A STUDY ON ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND LOYALTY IN THE TOILET SOAP MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Winning brands are one of the most important ways for a company to achieve competitive advantage and superior performance. In the present scenario the main workings for the brand is sustenance, sustainability and sustained advantage to retain its customers and make them loyal users of the brand. One the most significant challenges for the brand managers are to understand the relationship between loyalty and its antecedents. In the toilet soap market no single brand enjoys maximum market share.

The study is descriptive and cross section in nature. The data collected from consumers of Tiruchirappalli. Both primary and secondary data were considered for the study. The primary data were collected from the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of six dimensions. The dimensions are Behavior loyalty, Attitudinal loyalty, Hedonic Value, Brand satisfaction, Brand equity, Brand value and Brand trust. The questionnaires were distributed to consumers who made purchase of Toilet Soaps in leading stores in Tiruchirappalli.

As brand loyalty is found to be combination of several components, all the antecedents considered for the study should be given equal importance. In Toilet soap industry, a strong brand builds the foundation of business performance. The result of path analysis shows that Brand satisfaction, Brand equity and Brand trust has higher impact with behavior loyalty. Brand value and Hedonic value has higher impact with attitudinal loyalty.
**INTRODUCTION**

Winning brands are one of the most important ways for a company to achieve competitive advantage and superior performance. In the present scenario the main workings for the brand is sustenance, sustainability and sustained advantage to retain its customers and make them loyal users of the brand. One the most significant challenges for the brand managers are to understand the relationship between loyalty and its antecedents. In the toilet soap market no single brand enjoys maximum market share. The consumers now have plenty of choices, thanks to impact of globalization. The consumers brand loyalty on the toilet soap markets is divided among different brands within a product category. Research on the toilet soaps industry has gained popularity in the marketing literature.

However, in the Toilet Soap industry, brand loyalty within the soap and other hedonic. Consumer goods markets have not been studies comprehensively. More research is essential to understand the effect of hedonism on brand loyalty. The main aim of the study is to understand antecedents of brand loyalty in the Toilet soap market.

There is always healthy debate between attitudinal and behavioral approaches, in regards to brand loyalty studies. Early in 1941 the concept of brand loyalty emerged as a single dimension. In the journey of brand loyalty, two dimensions were emerged. The dimensions are attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty. The term behavioral brand loyalty explains the repeat purchase behavior. Later the attitudinal loyalty was recognized. The research on brand loyalty goes beyond repetitive purchasing behavior and implies a true commitment to a particular brand. Most of the marketing literature defines brand loyalty as a result of the relationship between the consumer’s attitude and repeat purchase behavior (Ogba 2009 and Tan, 2009).

In order to understand consumers’ utilization behavior and choices of brand, one must value the reasons following consumer choice behavior. At first predictable product purchasing concentrated on the utilitarian aspects (Miranda, 2009). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) were among the first to recognize the uniqueness of sensory inspiration and enjoyment in the buying process and brand choosing, also known as hedonic value. Hedonic utilization is related to fantasies, feelings and fun (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The marketers also include the flavor of soap, fragrance, scents, design, exciting stimulus and fantasizing in measuring consumer behavior (Hopkinson and Pujari, 1999). Hedonic consumption is “those facets of consumer behavior that relate one’s experience with products and brand desire, and emotional aspects”. Toilet soap usage is an excellent example of a product that possesses hedonic value and that is usually used for hedonic motivations.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Nature of market defines the antecedents of loyalty. The purpose of the study is to define the antecedents of brand loyalty within the Toilet Soap market and to test the moderating effect of hedonic value. In 2004 (Taylor) studied four antecedents. In addition several antecedents has been discussed separately by various authors (e.g. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera- Alema’n, 2001; Vranesivic and Stancec, 2003).

In any marketing research, Consumer Satisfaction is one of the key prominent predictors of consumer behavior (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alema’n, 2001). Brand loyalty is considered as an internal part which is built on consumer’s consistent satisfaction with the other functions and performance of the brand (Reast, 2005). According to (Oliver, 1999; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera- Alema’n, 2001; Back and Parks, 2003; Taylor, 2004) brand satisfaction is one of the key
elements of brand element. Many studies suggest that behavioral and attitudinal loyalty were important attribute of brand satisfaction (Taylor, 2004).

The attitudinal definition of loyalty implies that loyalty is a state of mind set about the product or brand. By this definition, a customer is "loyal" to a brand or a company based on their positive attitude. If the consumer like the particular manufacturer, its products or brands, their attitude influence to buy from it, rather than its competitors. In strictly economic terms, the customer loyalty towards attitudinal is the consumer who is intentionally willing to pay a premium for particular brand than its competitor brand, even if the competitor offers nearly comparative or even lesser price. In terms of attitudes, one way of increasing customer’s loyalty is closely equivalent to rising customer’s preference for the particular brand. The company always wise to increase customer satisfaction, customer loyalty in attitudinal terms, which will improve the products, image, and all other elements related to experiencing customer, relative to its competitors.

The next important antecedent of brand loyalty is Brand equity perceived by (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). Brand equity is a mixture of all the ingredients in marketing the brand in addition to the brand name which contributes towards the product. (Pitta and Katsanis 1995) continuously argue that strong brand equity increase the probability of brand choice and is also considered a tool for attaining competitive advantage. Taylor (2004) stated that brand equity is one of the most powerful factors for both behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty. The factors like relevance, Emotional connections, Differentiators, Value and Perceptions may be considered to track and measure consumer sentiment and behavior related to brand.

The customer’s conduct, with standing their attitude or preference are the key elements of behavioral loyalty. Based on the elements if the customer repeatedly purchase from the same company, then the customer is loyal to a particular company. Loyalty mainly concentrates on regularly repurchasing activity, rather than preference. Based on the behavioral definition, loyalty is not as cause of purchase, but it is considered as the result of brand preference. The essentials improving brand preference, product quality and customer satisfactions are the core ways to increase customer loyalty, which will increase the repurchase behavior of customers. The above mentioned essentials are key tactics which will be always applied by the company to increase customer repurchase behavior.

Brand equity and brand value are considered as a unit to measure and estimate how much a brand is worth. The distinction between the two is that brand value refers to the monetary asset in the balance sheets as recorded by the company, while brand equity refers to the importance of the brand to a customer of the company. Brand value is easier for a company to estimate when comparing with brand equity. The company can determine the reasonable market value of the brand by asking other companies what price they would give to purchase the brand. If the company wants to produce a new brand for its products, or to develop an existing brand, it has to consider hiring marketers, advertising experts and consultants. Once the company calculated its brand equity correctly, brand equity can increase the value of brand. If the customer likes a particular brand, the customer will also buy other products manufactured by particular brand name, which will increase the company revenue and brand equity.

Consumer’s perceptions, preference and evaluation of the brand are considered as a process of brand value and superior customer value has been recognized as a competitive advantage, Woodruff (1997). Vranesvic and Stancec (2003) confirmed that brand value helps companies to attain and maintain customer relationships also the author argues that brand value, brands can increase competitive advantage during tough competition. The impact of brand value on brand loyalty has been studied by various authors (Blackwell and Taylor, 2004) and accomplished that brand value affects brand loyalty.

The next antecedent of brand loyalty is brand trust, which is considered as a feeling of security that the brand will meet the consumer’s expectation this was conceptualized by Delgado-
Ballester and Munuera-Alemań (2001). The customer relationship can be developed by enhancing the trust of the consumers, which will create positive impact towards brand loyalty. The role of trust in consumers loyalty experience even more considerably. Many authors (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Taylor et al., 2004; Matzler et al., 2008) identified brand trust has an effect on both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty; they also acknowledged brand trust as the most influencing factor of loyalty.

When the organization manages their brand to bring meaningful significant impression on consumers are more likely to attain a win-win attention. The brand which has value added brands place a special place in the consumer’s mindset. By adding add-on value to the brand it could affect the consumers brand love and brand trust. The consumers always think that specific brand should bring value, pleasure, quality and uniqueness. The attitudinal loyalty of the consumers mainly lies on consumers trust towards brand which will clearly determine consumer commitment and loyalty towards the brand. Trust plays a major role in creating potential and highly valued relationship between consumer and brand. The impact of consumer commitment and brand loyalty will stimulate the positive affect accepted by the consumers. The consumer’s positive emotional mood or affect depends upon the brand loyalty if it is place and positioned in the consumer mindset. Healthy and positive brands will affect a positive impact towards the brand loyalty of consumers, in purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty.

Several authors have documented the emotional factors within the brand loyalty experience (Dick and Basu, 1994; Fournier, 1998; Holbrook and Schindler, 2003). For example Fournier (1998) noted the importance of emotions in consumers’ long-term relationships with certain brands. According to Holbrook and Schindler (2003), consumers’ emotional memories endure over time, which can be considered a high level of brand loyalty. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) acknowledged that hedonic products have an overall effect in the brand loyalty process.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the above literature review the research hypotheses were formulated. Brand Satisfaction, Brand Equity, Brand Value, Brand Trust, hedonic values are positively related to behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive and cross section in nature. The data collected from consumers of Tiruchirappalli. Both primary and secondary data were considered for the study. The primary data were collected from the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of six dimensions. The dimensions are Behavior loyalty, Attitudinal loyalty, Hedonic Value, Brand satisfaction, Brand equity, Brand value and Brand trust. The questionnaires were distributed to consumers who made purchase of Toilet Soaps in leading stores in Tiruchirappalli. The purpose of the study was explained to the consumers randomly, who wish to participate in the survey were considered as the sample of the study. In order to provide more explicit results and conclusion, a decision was made to limit the sample. But the effective sample was still large being 302 effective respondents. Thus random sampling technique will be appropriate for the study. The perception of the respondents were measured by a 5 point Likert Scaling technique ranging from (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5).

RESULT

The analysis first started with confirmatory factor analysis to ensure all the individual statements falls under each dimensions. The confirmatory analysis was made to check the single...
dimensionality. The result of confirmatory analysis shows that all the loadings of individual statements were above 0.6. Thus all the dimensions explain 60% approximately. The internal consistencies of the data were checked with Cronbach’s alpha. In this research all the dimensions were above 0.7, which were the required criteria. The results of Cronbach’s alpha ensure the reliability and validity of the data. The average variance extracted has been calculated to ensure that measured constructs are truly unrelated and attains discriminant validity. The result shows that entire dimensions AVE value is above .5 and it’s greater than the correlation between every dimension.

Modeling Behaviour and Attitudinal Loyalty Based on Antecedents of Brand Loyalty

The above model shows the acceptable goodness of fit measures. The Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) was closer to zero (0.07), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) above (0.9), Normalized Fit Index above (0.9) and Comparative fit index also above (0.9). The squared multiple correlation were calculated. Accordingly 25.6 percent of the total variance was explained by attitudinal brand loyalty and 25.6 percent by behavioral brand loyalty. The result of square multiple correlation shows that it can be considered adequate for explaining the total variance.

Regression Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses Statement</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior loyalty</td>
<td>Brand satisfaction</td>
<td>.237</td>
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<td>Brand value</td>
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<td>8.020   ***</td>
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</table>

The above table shows the beta loading, Standard Error, Critical ration and Significance level. Brand satisfaction found to have strong effect on behavioral loyalty when comparing with attitudinal loyalty. Furthermore attitudinal loyalty found to be not significant, which reject the hypotheses. The path brand equity found to have strong impact with behavior loyalty but weak with attitudinal loyalty. Brand value found to have weaker impact with behavior loyalty when comparing with attitudinal loyalty. Brand trust has higher impact with behavior loyalty when comparing with attitudinal loyalty. Finally, the hedonic value founds to have higher impact with attitudinal loyalty.
when comparing with behavior loyalty. Thus entire hypotheses are accepted, except brand satisfaction towards attitudinal brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION

As brand loyalty is found to be combination of several components, all the antecedents considered for the study should be given equal importance. In Toilet soap industry, a strong brand builds the foundation of business performance. The result of path analysis shows that Brand satisfaction, Brand equity and Brand trust has higher impact with behavior loyalty. Brand value and Hedonic value has higher impact with attitudinal loyalty. By giving significant importance towards the antecedents of brand loyalty, several competitive advantages can be gained through brand loyal customer. The manufacturers of toilet soaps should continuously invest huge time and money in acquiring and maintaining satisfied customer relationships. Interestingly hedonic value found to be strongest predictor, companies should take advantage of it; make the customers to emotionally link with the brand.

REFERENCE