Investigating the Nomological Network Surrounding the Construct of Gratitude within a Franchising Context

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Revised December 2013

Prepared for the 28th Annual International Society of Franchising Conference

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.

February 21-23, 2014
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ABSTRACT

This paper is the first attempt at modeling the sentiment of gratitude, a critical nascent relationship construct, as a mediating the linkage between relational norms (as antecedents) and relationship quality constructs (as consequents). A self-report online survey was used in this research to collect data from a random sample of 439 franchisees drawn across 28 franchise sectors in Australia. Relational norms were captured using the well accepted taxonomy of solidarity, flexibility and mutuality and relationship quality was conceptualized in terms of constituent constructs of trust, commitment and relationship satisfaction. Structural equation modeling was used to test the six hypothesized relationships. The relational norms were found to significantly and positively affect the emergence of gratitude, and in turn, gratitude was found to significantly and positively influence the relationship quality constructs of trust, commitment and relationship satisfaction. Implications of these results are discussed.