Segmentation of Consumers According to Their Attachment to the Brand and Their Propensity to Switch to Competing Brands (Conceptual and Methodological Framework)

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Summary: In the article, a conception of brand segmentation measuring based on the brand loyalty, is presented. A future model is being given just a bold outline. That model should include indicators such as level of satisfaction with the present brand, availability of better brands alternatives, level of the switching costs, involvement with the product category and attitude towards future purchases. By means of that model, the consumers of a specific brand can be classified in accordance with their inclination towards being loyal to that brand or their inclination towards switching to other competitive brands. The competitive brands consumers could also be classified according to the same criteria.

Key words: brand, brand segmentation, brand loyalty, switching attitudes, marketing research.

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Formulation of the issue

Segmentation, the way it is most often conceptualized, measured and studied, rarely occurs at brand level [Ehrenberg&Kennedy, 2000]¹. Brands rarely differ considerably and meaningfully from a management point of view on their client base: neither in terms of demographics (gender, age, family status, education), nor in economic terms (job, income, property), nor in terms of psychographics (values, aims, lifestyle).

Where differences in client base are present, we usually have one of the following two situations. The first one – these differences are inessential in practice, in the sense that it is wrong to plan and implement any marketing initiatives (modification of the product, advertising campaign, PR campaign, new packaging design, prices, etc.) following the rule “Our customers are such and such and the customers of our competitors are such and such.” The phenomenon of repertoire (polygamous, divided) loyalty testifies that most often “our customers” are someone else’s customers as well. In the vast majority of product