

“A Study on Consumer Behaviour on Select Footwear Brands With Reference To Guwahati City”

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to focus on establishing individuals' levels of loyalty and what sustains and develops their customer loyalty. These people recognize the importance consumer loyalty has for many competitive organizations and industries. However, there has been less focus on what value customers attach to customer loyalty in this context. The main contribution of this paper is that it uniquely identifies an approach to understanding the sustaining and vulnerability effects mediating customer loyalty development going beyond previous categorization attempts. Understanding this approach should lead to effective customer loyalty management and greater awareness of managing recognition, reciprocity and rewards.

KEYWORDS: Customer loyalty, Service levels, Customers, Behaviour

I. INTRODUCTION

Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuild and re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviors. "Customer loyalty is viewed as the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and re-patronage. Although customer satisfaction is a crucial part of a business, satisfaction alone cannot take a business to a top level. Customer satisfaction produces a positive financial result, especially in regular purchases. Today's unforgiving market where creating and maintaining customer loyalty is more complex than it used to be in the past years. This is because of technological breakthrough and widespread of the internet uses. Loyalty building requires the company to focus on the value of its product and services and to show that it is interested to fulfill

the desire or build the relationship with customers (Griffin 2002.)

Thomas et al. (2013) emphasize that "loyalty is more profitable." The expenses to gain a new customer is much more than retaining existing one. Loyal customers will encourage others to buy from you and think more than twice before changing their mind to buy other services. Customer loyalty is not gained by an accident, they are constructed through the sourcing and design decisions. Designing for customer loyalty requires customer-centered approaches that recognize the want and interest of service receiver. Customer loyalty is built over time across multiple transactions. A relationship with a customer is equally important in customer loyalty and this requires that company work in a broader context that extends beyond itself, as no company can be world class at everything (McDonladet al.2000). Gremler et al. (1999) divided customer loyalty into three different categories that include behavior loyalty, intentional loyalty, and emotional loyalty. Behavior loyalty is repeating purchasing behavior while intentional loyalty is the possible buying intention. Emotional loyalty, however, is achieved when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion.

II. FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty is another important factor in customer satisfaction. The impact of the satisfaction in loyalty has been the most popular subject in study of the marketing theory. Therefore, several studies have proved that satisfaction and loyalty have the direct connection between one another. As satisfied customers are loyal and dissatisfied customers are a vendor (Heskett 2011.) Finding the loyal customer is not accessible even the customers seem to be satisfied with the

products and the services. In fact, the behavior and attitude of the customers towards the particular goods and services matters the most. If the behavior of the customers is positive to the service holder, then those customers are said as a loyal customer (Abdullah 2012.) There are two types of customer loyalty based on behavioral and emotional loyalty on the goods and services. Behavioral loyalty refers to frequent shopping in a particular retailer and emotional loyalty refers to the customers' concern towards certain retailer on the basis of past buying experience and attitude. In this both behavioral and emotional loyalty model, increased satisfaction should increase customer loyalty. When customers are not satisfied, customers have the option to express the complaints going to the competitor. But, the study has shown that 60-80% of the customers are satisfied and very satisfied on the survey just prior to the defection. Therefore, there should also be other factors besides satisfaction that have a certain impact on customer loyalty (Reichheld et al. 2000.) At the time of 1980 product durability and service quality used to be evaluated by customer loyalty. But there has been dramatic changing in the late 1980 and in 1990, when the needs and wants of the customers were identified by the retailers in the market. Nowadays, in this modern era, the companies have changed this concept towards the initial target consumers by manufacturing ordinary product benefits in order to persuade customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Abdullah 2012.) Service quality, product quality, price strategy, store attributes are the four major variables that influence customer loyalty. Service is one of the most complex factors which do not exist before they are consumed. In order, to develop the service management it is important to understand what customers are really looking for and what the customers evaluate. Customers expect the quality of service through retailers, so, the service marketers have to assess how customers perceive the quality of the "services feature" implied by the perceived service quality framework. Service quality refers to the result of the comparison that the customer makes their expectation about the service and their perception of the way the service has been performed (Grönroos, C. 2007). Originally, there was no any model for the quality measurement based on a service quality. Normally, customer satisfaction studies are conducted to figure out how satisfied customers are with a certain service. Later on, Leonard Berry and his colleagues developed the SERVQUAL (SERVICES QUALITY) instrument which is important for measuring the customers' service quality. The

relationship between customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and service quality are studied based on the complaints from the dissatisfied customers. (Ziethamlet al.2003) Hence, consumer complaints are overviewed through customers' expectations, perceptions on the service of goods. The perceived value of the consumers is liable on the expectations and outcomes of the evaluation process of the customers. Further, service quality has a significant relationship with the customers' satisfaction which directly affects the customers' loyalty. Therefore, the retailer should focus on these factors to increase customer relationship with satisfaction and loyalty in this competitive retail market globally. Product quality is also another core factor of the customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Product quality is a collection of features and sharp brand product characteristics which have a contribution to the ability to fulfill specified demand. Product qualities also have different dimensions such as features, performance, reliability, durability, serviceability and customer perceived quality. Out of all these dimensions, mainly five elements, product durability, product variety, product freshness, product attractiveness and product equity have been used to measure the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers. Variety of products helps the retailers understand the buying behavior of the customers because the perceptions of the quality product vary from one another. Because of product variety, the firms will get an opportunity to pay attention towards the customer and also increase the greatest product variety. This will increase the growth and volume of the product as well as the customers' satisfaction and loyalty to a great extent. Hence, the firms had begun to develop the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers by offering quality goods and services.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To measure the loyalty status of the customer towards their preferred brand of shoes.

IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Data Sources

Primary Data: These are those data, which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. The researcher has used the structured questionnaire.

Secondary Data: These are those which are already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process. The researcher has used the journals.

Area of study

The study was conducted at The Guwahati city, Assam, India.

Tool of data analysis

There are two main methods of Data Analysis i.e., Bar diagram and Pie chart which was taken into consideration while conducting the survey.

Sample size

The sample size is a term used in market research for defining the number of subjects included in a sample size. By sample size, we understand a group of subjects that are selected from the general population and is considered a

representative of the real population for that specific study.

It is the total number of respondents targeted for collecting the data for the research. The researcher has taken sample size of 100 respondents for the research.

Sampling technique

Sampling is a method that allows researchers to infer information about a population based on results from a subset of the population, without having to investigate every individual.

The study is descriptive in nature. The primary data is collected through questionnaire by using snowball sampling method.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Analysis of Demographic Variable

%		Response (in nos.)	Response (in %)
Gender	Male	24	24
	Female	76	76
Age (in yrs.)	18-24	86	87.8
	24-29	8	8.2
	30-35	0	0
	36-Above	4	4
Educational Qualification	Class 10	6	6.1
	Class 12	27	27.3
	Graduate	49	49.5
	Post-graduate	15	15.2
	Other (please specify)	2	1.9
Profession	Student	88	89.8
	Business	7	7.1
	Other (please specify)	3	3.1
Annual Income	0-300000	22	81.5
	300001-600000	0	0
	600001-900000	3	11.1
	900001-1200000	2	7.4

Table 3.1: Demographic Profile

Source: Survey Data

2. A preferred brand loyalty

Loyal	Response (in nos.)	Response (in %)
Yes	49	50.5
No	48	49.5
Total	97	100

Table 2: Loyalty

Source: Survey Data

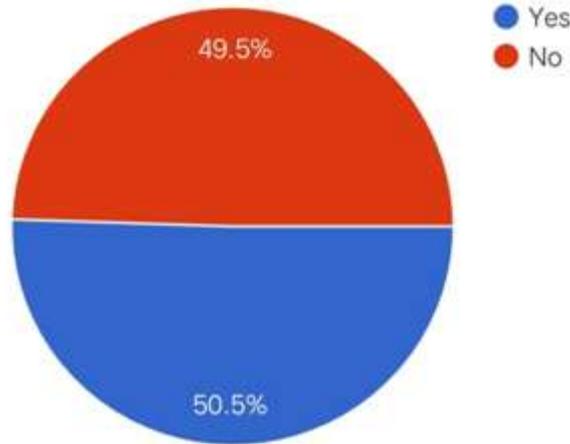


Figure 2: Loyalty
 Source: Table 2

Interpretation

From the above figure, it can be seen that out of 100 respondents, 50.5% people are loyal towards their preferred brand while 49.5% of

people don't seem to be loyal towards their preferred brand. It clearly shows that there is not much difference.

3. Factors affecting Consumer Behaviour in purchasing footwear.

Parameters	Response in nos.
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Table 3: Consumer Behaviour.
 Source: Survey Data

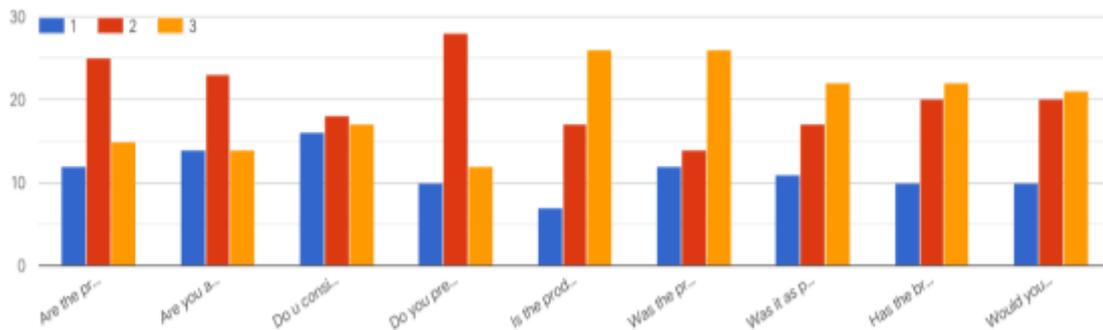


Figure 3: Consumer Behaviour.

	1	2	3	Total
Are the promotional schemes useful to you in purchasing the product?	12	25	15	52
Are you aware about the new changes?	14	23	14	51
Do you consider the competitive product before purchasing the product of a particular brand?	16	18	17	51
Do you prefer to buy products of this brand only?	10	28	12	50
Is the product easily available?	7	17	26	50
Was the product useful to you?	12	14	26	52
Was it as per your expectation?	11	17	22	50
Has the brand been able to gain your trust to enable subsequent purchases?	10	20	22	52
Would you refer the product/brand to your friends and family?	10	20	21	51

Source: Table 3

Interpretation

From the above figure and chart, it can be clearly seen that majority of people are loyal to their preferred brand and thus prefer to buy the product of a same brand, some also believe that the promotional scheme is useful while buying branded footwear and the customers also take into consideration the new changes if any while purchasing the preferred branded footwear.

VI. CONCLUSION

Every company aim is to maintain the long-term relationship with the customers and the business Organization. In order to acquire the potential customers, needs and demands should be acknowledged. The organization to understand what exactly the customers need and how to gain loyalty for the successful Business. As it is discussed in chapter two, the customer plays a crucial role in the market chain process. To Make it clearer, satisfied customers are the ones who creates the possibility of the new customers. If the existing customers are satisfied with the product and service, then there are the chances of recommendation to the new ones. This will lead to the increasing number of customers and could maintain the level of the relationship with the customers.

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