

THE IMPACT OF BRAND LOYALTY ON CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF SPORT SHOE BRANDS: A MINI-REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study incorporates with the determinants of brand loyalty to testify its impact on the customer purchase intention. The sporting footwear product is one of the most comprehensively branded area in sport setting. A quantitative research design was applied to examine the customer purchase intention. This study was accomplished with special reference to Basketball shoe brands of Adidas, Nike and Puma. The structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection method, 60 respondents equally from Sri Lanka, Japan, India, Nepal, China and Malaysia were selected as sample by using convenience sampling method. The design model surveyed overall, segments and path coefficients to emphasize the provision of independent variables vs. dependent variables. Based on the findings, all the hypotheses were accepted which denotes brand image, customer satisfaction and brand experience impacts on customer purchase decision of Basketball players in the selected Asian countries. The end results of this study also lead to a deeper understanding of a sportswear brand loyalty concept and some implications for practitioners. Brand loyalty and Purchase intention is more intense dearth in sport setting and this study will bung up that literature gap.

Keywords: Brand loyalty, Customer Purchase Intention, Basketball shoe brands, Nike, Adidas, Puma

INTRODUCTION

Consumers purchase decision is immensely rely on their perception level. They develop relationship or interaction with brands in accordance to their satisfaction. The bond or the strong link that a customer has to a certain product can be defined as brand loyalty and firms try to keep their customers well satisfied. The more loyal customers are less vulnerable

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clients who would not be willing to change brand they regularly purchase (Keller, 2001). The athletic footwear manufacturing is one of the most prominent branded area in the global apparel market. Estimates hold that over three quarters of the total active sportswear market, and nearly 80% of authentic footwear, are branded. (Newbery, 2008). Branding vestiges the industry's major source of competitive advantage with stiffening competition among different producers, marketers vastly focus on the branding of their products (Jayalath & Madhushani, 2019).

The demand for high quality Basketball shoes is immense, which is why the most performance sneakers are expensive and available in limited supply. The best Basketball shoes ultimately supply players with added ankle support, durability and traction. There are three distinct types of Basketball shoes: high tops, mid-tops and low tops. High tops provide the best ankle support, mid- tops stop at ankle level enabling players to leverage added movement and low- tops will allow players to best take advantage of speed and quickness. The best performance Basketball shoes, according to David Wilson of the Adrenalist, are the Nike Air Zoom Huarache 2K4, Addidas Adizero Crazy Light 2.0, Nike Air Force Max 2013 etc. All high performance Basketball shoes differ in style, design and purpose. Even though appearance is a sought-after commodity when determining if a sneaker is good, it is important for players to understand why certain types of shoes are effective. Sport-specific, and even sport condition-specific, shoes that are highly demands by athletes. Solid brand loyalty impact on customer purchase decision and it help firms to establish and identity themselves in the market place (Aaker, 1996) and reduces vulnerability in competitors action leading to higher margins and greater co-operation because of, these significant features and the need, players give their focus more on selection of the shoe. Buyer's purchase decision for Basketball shoe is a well-planned and time taken one because the players are going to make rational decisions in order to get the shoes which has the highest value compared to the cost incur. This study expecting to provide insights of what are the features that a player is looking in a Basketball shoes, what are the most buying brands in the world, what kind of issues can be seen in the Basketball shoes and its market, the relationship and impact of brand loyalty on customer to decide his buying choices? Finally the researcher aims to provide best solutions for the companies in order to do the most corrective action and use the best strategy.

REVIEW

Basketball is one of the world's most popular and widely viewed sport, which is physically and mentally demanding. According to the Federation of International Basketball Association 11% of the world's population plays basketball. Basketball is a fast-paced game that requires the knowledge and instinct to perform quickly and properly. Specially, the basketball shoe is the one and only equipment that a basketball player is using and it means that the performance of the player will be depend on the quality or the suitability of the basketball shoe to some extent. And in the world, there are many opportunities for the basketball shoe market and Nike, Puma, Adidas are some of the well established brands of basketball shoes industry.

A good pair of basketball shoes will help players advance their skill set and decrease the chance for injury. And also it will not fix a player that features a below average skill set. However, a pair of sneakers that has super-efficient traction on the soles will help players gain better positioning, which can potentially increase performance on defense. It's important to maintain traction on the court because basketball demands players to move in all directions. Good traction can also help players pivot more effectively in dribble- drive situations. As Basketball is a very popular and hard sport to play, it needs five players per side to have a play and it basically includes shooting, defending, throwing, catching etc. It is more popular in developed countries and the players need a good energy in order to perform well. Other than energy, skills and practice the players should possess good outfit shoes and knee guards etc. Among all, basketball shoe is very important because it plays a big role in performing well as the performance will depend on the strength, quality and the comfort of the shoe.

Because of these significant features and the need, players give their focus more on selection of the shoe. Buyer's purchase decision for basketball shoe is a well-planned and time taken one because the players are going to make rational decisions in order to get the shoes which has the highest value compared to the cost incur. Basketball shoes are expensive and therefore, the consumers go through all the stages of the purchase decision process and they are problem recognition, information searching, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post purchase stages. Consumers are not ready to do impulse buying because the basketball shoe is that much important for a basketball player.

Because of these factors, there are many opportunities for marketers and the marketers should indeed identify the real needs of the players and should try to fulfill these needs and wants by providing best products with values that the consumer is expecting to fulfill. Manufactures take advantage to this popularity and as a result, there are now hundreds and even thousands of basketball shoes designs and styles from different famous brands all over the world. Mainly because unlike any other sport, shoes is the only equipment of a basketball player has during the game, which is why the right choice of shoes is somewhat considered as a big deal to any player. Basketball shoes can give any player the confidence to run, jump and move making his performance even better than the usual.

Brand loyalty is believed to be a hugely important asset to the company. According to (Aaker, 1996), brand loyalty could help to reduce some marketing costs, because loyal customers tend to repeat purchase and it costs less to the company than attracting new clients to purchase the same product. A company with loyal customers may have more time to develop new products and respond by competing with rivals. According to this research, Brand loyalty consists with the determinant of Brand image, customer satisfaction and brand experience.

The attachment, bond or the strong link that a customer has to a particular firm can be defined as Brand loyalty and firms try to keep their customers well satisfied. Firms believe that the satisfied customers become loyal and the loyal customers will bring more benefits to the firm. It is true if the customers are going to be loyal to the firms. Therefore, if the basketball shoe companies can identify player's real needs and satisfy them, it will be a

huge contribution to the marketers as well as the players. The world is evolving fast and the advanced methods, technologies catch the business world easily. Not like in past, traditional perceptions, methods of producing and selling and the traditional objectives of firms have been changed and today the priority is for the customer and also customer relationships.

Therefore, this research was an interesting topic for the researcher and through the successful completion of the research, the researcher is expecting to provide insights of what the features that a player is looking in a basketball shoes are, what are the most buying brands in the world, what kind of issues can be seen in the basketball shoes and it's market, the relationship and impact of brand loyalty on customer to decide his buying choices and finally the researcher aims to provide best solutions for the companies in order to do the most corrective action and use the best strategy. Therefore, this research will provide valid and important facts and will be helpful in decreasing the knowledge gap of this research area.

CONCLUSION

The study is about the impact of Brand Loyalty on Customer Purchase Decision of Basketball shoe brands with special reference to basketball players in few selected countries in Asia. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the impact of brand loyalty on customer purchase decision of basketball players and sixty male basketball players from Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Japan, China and Malaysia were selected as the sample. Brand image, customer satisfaction and brand experience were taken as the independent variable dimensions and customer purchase decision was as the dependent variable. The study reveals that all the brand loyalty dimensions have a positive impact on customer purchase decisions while brand image is the highest impacting factor for customer purchase decision and brand experience next. It shows that brand image is the most influential factor which leads to brand loyalty for basketball shoe brands when customers decide what to purchase. Moreover, Nike is the most preferred basketball shoe brand in these six countries in Asia. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand loyalty impact on customer purchase decision.

One of the major purposes of the current research is to provide recommendations based on the findings of brand loyalty and customer purchase decisions of Basketball shoe brands in Asia. In overall, the highest impact on customer purchase decision is from brand image. It means that people rely more on what they perceived the brand as and they will decide to buy or not considering the image that they have in their mind for a particular brand. For example, the research reveals that majority is aware and prefer Nike brand as a good shoe brand for basketball playing. Therefore, the brands should have a good understanding about the perceptions of customers and to see their requirements.

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