

Evaluating the Effective Factors in Loyalty of Athletes to Sports Brands in the Archery League Teams

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and prioritize the factors affecting loyalty of athletes to Sports Brands in the archery league teams. The method of the study is descriptive and the needed data for the survey were collected in measuring way. The sample of the study consisted of 90 athletes participating in premier archery teams in 1393, 65 men and 25 women, but according to Kerjési and Moorgan Table sample size decrease to 73. To select a representative sample of the population, a randomly stratified by gender, 53 males and 20 females, were determined and availability research questionnaire was distributed among them. Questionnaire of the survey was adapted from Lau and colleagues (2006) of 11 subscales (brand name, product quality, price, style of product, environment of store, advertising, quality of services, influence of others, social class, lifestyle and volume of advertising), and 40 items were designed. Validity of the questionnaire was determined by outstanding masters of sports management and 0.77 Cronbach's Alpha showed acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. The KS test, stepwise regression, and Friedman were used for statistical analysis of data. Results showed that the components of price, volume of advertising, lifestyle and environment of store were stronger predictors for Sport Brands, respectively. Friedman test showed, among other components are the components of the product style, social class, lifestyle, quality of services, and the volume of advertising in the priority groups.

Keywords: loyalty, sports brands, athletes of teams, archery league.

Introduction

Brand, for a long time has been a part of physical product and most of its definitions considered the brand as a term, name or commercial sign (Soltanhoseini et al, 2011). Though today the brand is beyond this. Brand is a name, term, phrase, sign, symbol, design or combination of these which is used to introduce products and services of seller or group of sellers and distinguish them from products of competitors (Kotler& Armstrong, 2004). Communication with the brand is based on customer perceptions and is completely subjective and this guarantees long-term commercial communication survival with customer (Wood, 2004).

Loyalty is an old term used for description of adherence and intense interest to a country, goal or a person. Loyalty is a continuum resulting from interaction between negative changes of outside environment and internal level of commitment (Heere and Dickson, 2008). Oliver (1999) defined Brand Loyalty as “developing deep commitment to buying again or supporting again a preferred product or service continuously in the future and repeating purchase from the brand despite conditional effects and marketing efforts that may change the behavior”.

The obvious characteristic of a famous brand is the loyalty and preference that develops. Brand loyalty can be defined as customer's positive attitude toward a brand or his adherence to that brand and an intention to buy it in the future. Increasing mind involvement with a product will increase the brand loyalty which is affected by all dimensions of involvement with the product. Interests to the product, joy-based value, sign value and its importance have a direct relationship with loyalty. High level of loyalty among customers causes competitive advantages for companies and has a positive effect on increasing brand income and decreasing marketing costs, also long term customer retention increases company's market share and profit making (Jamali Nejad, 2009).

In fact, customer's perception of a brand, correct or incorrect, is the basis of their decision for purchase. Among these, brand loyalty is an important concept that has been designed for understanding customer behavior (Lee et al, 2001). Brand loyalty is defined as repeated and continuous buying of a product or service in the future, which shows deep commitment of customer that despite marketing efforts for changing customer behavior causes purchasing just one brand (Oliver, 1999). In fact, loyalty is measured by commitment to buy a product or service again.

Brand loyalty is a basic concept in strategic marketing. Companies design marketing strategies in order to increase loyalty to maintain market share and more profit making. Having more loyal customers decrease marketing and acquiring competitive advantage costs (Jamali Nejad, 2009) and this includes lots of results and benefits for brand producing companies. At present, companies have changed dramatically to achieve this goal and are transforming from dealing attitude to communication with customer.

Various researches have shown that factors like brand (Cadogan and Faster, 2000), product quality (Soltan Hosseini et al, 2013), price (Cadogan and Faster, 2000), appearance, store environment, advertisements, service quality and influences of others (Bornmark et al, 2005) are among factors effective in increasing loyalty and purchasing. Also, previous researches have investigated subjects like difference between real and unreal popularity (Blomer and Kasper, 1995), differences between loyalty factors of frequent and changing customers (Lao et al, 2006), relation between quality, service, consumer satisfaction and popularity and loyalty to the store (Sivadas& Baker-Prewitt, 2000), purchasing patterns

(Lawrence, 1969) or consumer characteristics based on purchasing behavior, costumer phantasm and multi brand purchasing (Erenburg and goodhardt, 1970).

Sporting goods companies are not exceptions and there are lots of brands today that have attracted athletes and sporting goods buyers.

Among these, the archery is one of the sports in which sporting goods have an important role in success and archery athletes pay lots of attention to buying their equipment and to do that they know brands and use them in selection.

As it was mentioned the purpose of this study is to investigate and prioritize factors affecting brand loyalty of archery league athletes.

Research Methodology

The method of the study is descriptive and the needed data for the survey were collected in measuring way. The sample of the study consisted of 90 athletes participating in premier archery teams in 1393, 65 men and 25 women, but according to Kerjesi and Moorgan Table sample size decrease to 73. To select a representative sample of the population, a randomly stratified by gender, 53 males and 20 females, were determined and availability research questionnaire was distributed among them. Questionnaire of the survey was adapted from Lau and colleagues (2006) of 11 subscales (brand name, product quality, price, style of product, environment of store, advertising, quality of services, influence of others, social class, lifestyle and volume of advertising), and 40 items were designed. Validity of the questionnaire was determined by outstanding masters of sports management and 0.77 Cronbach's Alpha showed acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. The KS test, stepwise regression, and Friedman were used for statistical analysis of data.

Findings

To determine the partial share of every basic factor on brand loyalty of archery league, step by step multiple regression test was used. Table 1 demonstrates results of correlation coefficient between elements and brand loyalty variable.

Table1:
results of step by step multiple correlation coefficient

Step	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Modified determination coefficient	Standard error of estimate
First	0.54	0.29	0.28	0.18
Second	0.73	0.54	0.53	0.15
Third	0.81	0.65	0.64	0.13
Forth	0.86	0.75	0.73	0.11
Fifth	0.92	0.85	0.83	0.09
Sixth	0.95	0.90	0.89	0.07
Seventh	0.96	0.93	0.92	0.06
Eighth	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.05
Ninth	0.98	0.97	0.96	0.04
Tenth	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.03
Eleventh	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

As it can be seen in table 1, with every step and entry of new element the correlation of elements with loyalty variable increases and finally in eleventh step, the correlation is

completed and reach to 1. Table 2 demonstrates step by step multiple regression significance test.

Table 2:
regression significance test

Step	F	Sig.
First	29.75	0.001
Second	41.77	0.001
Third	43.34	0.001
Forth	50.77	0.001
Fifth	73.35	0.001
Sixth	98.92	0.001
Seventh	126.30	0.001
Eighth	177.71	0.001
Ninth	206.34	0.001
Tenth	302.24	0.001
Eleventh	-	0.001

Considering results of table 2, the observed F is significant in 0.05 level, so the regression equation is significant. Table 3 shows the results of step by step regression test.

Table 3:
step by step multiple regression test

Model	Nonstandard coefficients		Standard coefficient	Significance level
	B	Standard error	Beta	
Constant	-	0.001	-	1.000
Price	0.91	0.001	0.30	0.001
Life style	0.91	0.001	0.26	0.001
Advertisements	0.91	0.001	0.22	0.001
Advertisements volume	0.91	0.001	0.29	0.001
Product style	0.91	0.001	0.21	0.001
Social ranking	0.91	0.001	0.24	0.001
The brand	0.91	0.001	0.21	0.001
Store environment	0.91	0.001	0.26	0.001
Influence from others	0.91	0.001	0.15	0.001
Product quality	0.91	0.001	0.18	0.001
Service providing quality	0.91	0.001	0.19	0.001

Based on results of regression in table 3, we can write regression equation as follow:

Brand loyalty of archery league athletes = price (0.30) + life style (0.26) + advertisements (0.22) + advertisements volume (0.29) + product style (0.21) + social ranking (0.24) + the brand (0.21) + the store environment (0.26) + influence from others (0.15) + product quality (0.18)

+ service providing quality (0.19). So all the element are significant determinants of brand loyalty of archery league athletes among which price, advertisement volume, life style and store environment are the strongest.

Table 4 demonstrates the results of Freedman test for basic factors affecting on brand loyalty of archery league athletes.

Table 4:
results of Freedman test for basic factors affecting on brand loyalty of archery league athletes

No	basic factors affecting on brand loyalty	Average point	Ranking
1	The brand	5.04	8
2	Product quality	6.08	7
3	Price	4.00	11
4	Product style	7.61	1
5	The store environment	4.01	10
6	Advertisements	6.12	6
7	Service providing quality	6.79	4
8	Influence of others	4.92	9
9	Social ranking	7.55	2
10	Life style	7.45	3
11	Advertisement volume	6.42	5
Test statistics			
N		73	
Chi- square		126.114	
Freedom degree		10	
Significance level		0.000	

As it can be seen in table 4, considering chi square and significance level obtained, the hypothesis of equality of all 11 elements is rejected and it is shown that these elements have different effects on brand loyalty of archery league athletes.

Based on results from this table, product style, social ranking, life style, service providing quality and advertisement volume have the highest priority among other elements.

Discussion And Conclusion

Price is probably the most important factor for most of costumers. Price is the most important stimulator. More loyal customers have less sensitivity to price. Price cannot dissuade loyal customers easily from purchasing. These customers are willing to pay high prices for their brands. Costumers` satisfaction is achieved by comparison between perceived price and present price. So that if the perceived price is higher than the paid price they will buy the product (Lao et al, 2006).

In results of this study price has been introduced as the strongest determinant for brand loyalty of archery league athletes which is consistent with Lao et al (2006), wung and Sidek (2008), Burfeni et al (2009), Heidarzade and Zarbi (2007) and Safavi (2009) in which price is the most important factor affecting on costumers` brand loyalty.

Moreover, in the next step after price, advertisements volume is the strongest determinant of brand loyalty in archery league athletes which is consistent with results of Lao et al (2006), Bornmark (2005), Salimi et al (2014), and Heidarzade and Zarbi (2007).

Brand loyalty by advertisement variables is the most important characteristic of purchase selections. Advertisements in market relations is a kind of communication with customer which includes using an ad, sales promotions, personal selling and distribution. Advertisement is an impersonal providing of information in a social media about a product, brand, company or store that influences ideas, beliefs and perception of customers toward that product, brand and purchasing behavior (Lao et al, 2006).

Based on long term analysis on consuming behaviors, Mella et al (1997) stated that advertising activities based on decreased price increase customers' sensitivity to price and more ad loyal customers which shows simultaneous attention to price and advertisements. Intensity of effects of this factors depends on brand loyalty of customers. In fact, advertisement activities that are not based on price, decreases loyal customers' sensitivity to these factors and increases sensitivity of other customers.

Researchers like Dodson et al (1978) also investigated the effect of advertisements on customers' perception of quality and purchasing again (the number of customers who do not choose another brand in the future). They concluded that creativity in advertisement can attract customers who are not loyal and may choose another brand under the influence of advertisements. Thus, after advertisement competition, purchasing will decrease again, although loyal customers do not change their consuming habits and their perception of product quality.

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