

Customer Delight: An Antecedent of Brand Loyalty in Online Shopping

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Abstract

The relationship of Brand Loyalty with customer delight have always been concentrated upon due to the changing buying patterns as different brands come into the market. Customer satisfaction is the best indicator of customer making purchase in the future which helps the firm gain competitive advantage and increase market share. In order to gain competitive advantage marketers are not only concentrating on satisfying their customers but taking a step ahead in delighting or ecstasies their customers by providing something in addition of what is expected. In addition, long term relationships with customers often means a greater resulting profitability as their economic positions improve over time. Providing satisfactory service most of the time and delightful service in the right moment is often enough for any company to make their brand and service stand out in customers mind. Satisfaction has also been linked with purchase intentions. Customers purchase a brand which they feel will make the most of their satisfaction; therefore they are more likely to purchase it, if their expectations of a particular brand are high. In this study, total 200 customers were selected from Indore city. The result indicated that there is a relationship between customer delight and brand loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Delight, Brand Loyalty, Delightful Services, Long term Relationship, Profitability, Repeatedly Purchases.

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Introduction

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty represents a favourable attitude toward a brand resulting in consistent purchase of the brand over time. It is the result of consumers' learning that only the particular brand can satisfy their needs. In this context several definitions have given to define the brand loyalty. Here some definitions have been presented on brand loyalty:

“**Brand loyalty** is a configuration of consumer behavior where consumers make repeat purchases over time after committed to the specific brand”.

“**Brand loyalty** is regardless of a competitor's actions or changes in the environment defined as positive feelings towards brand and dedication to buy the same product or service repeatedly now and in the future from the same brand”.

“**Brand loyalty** is the tendency of consumers to continuously purchase one brand's products over another. Consumer behavior patterns demonstrate from a company that has fostered a trusting relationship that consumers will continue to buy products”.

“**Brand loyalty** is the tendency of consumers to continue to buy products from the same brand over its competitors”.

Two approaches are required to the study of brand loyalty have dominated marketing literature. The first, a behavioural approach to brand loyalty, views consistent purchasing of one brand over time as an indication of brand loyalty. Behavioural measures have defined loyalty by the sequence of purchases and the proportion of purchases. Repeat purchasing behaviour is assumed to reflect reinforcement and a strong stimulus-to-response link. But, such loyalty may lack commitment to the brand and reflect repeat buying based on inertia. The second, a cognitive approach to brand loyalty, underlines that behaviour alone does not reflect brand loyalty. Loyalty by just measuring continuous behaviour implies a commitment to a brand that may not be reflected. The more modified description divided loyalty into two-interactive and attitudinal loyal. Behavioural loyalty is takes only the dimensions correspondent to the behaviour only while the attitudinal loyalty relates the attitude towards the product. In a nutshell, A person who purchases same thing is behaviourally loyal while if he tells about the positivity of the brand to others is attitudinal loyal. Now both these parts forming the brand loyalty relies on the company's devotion to its customers.

(Aaker, 1992) Brand loyalty is a complex phenomenon. At least seven different types of brand loyalty can be distinguished. In emotional loyalty, unique, memorable, reinforcing experiences create a strong emotional bond with a brand. Positive word-of-mouth is likely to be very high. On the similar grounds, Kapferer in 2005 posited “Brand loyalty is Marketer’s Holy Grail”. Based on the studies customer satisfaction, delight and ecstasy were identified as antecedents of Brand loyalty. Oliver(1999) defined Brand loyalty as –“ a deeply held commitment to buy re-buy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-setpurchasing, despite the potential to cause switching behaviour according to situational influences and marketing efforts”.

Brand loyalty – generates value mainly which can reflect a range from the habitual buyer to the satisfied buyer to those that like the brand to the truly committed –by reducing marketing costs: retaining existing customers is much less costly than attracting new ones. It is also difficult for competitors to communicate to satisfied brand users because they have little motivation to learn about alternatives. The burden on the competitor brand is substantial.

Customer delight which relates the emotion of the customer after being delivered is mirror of the company’s services, profitability and future scenario. It is the key aspect to which next step of the marketing strategy depends as it goes beyond the satisfaction level.

Global competitiveness and expanding economies has made the term “customer satisfaction” thing of the past while customer delight, customer joy, customer surprise and customer ecstasy became the new buzzword, companies who are practicing these have already started calling themselves customer –focused, or customer driven organizations.

Analysing the rate at which new competitors providing the same services are emerging, there is dire need to build brand loyalty to survive in the market in which customer’s happiness is the focus. Repurchase intention is implied through the level of contentment of the buyers. Customers will less likely to switch if he gets at least threshold loyalty from the company thus defining the target at which company has to maintain itself above to play safe in the market.

Amazon’s customer services are counted as one of the best services in the world which is also one of the reasons to make Amazon as a billion dollar company. As of 2014, it was estimated that there were 93% impressive customer engagements which is more sufficient to escalate

towards the pinnacle of the success. The 0.16 percent strategy i.e payback of few cents back to the customers for the product they purchased is one of the examples to gain the customer trust and delight. Flipkart also released the statement that they have wider focus on NPS(Net Promoter Score)i.e. how likely the customer is going to recommend the website to others for shopping which indicates the loyalty towards the company thus giving the rough estimate of the strength and the loopholes. Similarly there are many examples of other online giants which apart from managing its operations relies heavily on the customer experience. Apart from customer satisfaction and delight, Customer ecstasy is also of prime aspect of pondering as how to make customers feel extremely happy and special. Many online sites try to build personal attachment with the customers by surprising them or providing unexpected gift if they came to know about the certain situation. It is important for future of the company to have a informal relationship with the customers which can only be achieved if they do more than just to content the customers with their products as that is also been carried out by other competitors.

Brand loyalty not only relates the customer physically but also psychologically which plays an imperative role in building company's image in the longer run. Amazon is the epitome of Customer satisfaction and ecstasy as from the beginning it followed the motto "Customer is King" thus evolving itself as the number one ecommerce site whose just name infuses the sense of trust and each customer gets loyal and tied to its services firmly. Similarly many companies are thriving to derive the ways to encompass all the factors relating to the happiness of customers. Enhancing customer loyalty with customer satisfaction, delight and ecstasy will serve as the recipe of long term success of the company.

Researchers are exhaustively working on the customer relationship management model to segregate the aspects and define the individual relationships among them to increase the engagement of brand with the customers. Even psychological researchers like Vroom collaborated with the marketing one's to understand how this relationship is so entrenched. Evaluation of the brand is circumscribed with the three options- Confirmation, Positive disconfirmation and Negative disconfirmation. If the performance of the brand is neutral then it falls in confirmation category. If it high or low than the neutral, then it falls in positive disconfirmation and negative disconfirmation category respectively. So it is obvious that to tick in the particular category it is essential that the factors based on the customer's experience have to be taken.

Furthermore it has been observed that there is relation between surprise and delight of the customer too. There exist many hidden factors which make the brand image of the company. Positive surprise proportionately increases the customer satisfaction while the negative surprise will degrade it. Working on all the antecedents and keeping in mind their impact factor is studied rigorously by the company folks in order to check their status and their competitors'. Before devising any marketing strategy requirement analysis and customer analysis is done in many levels to make sure that brand value graph never decreases beyond the threshold. With the advancement of online shopping in different arenas, there is more of psychological involvement of customers with the company and once the image is set then there is no way that it changes easily in the short term. Amazon, Flipkart, and many other great players in the market follows some set of rules that there is negligible possibility of customer getting ditched in any way but practically it is not always 100%.

Review of Literature

Rawat (2006) has examined customer delight in his study for the context of fashion retailing. He found that the antecedents and outcomes of delightful shopping experiences for these customers in the highly competitive and dynamic world of fashion retailing, developing and retaining loyal customers is a requirement for survival.

Wang, (2011) aimed to find out how unrelated supporting service quality affects customer delight and customer satisfaction in lieu of intentions of purchasing. The result found that repurchase intentions influenced by unrelated supported service by affecting customer delight rather than satisfaction. When the service quality is high then unrelated supported service quality influences consumers' intentions to repurchase. On the other hand, if service quality is low than unrelated supported service quality does not influence consumers' repurchase intentions. The study mainly emphasized on service quality to delight customers.

Kyungae and Soonim (2013) identified the delight elements in online shopping malls and analysed the steps involved in online purchases. Delight elements were categorized into price services, delivery, package, quality etc. The results that customer delights included free gifts, offers, kindness of employees, easy return policy etc. exerted effects on repeatedly

purchasing. The results revealed that by various marketing elements. Customer delight is online shopping were experienced in various purchase steps.

Noyana, (2014) aimed to build a conceptual model to provide clear understanding of customer loyalty. The results of this study indicated that customer satisfaction among others is the most important antecedent of customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is influenced by comparative price, discount and exerted impact on customer satisfaction in terms of service quality, product quality, value added perceptions.

Jiradilok et al (2014) examined customer satisfaction leading to online purchase intentions for online users, experienced online purchasing and inexperienced online purchases in terms of customer delight and brand loyalty. The findings revealed that online customers depend on empathy, fair price, assurance, website information quality but those who do not purchase online they do not consider these attributes and these provided them a sense of delight. The study found that when customer repeatedly make purchasing online they become more experienced and thus be treated as a brand loyalty towards online shopping.

Dib and Al-Msallam (2015) explored the effects of three customer perceptions (perceived quality, brand image, price fairness) on customer satisfaction and Brand loyalty. The results illustrate that customer satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty. Also, the factors of perceived quality, brand image and price fairness affect Brand loyalty. Customer perception of perceived quality, brand image and price fairness are almost equally to build up the satisfaction. The study suggested that managers should consider perceived quality and price fairness as foundations to build up customer satisfaction, Brand loyalty and, also to improve brand image as an added on value for customers.

Badr EID (2015) analyzed the antecedents of customer loyalty namely; corporate image, customer satisfaction, and service quality. Findings revealed a positive relationship between corporate image and customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and service quality and customer loyalty. Results revealed the presence of a positive relationship between corporate image and customer loyalty, with a strong significant impact on affective loyalty. A positive relationship was also found between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, with a strong impact on cognitive loyalty.

Sudhakar and Devi Kumari (2016) discussed that majority of customers reflected online shopping for on time delivery, payment security, time saving on the other hand, some customers are satisfied for warranty, choice, availability, door delivery, discount offers, price and convenience. But after sale service found no association with customer satisfaction as customers were dissatisfied with the after sale services.

Ali and Sankaran (2016) analyzed the customer satisfaction and loyalty of the online customers. The study has discussed briefly about the effects of customer loyalty and retention on customer satisfaction. The results of the survey reveal that while a good percentage of Norwegians are satisfied with online shopping only less than half of them stay loyal to their online sellers.

Finn (2017) investigated these two customer satisfaction and customer delight perspectives by examining the linearity of how satisfaction influences behavioural aspects while controlling for customer delight as a distinct response. The study suggested that customer delight is a performance metric of service which needs to be monitored and managed just as customers satisfaction.

Gupta and Schivinski (2017) reviewed, systematize, and summarize empirical research on the antecedents and consequences of brand loyalty. The study has identified five categories of antecedents to brand loyalty associated with consumer, brand, social, corporate and relational factors. Furthermore, findings have proposed that bogus loyalty can result in behavioural consequences, premium loyalty in both behavioural and attitudinal consequences and latent loyalty in attitudinal consequences.

Rationale of the Study

The online shopping trends are increasing day by day at a very fast rate due to the convenience and offers provided by ecommerce sites to the customers. So it has become imperative to retain the customers as the competitors in the market are also increasing proportionately. According to a survey- Asian Market is expected to cross a billion mark in digital purchasing in 2018. The prime focus is to lure customers and retain them which can only be possible if there is sense of trust and loyalty between the services and the customers. New business tactics and ways indulge the customers for a short period time as other competitors start giving the similar offers. Retention of the customers is through customer

satisfaction, delight and ecstasy. Before the era of online shopping, predictions of the customer behaviour were very rare among brick and mortar stores. Even after online world came into existence, the importance of the customer's priority have been realized very late when data analytics emerged as the successful hand in the growth of the business.

To thrive in the digital era, one has to go extra mile to sustain itself in the market. The rationale behind the study is to explore whether customer satisfaction, delight and ecstasy individually have similar impact in creating brand loyalty in the online sites.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the impact of customer delight on brand loyalty.
- To give suggestions for future improvements in brands.
- To open up new vistas of research and develop a base for application of the findings in terms of implications of the study.

Research Design

In this study, the descriptive research is adopted related to customer delight because of the variables are already exist in the phenomena and are essential for brand loyalty.

Collection on Data

The primary data was collected from the customers including students, professionals, households, service class, business class etc. through the questionnaire.

Research Area: The study was carried out in Indore city.

Universe: Population in the study referred to the segment of customers who go for online shopping.

Sampling Method: For the purpose of this research, convenience was used. It involved selecting sample elements that was most readily available to participate in the research and who provided the information required to support the research according to the convenience.

Sample Size: Sample size selected for the purpose of this study was comprised of 200 customers.

Tools for data collection: For the study only primary data was used through the questionnaire. For this study following standard scale was used:

Customer Delight: Self-developed scale

Brand Loyalty: Seven scales measurement is adopted from Serkan & Gökhan (2005).

Analysis of Data: For this study partial regression was used in analysing the data.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of customer delight on brand loyalty.

Table 1 Model Summary^b On Customer Delight And Brand Loyalty

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.840 ^a	.705	.704	2.33510	.705	950.124	1	198	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Delight

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

The above table shows the model summary on customer delight and brand loyalty in online shopping, It is found that the value of correlation is .840 which is significant at 0.05 between these two factors and the value of R Square is .705 means that 70.5 per cent variance in brand loyalty is explained by the customer delight. Hence, the null hypothesis stated 'there is no significant impact of customer delight on brand loyalty' is rejected and it is concluded that customer delight has positive impact on brand loyalty.

Conclusion

The study found that Customer Delight is comprised of empathy, expectation, emotion, elegance, justice, esteem, engagement, economics, equivalence, service quality etc. Customer delight is related with providing something unexpected to the customer and thus creating a positive emotional reaction. Customer delight is something what a customer notices and remembers throughout his life. Customer delight demands consistency in providing quality to their customers, Fix chronic problems and Get the basics right every time. Customer delight provides a remarkable experience to their customers that focuses on their needs, interests and wishes and leaves them so satisfied that they can't stop to sing the praises of a brand or a product or any service.

Suggestions:

- The quality should be matched as per the changing expectations of the consumers.
- Customers should be involved by offering discounts, free samples etc.
- Product should be more appealing so that ads directly motivate them to purchase.
- The products should have a sense of appeal to attract a large number of segment of customers.
- Prompt response makes customers loyal and they associate their inner sense with brand.

Implications

The study will be applied in determining the effect of these three antecedents as; satisfaction, delight and ecstasy on brand loyalty so that a lot of efforts have to be made for the improvements in products or services. This study will be helpful to marketers in creating powerful strategies to create a niche in the market.

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