Assessment Consent of Sports Marks and Connection with Fidelity in Industry Sport

Hamid Bararzadeh, Omid Ghomi, Zahra Keivani, Azam Noralah

ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction could be considered as the final foundation in the modern marketing, and the success of the firm depends on detecting and satisfying the needs and legitimate demands better than the competitors. The current research main aim is to determine the correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty towards sports brands in Yazd. To this aim, the statistical population includes all of the customers of sports shops in Yazd during one month. Then 122 individuals were chosen as the sample through convenience sampling. Two questionnaires of Moghimi’s customer satisfaction and Brink et al. questionnaire were used for collecting data. The research methodology is correlative. Information and data achieved through the questionnaires were analyzed at two descriptive and inferential levels. Testing the current research hypotheses by the use of statistical methods of Pearson correlation coefficient indicates that there is a positive and significant correlation between the customer satisfaction and loyalty towards sports brands in Yazd (P<0.05). Results achieved from the current research partial hypotheses also showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between the customer satisfaction and the cognitive component of loyalty towards sports brands, emotional components, relationship management, time management, invested resources and partnership relationship management.

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction could be considered as the final foundation in the modern marketing, and the success of the firm depends on detecting and satisfying the needs and legitimate demands better than the competitors. Customer satisfaction could lead towards behaviors such as loyalty and word of mouth advertising [1]. Thus only in this way the merchants will be able to offer a product that has more compliance with the needs and demands of the consumers, and in other words, they will be able to offer a product that is the resultant of effective factors on the consumers’ behavior and to provide maximum satisfaction. Due to this, customer satisfaction is the main factor of success in many organizations and many researches have pointed out the correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty, repurchasing, and organizations’ increased profitability [7]. One of the desires of customers in choosing a product or service is the excellence and identity of that company. In many markets, a brand creates a special identity for the product owners and it links the customers to a specific group in the society [22,24]. Based on the research results of Acker, a top brand unconsciously means a better quality product to the customer. When customers buy a product with brand they believe that they have received a valuable product in return of their money [8]. Associations and consistencies of a brand introduce a base for making decisions for purchasing or being loyal to the brand. Based on related categorizations, product associations and organizational associations are considered as two comprehensive elements of brand association [23,4]. From the perspective of profits of brand association it is possible to profit from helping the information process and recovery, distinguishing the brand, making a reason or argument for purchase, creating feelings and positive attitudes and supporting from promoting and developing the brand. In sports industry these profits, especially in aspect of creating feelings and attracting the support of fans are considered by merchants. By the use of these concepts the merchants try to understand the effective factors on decisions related to purchasing and loyalty towards brand from the fans of professional sports in order to benefit...
their organizations and sports clubs from the enormous financial resources injected by this industry fans [24]. In activities related to marketing, customer relationship is the main issue, and attracting customer attention is considered as the first priority in all companies. By the rapid progress of sports industry throughout the world, sports clubs and teams focus on the loyalty in order to attract more fans and gain more income; loyalty is one of the major components of organizational success. Fans’ loyalty toward a specific club or team results in appropriate benefits for that club or team. Usually loyal fan is considered as a good tool for advertisement. As a conclusion, today’s organizations try to detect, manage and use effective methods and patterns for creating loyalty. In sports industry, fans mostly pay for the symbolic aspects and brand is one of the symbolic aspects in sports industry. Brand is the main process of profitability and base and foundation of current economy. During a critical period or a recession powerful brands encounter the least drop and problem due to gaining the consumers’ trust. Based on this matter, fans’ loyalty towards the sports team brand is the key to success in marketing programs of sports industry [23]. Based on the above mentioned content, apparently the more the sports customer satisfaction from the sports brands, the higher their loyalty will be; due to this reason the domestic sports brands should try to gain sports customer satisfaction and observe the satisfaction principles. However, in order to accurately understand this correlation, the researcher has provided a research named determining the correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty towards sports brands in Yazd.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current research is an applied research, and because this research surveys the correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty towards brand it is a correlative research. Also the research conceptual structure is provided as followed.

![Research Conceptual Structure](image)

Fig. 1: Research conceptual structure.

Participants and Sampling Method:

In this research all of the costumers of sports shops in Yazd during one month are considered as the research statistical population. The study population included 3600 subjects. According to a survey, 14 sports brands shops were established in Yazd, thus in this research by detecting 9 shops and by the use of convenience sampling, 246 individuals were chosen from the customers in order to fill out the questionnaires.

Measuring Tools:

Brand loyalty questionnaire: In this research Brink et al [3] questionnaire was used in order to measure the loyalty towards a brand. This questionnaire includes 25 questions and its aim is to survey the loyalty towards a brand from the cognitive component of loyalty towards a brand, emotional components of loyalty towards a brand, aspects of customer relationship management, time management, invested resources and senior management partnership. In Niknam’s thesis (2013) the face validity of this questionnaire was approved by three professors from the department of management in PNU. Also the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by the use of Cronbach’s Alpha ($\alpha=0.76$).

In this research the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire were approved by experts and professors and the reliability of the questionnaire was also calculated by the use of Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha=0.877$).

Customer satisfaction questionnaire: Moghimi’s questionnaire [15] was used in order to measure the customer...
satisfaction. Before conducting the research, the validity of the questionnaire was approved by experts and professors and its reliability was achieved through Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α=0.819). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in order to statistically analyze the research results. Descriptive statistics include frequency tables, charts, central sizes such as mean and distribution sizes such as standard deviation and variance. In statistical inferential part Pearson correlation method was used.

**Results:**

**Table 1:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty towards the sports brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty toward sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that there is a significant correlation between the customer satisfaction and loyalty towards sports brands (P< 0.01, r= 0.336).

**Table 2:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and cognitive component of loyalty towards sports brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.236</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive component of loyalty towards sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical analysis results in table 2 shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between the customer satisfaction and cognitive component of loyalty towards sports brands (P< 0.01, r= 0.239).

**Table 3:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and emotional component of loyalty towards sports brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional component of loyalty towards sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and emotional component of loyalty towards sports brands (P< 0.01, r= 0.250).

**Table 4:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and customer relationship management of sports brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.303</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relationship management of sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between customer satisfaction and customer relationship management of sports brands was surveyed by the use of Pearson correlation coefficient. Analysis showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between these two variables (P< 0.01, r= 0.303).

**Table 5:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and time management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between customer satisfaction and time management of sports brands by the use of Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between these two variables (P< 0.05, r= 0.226).

**Table 6:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and invested resources of sports Brands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invested resources of sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of correlation coefficient test show that there is a positive and significant correlation between the customer satisfaction and invested resources of sports brands (P< 0.05, r= 0.203).

**Table 7:** Results of correlation coefficient test for surveying the correlation between customer satisfaction and invested resources of sports brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership management of sports brands</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between customer satisfaction and partnership management of sports brands by the use of correlation coefficient is shown in table 7 (P< 0.01, r= 0.299).

**Discussion and Conclusion:**

Our study results showed that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty towards sports brands. In other words, when a people pay attention to a brand more than other sports brands they are always compatible with purchasing that brand and have more satisfaction with that brand. The above hypothesis results are consistent with the results of Kashkar et al [12]. Researches have shown that there is a significant correlation between satisfaction with the product and athletic women’s loyalty towards a product. Along with this, Ranjbarian et al [20] concluded that the quality of product and perceived value affect the
repurchasing and loyalty towards that product. Foreign researches such as the research by Gladden and Funk [6] showed that there is a correlation between brand association factors (assets, profits and attitudes) and fans’ loyalty, and this result is consistent with the mentioned hypothesis result. It must be noted that it is essential to understand that priority or preference to buy a specific brand on shelves by the customer means loyalty towards that brand. Customers have found out that their favorite brand offers them a design and combination of a healthy product that has quality levels. This perception of the customer is the foundation for repeating the purchase. At first, customers buy a product with a specific brand and after being satisfied with that product they repeat this procedure and buy the same brand again, because they know that product and they are sure about its quality. People who are loyal towards a brand have such thought: They are loyal towards the brand, they prefer to pay more for that brand instead of buying another brand, and they suggest that brand to others [10]. Also our study results showed that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and the cognitive component of loyalty towards sports brands. In order to explain this finding it could be said that: when people only think of their favorite brand when they want to buy a product, and when they purchase it with cognition and perception of product value, in fact they are showing their satisfaction from that sports brand. Approving the above mentioned hypothesis, Ranjbarian et al [20] indicated that quality of product and perceived value affect the repurchasing and loyalty towards that product. Also, Samadi et al [21] showed that brand evidences and also brand relationships have direct effect on satisfaction, attitude and behavioral intentions. Also in coordination with the above mentioned hypothesis, Anonymous [2] concluded that Our results showed that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and emotional component of loyalty towards sports brands. In other words, when a customer feels excited or proud of a sports brand, he/she feels better, and feels a bond and interest for that sports brand, and it is important for him/her to buy that sports brand, in fact his/her satisfaction about that brand is high. Along with the above result, Samadi et al [21] showed that emotions and consistency with personal impressions of the brand directly affect the satisfaction, attitude and behavioral intentions. Also Mohammadian et al [16] concluded that in aspects of jurisdiction, excitement, perfection and honesty, Sony, Toshiba, Samsung, Cuen and Sharp gained the 1th to 5th ranks. Also in a research by Heydarzadeh and Ramezani Qomi [9] these results were achieved that trust on the seller directly affects the satisfaction from the seller, trust on the supplying company and probability of a deal between customer and seller in the future. Among foreign researches, Anonymous [2] showed that brand charisma is a medium for team popularity and predicting the customers’ feeling of identity with that team. Also Kim et al [14] showed that perception impact from the brand personality affects the attitudinal loyalty. Thus the brand emotions are emotional responses of the customers towards a brand, which means what emotions are excited by the brand? How the brand affects the customers’ emotions towards itself and its relationship with others? These emotions could be mild or intense, negative or positive [13]. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in surveying the hypothesis of customer satisfaction with customer relationship management of sports brands and results showed that there is a significant correlation between these two variables, which means that when the owner of a sports brand does something to provide the ground for an optimum relationship with the customer, and response to their comments, the satisfaction will automatically increase. Ranjbarian and Barabari [19] indicated that in state banks, relationships have a positive and significant effect on the customer loyalty. About the private banks, except for the variable of relationships, other variables have a positive and significant effect on the customer loyalty. Also Tajzadeh Namin et al [25] concluded that there is a correlation between the customer satisfaction and quality of relationship with customers. Also, Valette-Florence et al [26] showed that geographical and demographical features of the customers affect their perceptions about the promotional activities and brand personality. According to Ross and Harradine (2010) based on the brand identity and the image and principles determining the brand position in customers’ minds and that it could be used for attacking the market with the perspective of market share growth, and decrease of competition expenses, there is no doubt in the importance of the brand. The importance of the brand is multiplied when we consider the competitive nature of the market, where the consumer has been improved by saturated relationships and technology of similar products. Also, in marketing activities, customer relationship is the major principle, and attracting customers’ attention is the first priority of all companies. On the other hand, with rapid progress of sports industry in world, sports clubs and teams practice the loyalty issue in order to attract more fans and gain more income. Loyalty is one of the main components of organizational success. Fans’ loyalty towards a specific club or team results in proper advantages for that club or team. Loyal fan is considered as a source of income and usually a tool for advertisement. As a conclusion, modern organizations try to detect, manage and use effective methods and patterns in order to create loyalty. On the other hand, in sports industry, fans mostly pay for the symbolic aspects and brand is one of the symbolic aspects in sports industry. Brand is the main process of profitability and base and foundation of current economy. During a critical period or a recession powerful brands encounter the least drop and problem due to gaining the consumers’ trust. Based on this matter, fans’ loyalty towards the sports team brand is the key to success in marketing programs of sports industry [24]. The current research results indicate that customer satisfaction has a significant correlation with time management of sports brands. In other words, when the duration of advertisement of a sports brand is appropriate, and from the perspective of the buyer it matches the
information about the sports brand, it can provide satisfaction. In coordination with the above finding Kim et al. [14] stated that there is a direct correlation between brand preference and duration of advertisement. Also Wong and Yahyah [27] indicated that there is a positive and significant correlation between advertising and loyalty. Also one of the results of the current research was that: customer satisfaction has a significant correlation with invested resources. In other words, when the owner of a sports brand uses appropriate resources for advertising, he/she could attract customer satisfaction. Confirming our study, Anonymous [2] showed that usually customers get a sense of identity by spending in retail and increased visits from their team. From the perspective of Perpelkin and Di Zhang [18] brand personalities can be created through different methods, in other words, brand personality resources are: direct and indirect resources. Direct resource includes a set of human characteristics related to users, company staff, senior managers of the organization and brand approvers. Indirect resource includes all of the created aspects through company managers such as decisions related to the product and service, advertisement, price, distribution and promotions. In a survey about the correlation between customer satisfaction and management partnership of sports brands, the statistical analysis results showed that there is a significant correlation between these two variables. In other words, the person who buys a sports product is interested in that product and values it, and when the sports brand company management considers these matters related to the customers, they could guarantee the customer satisfaction. In order to explain this result, Ranjbarian and Barabari [19] showed that in state banks, trust has a positive and significant effect on the customer loyalty. Also Gilani Nia and Mousavian [5] concluded that loyalty, awareness and quality affect the brand equity. Based on Moormal et al. [17], brand trust points to the customers’ trust on the ability of a brand to do the given duties. This definition challenges two major approaches. Firstly, this trust is considered as a belief, tendency or expectation of an assured exchange with the other party in a deal which is resulted from that party’s skill and reputation. Secondly, trust is considered as a behavioral tendency reflecting the reliance on the partner. Zaltman and Canon and a few other researchers believe that the concept of trust is only related to the situations of uncertainty, especially, brand trust decreases the uncertainty in an environment in which the consumers have a sense of vulnerability. Doney and Canon suggested that creating trust includes a process based on the ability of an organization to perform its commitments and estimate the cost against the benefit of staying in a relationship. Brand trust leads to brand loyalty or commitment, because the relationship trust creates an exchange which is very valuable, and also commitment is defined as a continuous tendency toward keeping a valuable relationship. Thus, loyalty or commitment provides the ground for continuing and keeping a valuable and important relationship created by trust. In other words, trust and commitment should be linked together, because trust is important in relationship exchanges and commitment is the fund of such valuable relationships. Thus it could be concluded that brand trust helps both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty [28].

REFERENCES


