis 2d: Corporate brand pride has a positive effect on the participation in online brand community*

### *2.3 The Moderating Role of Perceived Management Support for CSR*

Latest research highlights the relevance of a firms environmental and social orientation on frontline employee outcomes (Gabler, Landers & Rapp, 2020). In doing so, Gabler et al. (2020) shows that both firm level orientations affect sales performance, word-of-mouth, turnover intention and job satisfaction of service personnel. Following these findings, we focus on the perceived management support for CSR – as supervisor behaviour and related perceptions play a crucial role in a service context (e. g. Kraemer, Gouthier & Heidenreich, 2017; Walsh, Yang, Dose & Hille, 2015; Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014). Hereby, perceived management support for CSR can be defined as "*The extent to which an employee believes that the company's executives or other member of management enable, encourage, or embrace the company's CSR activities*" (Korschun, Bhattacharya & Swain, 2014, p. 34). Focusing on brand- and customer-oriented behaviour, we suppose that perceived management support for CSR enhance the relationship of corporate brand pride and brand- as well service-oriented behaviour for various reasons. First, a positive assessment of achievements of the corporate brand, reputation or status lead to corporate brand pride (e. g. Salerno et al. 2015; Helm, 2013; Yim & Fock, 2013). As CSR perceptions enhance the image of a corporation or brand, it should lead to higher levels of corporate brand pride (Helm, 2013). This view is theoretically supported drawing on signaling theory (Spence, 1978). Second, pride refers to a high level of

identification with the corporation (e. g. Kraemer et al. 2020; Lythreatis et al. 2019). Following social identity theory, employees who perceive their management as more caring about society and environmental aspects should exhibit a higher social identification and vice versa higher levels of corporate brand pride. In particular, as work and the relating employer represent a fundamental part of a persons` self-concept (Gabler et al., 2020). Third, Oh and Kim (2019) show that work engagement is fostered by CSR perceptions, which in turn positively influence motivation and performance. Similarly, Gabler et al. (2020, p. 1000) state that employees “*may also become more creative in their jobs*”. This should help service personnel better adapting to customer actions, increasing service-oriented behaviour. Fourth, Gabler et al. (2020) show that environmental and social orientation can lead to a higher engagement in organizational citizenship behaviours. Therefore, as follows:

Hypothesis 3a: The perceived management support for CSR moderate the relationship between corporate brand pride and customer oriented behaviour.

Hypothesis 3b: The perceived management support for CSR moderate the relationship between corporate brand pride and dissemination of service complaints.

Hypothesis 3c: The perceived management support for CSR moderate the relationship between corporate brand pride and participation in brand development.

Hypothesis 3d: The perceived management support for CSR moderate the relationship between corporate brand pride and participation in online brand community.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Participants

To collect the data for this study, an online survey was conducted. In doing so, we focussed on service personnel with direct customer interaction, working for corporate brands operating in Germany. The survey began with a short introduction on the purpose of the study and its confidentiality. In total 343 completed questionnaire were returned. Following Nysveen and Pedersen`s (2015), we analysed the dataset for careless responses. Hereby, we analysed the average processing time (median), which was 10 min and 30 seconds. Respondents with a completion time shorter than 180 seconds, indicating superficial reading, were removed from the final sample. Next the names of the corporate (service) brands, which must be indicated, were checked. Though, it should be ensured that only person from corporate brands with own services participate in the study. The final sample comprise 325 observations. Of the service employees who participated, 197 (60.6%) were female and 128 (39.4%) were male. Around half of the respondents (51.7%) were employed at corporation with more than 1.000 employees. Nearly 35% of the participants hold a bachelor´s degree, as the lowest education level (34.5%). In addition, most of the participants are 35 years old or younger (80.6%).

#### 3.2 Measures

All the response scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 7 (‘strongly agree’). We used the translation-back translation procedure of Brislin (1980) regarding measures previously developed in English, as this study was conducted in Germany. Moreover, all used measured had been pre-tested regarding reliability, validity and mutual understanding. Table 1 in the appendix gives an overview of the complete item set used in this study.

*Brand knowledge dissemination.* We measured brand knowledge dissemination with the three-item scale used by Baker et al. (2014) and originally developed by King and Grace (2010). A sample item is: ‘[corporate brand name] communicates its brand message well to its employees’. The reliability of this scale was 0.86.

*Corporate brand pride.* Measurement items for corporate brand pride were used from Egeler et al. (2022), which have been originally developed by Gouthier and Rhein (2011). Hereby, the four-item-scale was used to ensure reliability of the central construct in our framework. A sample item is ‘I’m proud to be part of [corporate brand name]’. The Cronbach´s alpha coefficient was 0.93.

*Customer-oriented behaviour.* We used the four-item scale by Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014). A sample item is: ‘I always recommend the product or service that is best suited to the customer’s problem’. The reliability of the scale was 0.86.

*Dissemination of service complaints.* The four-item scale by Luria, Gal and Yagil (2009) was employed. A sample item is: ‘I report to management about incidents in which customers complain about serious problems’. The Cronbach´s alpha coefficient was 0.87.

*Participation in brand development.* We used the three-item scale by Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014). A sample item is: 'I participate in building our brand, even when I am not rewarded for doing so'. The reliability of this scale was 0.91. Item 1 was deleted due to low factor loadings.

*Participation in online brand community.* We used the four-item scale by Casaló, Flavián and Guinaliu (2010). A sample item is: 'I post messages and responses in the community with great excitement and frequency'. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.94.

*Control variables.* Following common sense in literature, we controlled for several socio-demographic variables, including age, gender, corporate tenure, corporate size, education and occupation level.

### 3.3 Analyses

Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we analysed data in a two-step approach. In doing so, we evaluated the psychometric properties of the constructs in a first step. Furthermore, we analysed if common method variance (CMV) is present in the data, applying well-known statistical remedies. In a last step, AMOS 27 have been used to assess hypothesized relationships (Arbuckle, 2003).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the validity of the measurement model, following well-established recommendations (e. g. Gracia, Salanova, Grau & Cifre, 2013; Stumpp, Hülshager, Muck & Maier, 2009). The results of the CFA indicate a good model fit, as values fulfil common thresholds (Arbuckle, 2003; Byrne, 2002; Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998; Hair, Babin, Black, Anderson & Tatham, 2006; Homburg & Giering, 1996; Hu & Bentler, 1998): Comparative fit index (CFI) = .97, normed fit index (NFI) = .93, goodness of fit index (GFI) = .90, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = .88, tucker lewis index (TLI) = .96, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .048, standardized root mean square error of approximation (SRMR) = .03 and CMIN/DF = 1.760. In a next step, the scales were assessed regarding reliability. All Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceed the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). See Table 2 for reliabilities. Apart from Cronbach's alpha analysis, convergent and discriminant validity were assessed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As all factor loadings meet or exceed the threshold of 0.70, we suppose that convergent validity is given. See Table 1 for an overview. Following the procedure of Fornell and Larcker (1981) composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. Analysis reveals that CR for all constructs were above 0.86. Similarly, AVE scores for all constructs are larger than the 0.50 criterion. Moreover, the AVE for each construct is greater than the squared correlation coefficient between that construct and any other factor (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), suggesting discriminant validity is not an issue.

Since this study uses self-reported data for dependent and independent variables, the problem of CMV can occur (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In order to mitigate the potential common method bias problem, procedural and statistical remedies recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) were followed. For example, we guarantee anonymity. To examine the existence of common method bias, we conducted Harman's one-factor test. No single factor explained the majority of the total variance. However, literature provide evidence that Harman's one-factor test is not free of criticism (e. g. Temme, Paulssen & Hildebrandt, 2009). Hence, we additionally employed Lindell and Whitney's (2001) marker variable test. A three-item measure "flat hierarchy" from Nahm, Vonderembse and Koufteros (2003) was selected as a marker variable, as it was theoretically not correlated with the majority of constructs used in this study. Analysis revealed that none of the correlations became non-significant or alter its sign after correcting for method bias. Therefore, results indicate that CMV is not a serious threat in this research.

### 3.4 Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities are shown in Table 2. The results revealed that only one out of 9 hypotheses need to be rejected.

Brand knowledge dissemination affect corporate brand pride, supporting H1 ( $\beta = .70, p < .001$ ). In turn, corporate brand pride positively influence brand supporting behaviour of employees, namely customer-oriented behaviour (H2a,  $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ), dissemination of service complaints (H2b,  $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ), participation in brand development (H2c,  $\beta = .60, p < .001$ ) and participation in online brand community (H2d,  $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ) of frontline personnel. In addition, we tested for moderators. Analysis showed that perceived management support for CSR strongly influence the relationship between corporate brand pride and customer-oriented behaviour (H3a,  $\beta = .17, p < .001$ ). Moreover, CSR perceptions moderate the link between corporate brand pride and dissemination of service complaint similarly (H3b,  $\beta = .17, p < .05$ ). The moderating effect with regard to participation in brand development cannot be supported (H3c,  $\beta = .05$ , not significant). H3d can be supported as management support for

CSR moderate the pride – participation in brand community link (H3d,  $\beta = .09, p < .10$ ). See Table 3 for an overview.

Moreover, we conducted a multi-group analysis to test for moderators that were not hypothesized (i. e. discrete variables) (Eberl, 2010). We tested for group differences following the procedure of Byrne (2010). Since previous research possess mixed results regarding gender, we test for gender effects (e. g. Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). We also analysed whether tenure influence the proposed relationships. In particular, as previous studies show that personnel with a longer tenure tend to exhibit higher levels of pride (Helm, 2013). Furthermore, we analysed if the employment status (i. e. management vs. non-management) leads to differences in the strength of relationships.

Results suggest that gender has a significant effect on the relationship between corporate brand pride and customer-oriented behaviour ( $\beta = .38, p < .001$ ). Here, proud male are more likely to show customer-oriented behaviour. Tenure analysis showed that employees with a short tenure show higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour than service personnel with a long tenure ( $\beta = .32, p < .05$ ). In addition to earlier studies (e. g. Abed & Bütgen, 2022) we found support for differences regarding management and non-management employees. Although, multi-group analysis revealed that management employees show higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour ( $\beta = .31, p < .05$ ). See Table 4 for an overview.

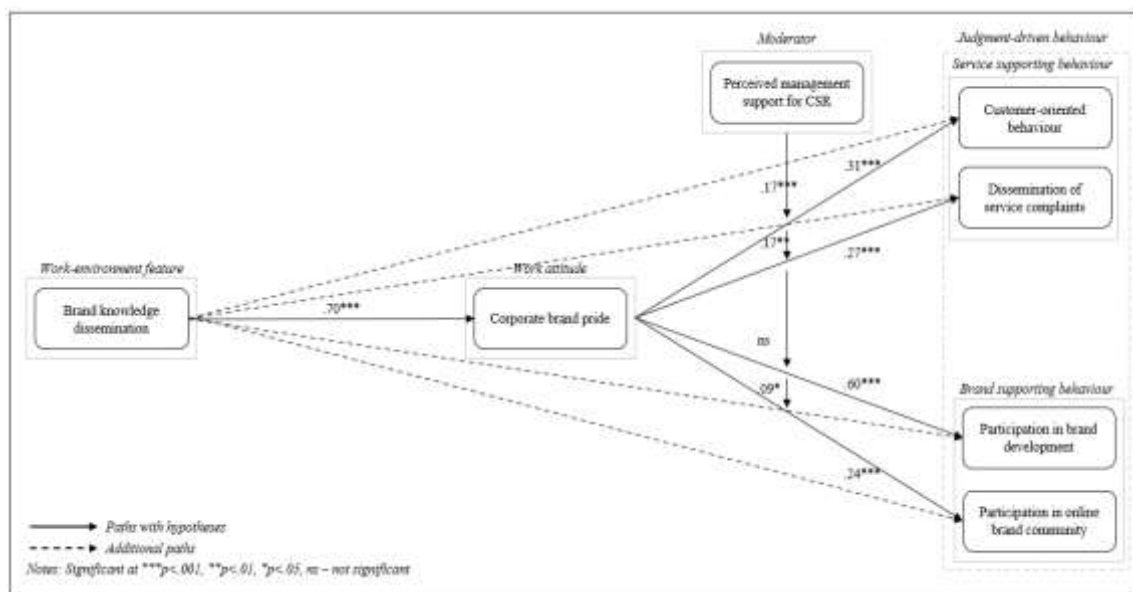


Figure 2. Structural model

#### 4. Discussion

Literature often explicit or implicit postulate that internal branding concepts can act “as an enabler of employees’ delivery of the brand promise through its influences on their attitudes and behaviours” (Punjaisri, Wilson & Evanschitzky, 2009, p. 217). The present study provides empirical support that brand knowledge dissemination, as a central part of internal branding, positively influence corporate brand pride. In turn, corporate brand pride of service personnel affect customer-oriented behaviour, dissemination of service complaints, participation in brand development and participation in online community.

As CSR perceptions are becoming more important in nowadays employer – employee context (e. g. Ng, Yam & Aguinis, 2019), we incorporated perceived management support for CSR as a potential moderator in our study. Interestingly, perceived management support for CSR strongly moderates the employees’ customer-oriented behaviour as well as the dissemination of service complaints. In contrast to our expectations no moderation effect was found regarding participation in brand development variable. Also, moderation regarding participation in online brand community was on minor level, in particular the significance level. A possible explanation could be that the first two behavioural outcomes (customer-oriented behaviour and dissemination of service complaints) refer to a higher extent to CSR’s inherent nature of doing the right things. For example, to society or in particular the customer. Participation in brand development and participation in online brand community exhibit more a brand perspective instead of a pure service/society orientation.

The examination of control variables (multi-group analysis) discloses significant gender effects. Thus, male service employees show higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour. This is interesting, as in general women are perceived as more caring and communally oriented, whereas men usually show more self-assertive behaviour (e. g. Biron, De Reuver & Toker, 2016). These gender-stereotypical expectations can “*produce social and economic reprisals, or backlash effects, towards men and women who show deviant (counter-stereotypical) behaviour*” (Biron et al., 2016, p. 433), which could be a potential explanation for our findings. In addition, frontline employees with a short tenure exhibit higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour. We assume that service personnel which is new in the job might be higher motivated than a person which exert the job for a couple of years. Latest research of Abed and Böttgen (2022) support this view. Here, participants with a short tenure tend to show higher employee referral behaviour. Similarly, the present study reveals that management show more customer-oriented behaviour than non-management employees. This circumstance might relate to the fact, that management employees are usually more trained to act in a customer-oriented manner and how this behaviour relate to overall corporate or service success.

### **5. Limitations and Implications for Further Research**

Besides the new findings noted here, our study must be considered in light of some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the generalizability of the findings is limited because the sample consists of data from frontline employees of a single country (Germany). As high-power distance cultures might differ in their brand knowledge dissemination practice and its perception, future studies should incorporate data from various countries. Second, data of this study were based on a cross-sectional design. Though, it would be useful to analyse how brand knowledge dissemination affect corporate brand pride of personnel over time. Similarly, the perception of management support for CSR may vary over time, calling for further research using a longitudinal design. Third, corporation can use various channels for the dissemination of brand knowledge (e. g. internal communications). Future studies should try to reveal if brand knowledge dissemination is similarly effective across multiple channels. Latest research regarding corporate brand experience provide insight, that not all forms of brand experience are equally effective in an employee setting (Egeler et al., 2022). It would also be interesting to examine how hierarchy might influence brand knowledge dissemination and its effects on service- and brand-behaviour (Bravo et al., 2021). Moreover, internal branding mechanisms embrace usually brand-focused human resource management practices (Afshardoost et al., 2021). Future studies should incorporate specific human resource management practices examining synergy effects on employees besides internal branding activities.

### **6. Practical Implications**

The findings of this research have several implications for (service) management and marketing practitioners. On the one hand our results indicate the importance of corporate brand pride on brand- and service relevant behaviours, e. g. dissemination of service complaints. Here, we show that male employees show more often customer-oriented behaviour. Moreover, multi-group analysis revealed that service personnel with a short tenure show higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour. Similarly, management exhibit higher levels of customer-oriented behaviour than non-management employees. Thus, corporation might stimulate the customer orientation of service personnel with longer tenure or non-management employees by training activities.

On the other hand, we offer managers insights of how corporate brand pride can be stimulated. Here, brand knowledge dissemination acts as a strong facilitator. Marketing- and (service) management practitioners should foster the exchange and experience of brand-related information (e. g. vision) within the corporation and service branches.

Moreover, this research highlights the importance of perceived management support for CSR amongst service employees. The perception of management support for CSR enhances all behavioural outcomes, except the relationship between corporate brand pride and participation in brand development. Thus, service brands might think about intensifying their CSR actions or their internal visibility of such initiatives. The latter aspect might be stimulated by internal communications or through brand experience days, where employees internalize a brands vision and mission.

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## Appendix

Table 1. Overview item set

Items	Constructs	Items inspired by	Factor Loadings	Notes
<i>Dissemination of brand knowledge</i>				
[Corporate brand name] communicates its brand message well to its employees			.80	
[Corporate brand name] explains the importance of my role in delivering the brand message		Baker et al. (2014)	.87	
The information provided to me when I started at [Corporate brand name] helped me understand the goals of the [Corporate brand name] brand.			.80	
<i>Corporate brand pride</i>				
I feel proud to work for [corporate brand name].			.91	
I feel proud to contribute to [corporate brand name]'s success.			.82	
I feel proud to tell others I am working for [corporate brand name].		Gouthier and Rhein (2011)	.86	
I feel proud to be a part of [corporate brand name].			.94	Additional item
<i>Customer oriented behaviour</i>				
I always try to figure out what customer's needs are.			.70	
I always try to bring a customer with a problem together with a product or service that helps him/her solve that problem.			.78	
I always recommend the product or service that is best suited to the customer's problem.		Löffendorf & Diamantopoulos (2014)	.80	
I always try to find out what kind of product or service would be most helpful to a customer.			.85	
<i>Dissemination of service complaints</i>				
I report to management about incidents in which customers complain about serious problems.			.72	
I report to my direct manager about problems customer encounter even if a customer has not told me that he or she wants to complain about service.		Luria et al. (2009)	.80	
I feel comfortable discussing problems encountered with a dissatisfied customer with my direct manager.			.79	
I am willing to tell my direct manager about difficulties I had when serving customers.			.88	
<i>Participation in brand development</i>				
If I have a useful idea on how to improve our brand's performance, I share it with my organization, even when I am not rewarded for doing so.		Löffendorf & Diamantopoulos (2014)		eliminated
I would voluntarily accept extra work if that has a positive effect on our brand image.			.92	
I participate in building our brand, even when I am not rewarded for doing so.			.90	
<i>Participation in online brand community</i>				
I participate actively in the community activities (for example by posting to the page or commenting other's posts).		Casaló et al. (2010)	.88	
I use to contribute to the community.			.96	
I usually provide useful travel information to other community members.			.85	
I post messages and responses in the community with great excitement and frequency.			.84	
<i>Perceived management support for CSR</i>				
For executives, [company]'s impact on society is a primary concern.		Korschun et al., (2014)		eliminated
Management encourages employees to be involved in [company]'s social responsibility.			.80	
Managers at [company] fully embrace social responsibility.			.86	

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Brand knowledge dissemination	5.22	1.45	(.86)					
2. Corporate brand pride	5.58	1.41	.63	(.93)				
3. Customer oriented-behaviour	6.26	.87	.21	.30	(.86)			
4. Dissemination of service complaints	5.99	.96	.17	.23	.34	(.87)		
5. Participation in brand development	5.00	1.57	.35	.56	.15	.28	(.91)	
6. Participation in online brand community	2.72	1.81	.17	.22	.07 <sup>ns</sup>	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.31	(.94)

Notes: Correlations are significant at  $p < .01$  unless otherwise stated, coefficient alphas appear on diagonal

Table 3. Results of moderator analysis (CSR)

Moderator	Path	Effect
Perceived management support for CSR	Corporate brand pride → customer-oriented behaviour	.17***
	Corporate brand pride → dissemination of service complaints	.17***
	Corporate brand pride → participation in brand development	.05 <sup>ns</sup>
	Corporate brand pride → participation in online brand community	.09*

Notes: Significant at \*\*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .10$ ; ns – not significant

Table 4. Results of MGA analysis

Path	Standardized coefficient								
	Male	Female	Group diff.	Long tenure	Short tenure	Group diff.	Management	Non-Management	Group diff.
Brand knowledge dissemination → Corporate brand pride	.69	.75	.06 <sup>ns</sup>	.75	.74	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.63	.73	.10 <sup>ns</sup>
Corporate brand pride → customer-oriented behaviour	.55	.17	.38***	.15	.47	.32**	.48	.17	.31**
Corporate brand pride → dissemination of service complaints	.23	.31	.08 <sup>ns</sup>	.05	.23	.18 <sup>ns</sup>	.07	.14	.07 <sup>ns</sup>
Corporate brand pride → participation in brand development	.59	.62	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	.56	.63	.07 <sup>ns</sup>	.68	.51	.17 <sup>ns</sup>
Corporate brand pride → participation in online brand community	.18	.27	.09 <sup>ns</sup>	.21	.15	.06 <sup>ns</sup>	.28	.24	.04 <sup>ns</sup>

Notes: Significant at \*\*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .10$ ; ns – not significant

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