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Effect of Sport Brands on Loyalty in Sport Customers

M. Khorsandi Fard*, R. Ismaeelzadeh and R. Ramshini

Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad Branch, Mashhad, Iran

Corresponding Author: M. Khorsandi Fard

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of sports brand on sport customer loyalty and its components in terms of behavior, and attitude. Statistical population of the research was professional and semi-professional and sports athletes of clubs then users of the authentic sport brands and due to the unlimited volume of society according to Morgan 386 samples were selected. The measuring instruments included questionnaire of brand loyalty of Taylor and the validity was confirmed by experts and its reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha test 0/88. For data analysis, descriptive statistics and Kolmogorov - Smirnov, Spearman correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used. The findings suggest that the variables of brand have a significant positively correlated with behavioral loyalty but from the components of brand, resistant to change and feel have not significant effect on attitudinal loyalty Based on regression analysis. According to the results recommended the organization of production and sports services must be scheduled to increase behavioral and attitudinal loyalty of their customers and through the factors related to brand and develop them have a loyal and valuable customers for their own sport productions.

Keywords: *Brand, Behavioral loyalty, Attitudinal loyalty, Sport.*

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INTRODUCTION

Today we live in a period that Production orientation, product and sales cannot guarantee the survival of a company in the market. Because of smarter customers and competitors, all companies that want to survive in this environment are intentionally or unintentionally must turn to marketing, especially social marketing (Sweeney and Swait, 2008). Institutions by identifying consumer needs and finding ways to satisfy them through innovation and quality improvement and having loyal customers can maintain profitability and maintain its survival in a competitive market. Many large companies such as General Motors, Harley-Davidson and Del Monte annually huge sums to create loyal customers and maintain their loyalty (Mellens et al, 1996). Customer loyalty is a valuable competitive advantage because customers are loyal saves marketing costs, because the cost of attracting a new customer is 6 times more than the current customer retention. In addition, loyal customers are willing to pay more for their favorite products and brands and are less sensitive to price. Brand loyalty also creates a business lever for participation in the competition (Sweeney and Swait, 2008). The main issues raised in product mix strategy trademarks of the firm. Companies for their trademarks broad and long-term investments, especially in the field of advertising, sales promotion and pack. They know their market power due to the strong brand equity and brand equity to bring to customer loyalty. Perhaps the most distinctive skill of professional firms, are their ability to create, maintain and develop their trademarks (Kotler, 2000). One of the very important decisions in the process of marketing of products is determining products brand. Product brand is defined as any word, design, sound, shape, color or a combination of these to make a distinction between products and services of one manufacturer or seller of products and services used by competitors (Kotler, 2000). Characteristics of brand influences customer behavior and today needs business branding strategy (Chen, 2010). If a company consider a brand only as a name, a great application that brand can have on marketing, will not understand. Research shows that brand image influence on customers' perceptions of the quality of products and services, and reputation on customer perception and loyalty (Faircloth et al, 2000). Especially trademarks and power will be more important in sports marketing and customer sensitivity is very high and its flexibility is low and the slightest inattention caused the loss of all marketing efforts (Simon and Sullivan, 1996). Loyalty is a behavioral response that

appearance in a person over a time other and between all of the brand names in mind select one brand. This is a reaction function of psychological and mental processes of the individual (Labiga et al, 2007). In fact loyalty through commitment to repurchase the product or service is evaluated (Sheng and Liu, 2010). When consumers in their daily life looking for a special brand, go to meet his demands and select a name that attracted him satisfaction (Veiotso, 2009). The brand names that are distinct identity and their goals and to offer a friendly face they are able to establish beneficial relationships with its customers. In addition, customer loyalty has competitive advantages in the market, especially in customer brand loyalty product markets that could ensure a company or it can come to destruction (Moisesco, 2006). Over the past two decades, many organizations recognize the importance of customer satisfaction and have found that keeping existing customers is far less expensive than attracting new customers. In addition, there is a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability are adopted and improve the customer satisfaction has become the most important operational objective in organizations (Akhter, 2010). Loyal customers buy only from their preferred brands despite the fact that there are different brands in the market and which results in many financial benefits for the producer of branded companies involved. Hence it can be concluded that the effective factors on customer loyalty and an albatross around one of the most important marketing efforts and combination of these factors in the different target markets should be checked and adjusted in line with the sales policy (Keller, 2008). Sports industry play and makes an important role in the global economy of the world's and today great brands seek to identify their brands more effectively to customers and sports fans (Dennis and Duffy, 2005). Today, successful brands that have created a degree of loyalty to your customers and developed a group of customers who purchased a brand again and again and encouraged to invest again on the brand. Gladden and Funk (2007) Believe in creating a strong indicated, building strong relationships with consumers and respond to their needs and wishes of the sports brand is required. Therefore, understanding the factors that is important in purchase decisions and brand loyalty customers for enhance strategies of brand management. Bowen and Chen (2007) in the concept of loyalty believe that this concept can be explained by behavioral and attitudinal approaches. In behavioral approach, brand loyalty is measured on the basis of repeat purchase and recommend to others. In the second approach as attitude approach, more detailed dimensions including the emotional brand loyalty, commitment and action is measured and express their feelings of love, commitment and devotion to the brand and buy it again and recommend to others.

Eagle and Kitchen (2000) reported that is strong correlation between brand awareness and brand association with the level of brand loyalty and increase loyalty among customers are affected on brand equity. Hair et al (2006) in their article titled Studying the effect of brand and brand relationships on customer purchase behavior reported that is a positive relationship between brand image and awareness of current and future customers purchase approved. Leo et al (2006) in examining the sports brand loyalty, concluded that product quality is the most important factor in brand loyalty. In another study by Fung Yi and Sidek (2008) titled the impact on customers sportswear brand loyalty was observed a significant impact between brand name, price and promotion, quality service whit sports brand loyalty. Filo and Funk (2008) in a study titled the role of brand trust in the relationship between brand associations and brand loyalty in sports and fitness programs concluded that a mediator relationship between brand loyalty, brand equity whit management and reputation of brand. As well as Babakus & Mangold (2012) in classification and selected variables influencing customer loyalty, concluded that brand equity, rates, service development, customer satisfaction, service quality and cost effective changes need to have been considered. As well as Leong et al (2012) in study the effect of customer loyalty and behavior of Purchasers have concluded that customer satisfaction is a prelude to customer loyalty and brand capital is a positive rating. Taylor and Hunter (2003) also believe that loyalty can be affected by attitudes about the brand and satisfaction. But finding of Tungs (2004) research in the loyalty of fans in Baseball league showed no relationship with brand loyalty and satisfaction of their fans there. Kaynak et al (2008) in their study reported that confidence plays an important role in building strong customer relationships and observed a significant positive relationship between confidence and brand loyalty. As well as Zhaohuawi D et al (2010) in an article titled Understanding factors of loyalty introduced service quality, perceived value and switching costs affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty. And Baldauf et al researches showed customer satisfaction by influencing, brand trust leads to brand loyalty and brand value and similar result whit Zhaohuawi D et al (2010) and Kaynak et al (2008) have reported.

Given the importance of the development of the sports industry and sports marketing, and the competition between sport brands in the world development of brand loyalty, the type of behavior and attitude can lead to undeniable increase in market share, a significant increase in sales and a major reduction in marketing costs by keeping customers loyal to the brand. In addition the permanent use of the brand's loyal customers recommending products to others and helping organizations in the marketing process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

This study is descriptive correlational study and the purpose of the research are applied. The statistical population of research was professional and semi-professional athletes and members of sports clubs their sports brands customers and 386 persons sampled given because the breadth of unlimited population were selected based on Morgan table. Tool of research was Taylor

questionnaire of brand loyalty and its validity was approved by experts and its reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.88). To evaluate the normal distribution of data Kolmogorov - Smirnov was used and according to the non-normal distribution of data, in addition of descriptive and inferential statistics mean and standard deviation to evaluate the correlation between variables Spearman correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used. For statistical analysis statistical software of SPSS 21 was used.

Finding

Table 1 describes the components of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in the customers of sport brands

Row	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Behavioral loyalty	3.84	0.84
2	Attitudinal loyalty	2.9	0.98

The findings suggest that the level of customer behavioral loyalty among customers of sport brands was higher than attitudinal loyalty but the attitudinal loyalty is at an appropriate level and customer loyalty to brands used in an acceptable level.

Table 2 describes the components of the sports brand from the perspective of customers

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction	2.84	0.64
Value	2.6	0.68
Resistance to Change	2.63	0.65
Feeling	2.74	0.62
Trust	2.9	0.71
Brand equity	2.69	0.59

According to Table 2, it can be concluded that important of all components of sport brands from the perspective of customers in all factors was higher than the average level and among the factors, factors of trust and satisfaction are the most important factors are considered.

Table 3. The coefficient of correlation of behavioral loyalty and brand

Variable	Correlation Type	Correlation Coefficient	Significant Level
Behavioral loyalty and satisfaction	Positive	0.832	0.0001*
Behavioral loyalty and value	Positive	0.714	0.0001*
Behavioral loyalty and resistance to change	Positive	0.801	0.001*
Behavioral loyalty and emotional	Positive	0.590	0.0001*
Behavioral loyalty and trust	Positive	0.860	0.0001*
Behavioral loyalty and brand value	Positive	0.199	0.001*

Findings of Table 3 showed there is a significant positive correlation between all components of brand and behavioral loyalty of customers and each of the variables are related to sport brands can positively influence behavioral loyalty of customers the brand.

Table 4. The coefficient of correlation of attitudinal loyalty and brand

Variable	Correlation Type	Correlation Coefficient	Significant Level
Attitudinal loyalty and satisfaction	Positive	0.645	0.01*
Attitudinal loyalty and value	Positive	0.689	0.001*
Attitudinal loyalty and resistance to change	Positive	0.036	0.095
Attitudinal loyalty and emotional	Positive	0.156	0.0012*
Attitudinal loyalty and trust	Positive	0.736	0.001*
Attitudinal loyalty and brand value	Positive	0.299	0.0001*

According to Table 4, it can be concluded that except resistance to change, among other components of brand equity and attitudinal loyalty positive and significant correlation exists while improving these components of brand attitudinal loyalty of customer of sport brands also increased.

Table 5. Multiple regression between brand variables and behavioral loyalty

Variable	Determination of coefficient	Adjust R2	F	P-Value
brand variables	0.556	0.598	24.041	0.0001*

According to Table 5 it can be concluded that the variables are significantly predictive behavioral loyalty and brand characteristics shows to the 59% of the variance in behavioral loyalty.

Table 6. Regression of characteristics of brand and behavioral loyalty

Predictor variables	B	SE	T	BETA	P-Value
Satisfaction	0.198	0.036	5.326	0.321	0.0001*
Value	0.159	0.029	5.265	0.315	0.0001*
Resistance to Change	0.145	0.017	2.239	0.212	0.0001*
Feeling	0.155	0.069	1.985	0.192	0.021*
Trust	0.187	0.023	6.478	0.325	0.0001*
Brand equity	0.123	0.048	2.190	0.098	0.0001*

According to Table 6 it can be seen that all variables are significantly related to behavioral loyalty and satisfaction and trust on have the highest relative value behavioral loyalty and most effective role in predicting behavioral loyalty.

Table 7. Multiple regression between brand loyalty and attitudinal variables

Variable	Determination of coefficient	Adjust R2	F	P-Value
brand variables	0.434	0.398	20.259	0.0001*

According to Table 7 it can be concluded that the variables are significantly predictive attitudinal loyalty and brand characteristics shows to the 39% of the variance in attitudinal loyalty.

Table 8. Regression of characteristics of brand and attitudinal loyalty

Predictor variables	B	SE	T	BETA	P-Value
Satisfaction	0.186	0.030	4.897	0.259	0.0001*
Value	0.134	0.030	5.002	0.198	0.0001*
Resistance to Change	-0.016	0.019	-0.567	-0.023	0.087
Feeling	-0.018	0.011	-0.875	-0.012	0.07
Trust	0.155	0.049	4.598	0.258	0.0001*
Brand equity	0.111	0.036	1.134	0.154	0.0001*

According to Table 8 it can be seen that the satisfaction and trust, as well as behavioral loyalty, were greatest impact of variance on attitudinal loyalty and have must important predictors for attitudinal loyalty but resistance to change and feel have no significant linear correlation with attitudinal loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to investigate the effect of sport brands on loyalty in customers of sport products. The population of this research is professional athletes, semi-professional and sport clubs members that were purchasers of sports brands and according to unlimited size of community based on Morgan table 386 peoples were selected as sample. The results showed that in participants in the study behavioral and attitudinal loyalty toward sports brands are used by them is higher than the average level but behavioral loyalty is at a higher level. Simon and Sullivan (1993) believe that behavioral loyalty mean that to continue customers in a long period of time to purchase or use a product or service. Attitudinal Loyalty as brand preferences, purchase intentions and long-term commitment to a brand by customers and their tendency to positive mouth to mouth advertising is defined. These findings suggest that actually the sports brand loyalty of customers were more than attitudinal and mental loyalty and despite the prolonged use of a sport brand in customers their commitment and positive word of mouth marketing is at a lower level however, their attitudinal loyalty levels also were observed at an acceptable level. Among the aspects related to the brand as well as all variables are higher than the average level and these findings indicate that successfully of sports brands of sports brands among consumers of this brand in the population studied. Among components of the sport brands, trust, brand satisfaction and feeling toward the brand, brand in terms of sport customers compared to other components of sport brands have a higher importance. The findings showed that between behavioral loyalty and all the components of sport brands is a significant positive correlation. But most of the correlation were between behavioral loyalty and satisfaction and brand trust. Also assessing the correlation of brand components and brand attitudinal showed that resistance to change has not significant correlation whit attitudinal loyalty but other factors of brands have positive and significant correlation with attitudinal loyalty. As well as the components of brand like trust, brand value and satisfaction have highest positive correlation whit attitudinal loyalty in costumers of sport brands. Also regression analysis showed that the components of feel and resistance to change cannot predict attitudinal loyalty. But other factors have been identified as predictor variables of attitudinal loyalty. As well as results showed that all components of brand had a significantly impact on behavioral loyalty.

These findings are consistent with research findings of Zhaohuawi et al (2010) and Kaynak et al (2008) were consistent and in this researches, has been proven that the most important role in increasing confidence to behavioral and attitudinal loyalty of customers. Finding of Leong et al (2012) and Taylor and Hunter (2003) endorsed the impact of satisfaction on customer loyalty to the brand and its major role in his research that is consistent with the findings of this research. But Tung et al (2004) believe that is no relation between satisfaction and loyalty and this difference is due to the different population. Because of his research examined professional baseball's fans and among fans of sport popular teams if they earn bad results, loyalty of their fans are not change.

In finding of Foong and Sidek (2008), Eagle and Kitchen (2000), Filo and Funk (2008) and Babakus and Mangold (2012) on importance of brand equity on customers loyalty as the most important component was emphasized. Finding of our research showed brand equity has a significant positive correlation with behavioral and attitudinal loyalty of customers, but has less impact than other components of the sport brands and trust and satisfaction to the brand, have more effective role in the development of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty is costumers of sport brands. Violet and Petrovic (2007) also examines brand loyalty among young people and reported that in the current marketing due to brand appeal among the younger generation and dealing with the use of marketing tools to influence on brand loyalty in this generation is necessary.

As well as Hair et al (2006) and Leo et al (2006) respectively consider positive image of the brand and quality of the brand are the most important factors to brand loyalty and these are equivalent to the feeling of the brand and brand satisfaction and in our study significant and positive correlation was found between these factors and customer loyalty and the results of this research is also consistent with our researches findings.

According to the research findings can be seen sport brands and loyalty of customers of sport products depends on each other's And to create loyal customers should always did factors related to brand development. Sporting goods producer organizations should increase the quality and service to customers and develop trust and satisfaction and thereby increase customer loyalty and discourage their customers from buying the products of other brands. By increasing the quality of products and services as well as changes in products based on the latest scientific and modern production technology and create a positive impression on customers when buying and thus increase the brand value can gain loyal customers, with the appropriate level of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty whom can reduce the cost of marketing to the organization. Therefore managers of sport brands should plan for increase behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in their customers.

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