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FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASE OF BATH SOAPS IN CHENNAI AND ITS SURROUNDINGS-AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Brand Loyalty is the consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through intention or behaviour, to repurchase a brand continually. It occurs because the consumer perceives that the brand offers the right product features, image, or level of quality at the right price. Consumer behaviour is habitual because habits are safe and familiar. In order to create brand loyalty, advertisers must break consumer habits, help them acquire new habits and reinforce those habits by reminding consumers of the value of their purchase and encourage them to continue purchasing those products in the future. This paper was tried to understand the factors which were affecting the brand loyalty of the bath soaps in Chennai.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Bath Soaps, Cognitive Loyal, Affective Loyal

Introduction

Brand loyalty is a result of consumer behavior and is affected by a person's preferences. Loyal customers will consistently purchase products from their preferred brands, regardless of convenience or price [1, 2]. Brand loyalty, in marketing, consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using the brand and can be demonstrated by repeated buying of a product or service or other positive behaviors such as word of mouth advocacy. Brand loyalty is more than simple repurchasing, however. Customers may repurchase a brand due to situational constraints (such as vendor lock-in), a lack of viable alternatives, or out of convenience. Such loyalty is referred to as "spurious loyalty". True brand loyalty exists when customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand which is then exhibited through repurchase behaviour. Conceptualization of brand loyalty implies that loyalty is neither a dichotomy

(loyalty and no loyalty), nor multi-category typology (e.g., low, spurious, latent, and high loyalty), but a sequence or continuum. In this case, loyalty formulation commences with cognitive loyalty, followed by affective loyalty, to conative loyalty or intention loyalty and finally the actual purchase (action loyalty or behavioural loyalty).

Cognitive Loyalty

Conceptually, cognitive loyalty is based on the cognition dimension of attitude. Cognition simply refers to consumer's belief and knowledge about a phenomena [3]. As cognition is based on beliefs and knowledge; cognitive loyalty is loyalty based on brand knowledge and belief that the brand is preferable to its competitors (Harris & Goode, 2004; Oliver, 1999). At this loyalty stage, a brand will come first in a loyal consumer's mind when questions of what to buy or where to go arise (Gremler & Brown, 1998). In other words, the brand is the customer's primary option or first choice among alternatives

Affective Loyalty

Affective loyalty is a favourable attitude or liking based on satisfied usage" (Harris & Goode, 2004, p. 141). Oliver (1999) insisted that this loyalty is grounded on the affect concept of attitude. Affective corresponds to a consumers' overall evaluation of the brand (Assael et al., 2007) and contains some involvement, liking, and caring (Oliver, 1997). In a similar vein, Back and Parks (2003) asserted that affect refers to feelings, moods, or emotional responses that can be measured by collecting verbal reports or by psychological responses. This liking 'a product or service is the result of satisfaction of consumption of product or service over time. Liking 'will eventually create commitment toward the product or service which is called affective loyalty and is encoded in the consumer's mind as a result of cognition and affect (Oliver, 1997, 1999).

Conative Loyalty

Oliver (1997) stated that conation implies a brand-specific commitment to repurchase. While Assael et al. (2007) defined conation as a consumer's tendency to act toward an object generally measured in terms of intention to buy. Conative loyalty, also known as behavioral intention or loyalty intention (Johnson et al., 2006), is *a loyalty state that contains what, at first, appears to be the deeply held commitment to buy* (Oliver, 1999, p. 35). The commitment to buying a product or service is influenced by repeated episodes of positive affect toward the brand. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) insisted that commitment restricts customer in no uncertain choice direction towards a particular brand's

warranting for repeat purchase. Consequently, having committed consumers is important for any business as they tend to resist persuasion from other providers (Pritchard et al., 1999).

Toilet (Bath) Soaps- An Introduction

Toilet soap is an important day to day basic requirement of any consumer [4, 5]. It is considered as cleansing and beautifying products which is usually used for cleansing one's body. The toilet soaps market is dominated by several, leading national and global brands and a large number of small brands.. The accepted and quality brands are Hamam, Lux, Power, Dove, Rexona, Medimix, Cinthol, Pears, Mysore sandal, and Lifebouy. The existence of different brands made the consumers difficult to differentiate each brand from other. It is, therefore, very important to find out the impact of brand loyalty and advertisement lure the consumers. The toilet soap market is fragmented and highly competitive in nature.

Review of Literature

Loyalty is defined as a customer who repurchases from the same service provider whenever possible, and who continues to recommend or maintains a positive attitude towards the service provider (Bloemer et al., 1999, Gremler and Brown 1999, Shoemaker and Lewis 1999, Kandampully and Suhartanto 2000). Customers may be loyal due to high switching barriers or lack of real alternatives. Customers may also be loyal because they are satisfied and thus want to continue the relationship. History has proven that most barriers to exit are limited with regard to durability; companies tend to consider customer satisfaction the only viable strategy in order to keep existing customers [7]. Several authors have found a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bearden, Teel et al. 1980; Bolton and Drew 1991; Fornell 1992; Anderson and Sullivan 1993).

Customer loyalty is a buyer's overall attachment or deep commitment to a product, service, brand, or organization (Oliver, 1999). Oliver, (1999) defines loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-buy product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same-brand set purchasing [8]. From all previous studies about customer loyalty and the factors that affecting on it such as service quality, switching barriers, and brand image, all researchers gave several definitions of customer loyalty, each definition expect type of product or service, but there are some things are similarity between their definitions as, repeatedly purchase a goods or service over time; and hold favorable attitudes towards a goods or service, or towards the company supplying the goods or service [9].

But the deference between their definitions are the factors that affecting on customer loyalty for example the factors that affecting on loyalty to cars are deferent the factors that affecting on loyalty on mobile phone or any product that consume it daily, monthly or yearly, as mentioned by (Jun and Bin, 2005).

The customer loyalty is characterized by repurchasing and not transferring by the fluctuation of the market. There are many factors that affect the customer loyalty. In the telecommunication industry, according to opinions of the experts and literatures previous studies, the effects of customer loyalty can be assessed in these aspects: service quality, switching barriers, and brand image "the customers' switching cost requirement, quality requirement and service requirement for the telecommunication business" (LI Li, 2005). Oliver (1999) proposes that eventual customer loyalty is a role of perceived product superiority, personal fortitude, social bonding, and their synergistic effects. Further analysis of Oliver's discussion tend to suggest not that loyalty is commitment, but that loyalty is an aspect of commitment called attitudinal or emotional component of commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer et al., 1993; Ogba, 2008).

A brand's image often influences a customer's expectations and consequently satisfaction with a product or service. Brand image pertains to the perception or mental picture a customer holds of a brand and is formed through his/her response, whether reasoned or emotional, an organization's image is an important variable that positively influences marketing activities. Image is considered to have the ability to influence customers' perception of the goods and services offered [10, 11]. Thus, image will have an impact on customers' buying behavior. The objective is to arouse a positive affective response to the brand in the customers, such that they buy brands for their physical attributes and functions, and their symbolic meanings associated with the brand, product or service. During its formation, the customer's experiences, feelings and trust will influence the image. Corporate image is related to the physical and behavioral attributes of the firm, such as business name, architecture, variety of products/services, and to the impression of quality communicated by each person interacting with the firm's clients [12].

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the brand loyalty among the consumers towards bath soap.
2. To find out the factors which affect the brand loyalty of consumers for bath soap?

Method of data collection

Primary data: The study is based on both primary and secondary data [13]. The primary data were collected by distributing interview schedule to the users of bath soap in Mugapair area in Chennai City.

Secondary data

The secondary data has been collected from the various journals, magazines connected with toilet soap [14].

Sample Size: The sample size of 430 respondents was selected from the respondents of Chennai.

Sampling Technique

The study has been undertaken by survey method, the data is collected with the help of convenient sampling method from the household in Mugapair [15].

Analysis

Table: 1 Shows the Multiple Regression Tests of Factors Affecting the Customer.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.267(a)	.071	.058	5.80850

The above table displays are R, R², adjusted R² and standard error
ANOVA (b)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1092.719	6	182.120	5.398	.000(a)
Residual	14271.467	423	33.739		
Total	15364.186	429			

(b) Dependent Variable: Brand loyalty

Financial Activities	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	29.436	2.573		11.442	.000
Quality of the soap	.649	.243	.132	2.674	.008**
Product design and style	-.434	.280	-.085	-1.548	.122
Attractive flavours	-.117	.261	-.024	-.447	.655
Price	.282	.158	.085	1.779	.076
Promotion offer	-.059	.066	-.042	-.886	.376
Brand trust	.397	.089	.212	4.485	.000**

Source: Computed Primary Data ** Significant at 1 percent level

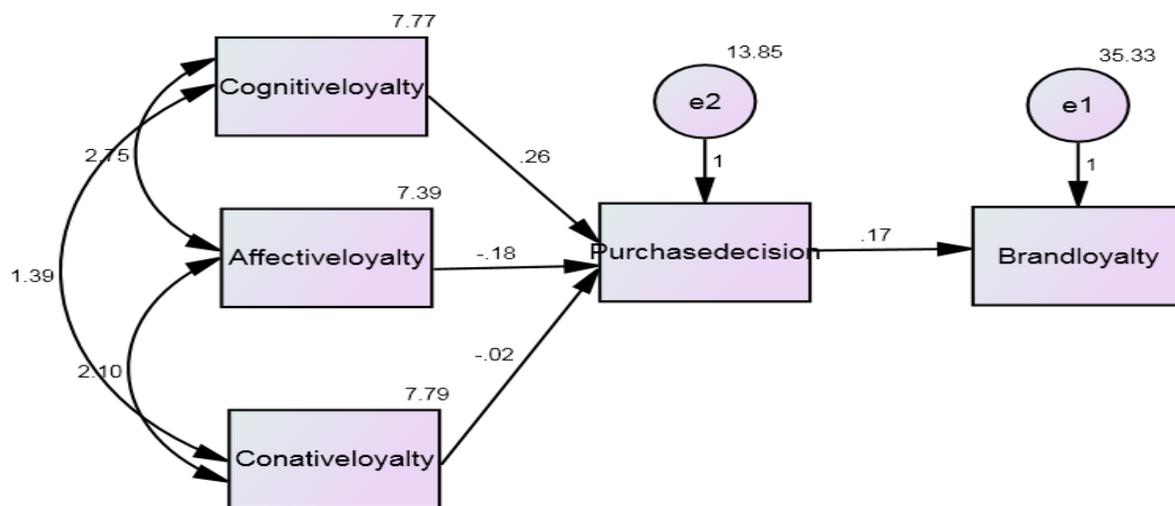
a) Dependent Variable: Brand loyalty

$$\hat{Y} = 29.43 + (.132)x_1 + (-.085)x_2 + (-.024)x_3 + (.085)x_4 + (-0.042)x_5 + (.212)x_6$$

Where \hat{y} is the estimated factors that influencing the brand loyalty for bath soaps.

The above equation shows the overall brand loyalty predicted by the influencing variables. The result of the t test reveals that the calculated significance of the partial regression co-efficient 2.674 and 4.485 are valid at 1 percent level respectively. The multiple R found to be 0.267 which reveals that there exists a relationship of 26.7 percent brand loyalty related to its relevant factors. The R square value of 0.071 confirms that the bath soap variables explain only 7.1 percent of variation in the brand loyalty. The f-test shows that the explained variation was highly significant at 1 percent level. From the above co-efficient table, it has been concluded that quality of the soap (2.674) and brand trust of the soaps (4.485) are highly influenced to the brand loyalty of the bath soaps [16, 17].

Fig.1 Brand Loyalty Model.



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Purchase decision <--- Cognitive loyalty	.260	.069	3.751	***	
Purchase decision <--- Affective loyalty	-.184	.073	-2.529	.011	
Purchase decision <--- Conative loyalty	-.017	.067	-.246	.806	
Brand loyalty <--- Purchase decision	.168	.076	2.217	.027	

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate
Purchase decision <--- Cognitive loyalty	.192
Purchase decision <--- Affective loyalty	-.132
Purchase decision <--- Conative loyalty	-.012
Brand loyalty <--- Purchase decision	.106

Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate
Affective loyalty <--> Conative loyalty	.277
Cognitive loyalty <--> Affective loyalty	.363
Cognitive loyalty <--> Conative loyalty	.179

Cognitive loyalty is influencing the purchase decision of the respondent towards the bath soaps, it significant at 1 percent level. Whereas affective loyalty also shows with 5 percent significant level in the purchase decision of the respondents. But conative loyalty, conation implies a brand-specific commitment to repurchase was not significant at 5 percent and 1 percent level. Purchase decision may induce the brand loyalty (P value: 0.027) [18].

Findings and recommendation

Quality and brand trust of the soap can induce to purchase intention. Other factors like style, design and flavor of the soaps are not that much influenced. Likewise affective and cognitive mode of loyalties are induced the purchase decision, but the conation loyal not influenced on the same [19]. The bath soap branders make an effect of affective and cognitive mode of affection among customers towards their bath soap brand [20, 21].

Conclusion

Consumer preference is one of the important factors of marketing; FMCG companies must find out consumers want and then translate these desires in to meaningful technical language. Knowledge of buying behavior of different market segments help marketers to identify buyer who support the company. In toilet soap market generally buyers are of low or reasonable price minded, expecting free gifts, quality and modification, the company should take up some changes in their product to cover more market area and attract more customers and to complete their competitors. FMCG companies should concentrate their innovative strategies and distribution channels to attract the new customers and retain the existing customers [22].

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