Prioritize the Factors Influencing Sports Brand Loyalty among Members of the Iranian Student’s Women’s National Karate Team

Mohammadbagher Forghani Ozrudi1* and Zahra Samadi2
1Young Researchers and Elite Club, Islamic Azad University, Iran
2Department of Sport management, Islamic Azad University, Iran

*Corresponding author: Mohammadbagher Forghani Ozrudi, Young Researchers and Elite Club, Babol Branch, Islamic Azad University, Babol, Iran, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1683-3106

Received: July 11, 2019
Published: July 29, 2019
Volume: 01; Issue: 02


Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of study was to Prioritize the factors influencing sports brand loyalty among members of the Iranian student’s women’s national karate team.

Material: The research method was descriptive correlational research and carried out the field. The population of the study, 12 members of the Iranian student’s women’s national team karate which were chosen as census. For data collection, using questionnaires Lau et al (2006) were reviewed with 11 subscales and 40 questions with Spoint Likert scale (α=0.92). According to comprehensive analysis Kolmvgrof-Smirnov test for normality of research data and to check the hypotheses used one sample t-test, Shannon entropy. Data were analyzed with SPSS22 software at α≤0.05.

Results: The findings show that brands as Adidas, Nike and Arawaza the highest percentage of participants had the choice of priorities. According to the results, the impact of all factors studied (brand name, product quality, price, effectiveness, social class, advertising, product style, store environment, the quality of services, lifestyle, and volume of advertising) on the loyalty national karate team than sports brands.

Conclusions: Entropy analysis showed that the influence of others, product quality, product style top rated and price of the product lowest score in the national student’s women’s karate team loyalty to sports brands.

Keywords: Prioritize; Loyalty; Sport Brands; National student’s Karate Team; Women; Entropy Analysis

Introduction

Today, brand management is very important on marketing management, especially when organizations are trying to communicate untouchable and complicated messages [1,2]. On the other hand, the basic investment of so many organizations are their brands [3].

One of the basic problems encountering brands managers today is how to prepare and develop better understanding from relation manag structures like brand and customer loyalty, especially on marketing literature; there are so many factors influential on customers’ loyalty [4]. On recent decades, company’s value has been evaluated based on properties, touchable properties, factories and its equipments. But today, researchers of economy and management science has concluded the real value of a company is out of it, it means on the minds of potential buyers. A product price is its monetary value, but brand, introduces production and its especial aspects [5,6].

So many researchers have mentioned to this topic in which creating powerful brand is the key factors for achieving competitive advantages and longterm survival in market [7]. Companies could establish higher price for products based on powerful brands, establish better business prize, sale margin and increase their profits and decrease their vulneration against competitors [8].

Consumers not only use sport cloths on sport games, but also use of them on home, work office or on entertainments. In addition, there is always tendency to better designing and sport designation along each other on sport clothing industry [9]. Brand is figured as part of physical products and more of brand descriptions are interpretation of brand as a word, name or business sign [10].

Successful brands increases confidence to products and untouchable services and customers could imagine and recognize better their services. Also, higher level of brand especially value increases the amount of customer satisfaction, intend to buy again and loyalty level [11]. Intensity
of competition on business and speed changes on technology and increasing power and right of selection, success would be for those who are able to understand and satisfy better customer's value and respond then properly [12]. Brands characteristics are influential on customers’ behavior and today business requires branding approaches [13].

In fact, loyalty is evaluated through commitment to buy again product or services [14]. Loyal customers only buy one brand, although there is so many brands on markets, they buy products even 20-25% higher than others [15]. There are so many results and advantages for brand producer's companies. Nowadays, companies have changed drastically in order to achieve targets and are changing peoples view on buying to communicate customers. There are so many differences among sub structures and partnership and loyalty dimensions, especially on the ground of brand loyalty dimensions [16].

Communicating to brand and its characteristics are influenced by customers understanding and are completely mental and the same communication is guarantor of long term relation on business and customers [17]. In fact, customers understanding from brand even correct or un correct is the bases for decision making on brand buy [18]. In this case, loyalty to brand is an important concept in which has been designed for understanding customers' behavior [17,19]. Loyalty to the brand has been defined as buying again and continuously of a product or services on future in which shows deep commitments of customer and by marketing tries for customer behavior change, leads to buying a brand [20].

In fact, loyalty through commitment to buy again a product or services has been evaluated [14]. Loyal customers, although there is so many brand on markets, only buy their brand in which does have so many financial advantages for producer companies. In this regard, we could say recognizing influential factors on loyalty and customers’ popularity is the most important marketing tries in which has been considered on different target markets and set sale policy based on them.

Researches has shown factors like brand [8,21], product quality [22,23], price [14,24], appearance form [25], story environment [24,26], publicity [27], service provide quality [23,24,28], and influences from other [10], are of influential factors on increasing loyalty and customers’ buying.

Of course, the past researches has considered topics including differences among real popularity and un real [29]. differences among loyalty customer and changing [30,31], the relation among provide quality, services, customers satisfaction and popularity and loyalty to the store [23,32], buying pattern [33], or consumer's characteristics based on his buy behavior; customers' mental picture and buying some brands [34,35], based on brand, picture and understood quality on return to buy, loyalty to brand has been considered, too.

Then the question is: is loyalty the only factor on brands’ customer establishes value or there are other factors like quality, price, appearance form, ...in which does have value and also these factors are influential on loyalty and athletes of national teams of karate to the sport brands? How is the rank of these priorities on loyalty? According to the globalization of sport and its industrial appearance, entering international sport brands to our country along with other countries and the existence of interested especially athletes to these brands, gathering more information in this ground prepares possibility for sport marketers to have better understanding from customers as athletes and help them in correct decision making.

Methodology
Participants
Current study according to the topic is of descriptive-correlation one and from target view is of applicable and based on the amount of auditing and control degree and gathering data is of field study Statistical society includes all national student’s team of Iran’s women’s karate on the two styles of kata and commite (12 persons). According to limitation of statistical society, statistical sample has been evaluated by whole numbers.

Tools
Study variables includes population knowing variables as age, marriage situation, education level, educational fields, past record of athlete sports, past record of membership in national teams, the name of first three priorities of sport cloths. In this study, in order to gather field information, we have used of questionnaire in which Lau questionnaire (2006) has been reviewed by resercher (α=0.92) and have has 11 sub scles and 40 questions by 5 likhert value scles [30].

Statistical analysis
In this study, researcher have used of descriptive statics for analyzing data like mean, min, max, frequency, percentage, standard deviation for describing variables on study society. On the level of inferential static level, we have used of KS static technique for determining naturality of data. We have used of static-test, variance analysis (ANOVA) for study hypothesis and in order to rank, we have used of Shanon antropy test by the aid of SPSS22 software to analyse them.

Results
Participators does have the mean age of 17.56±2.61 and also participators do have the mean 2.38±2.34 years past records of presenting in national team camps and 6.13±2.44 years past records on participating on champion ship games. 75% are single, 31.3% does have bachelor degree, 50% are educated on physical education field, 6.3% are employed and 46.9% does have intermediate economical situation. Athletes participating on 62.5%does have the interest of Olympic athletes by organized sport (Table 1). Competitive level of 53.1% is on country level and 9.4% are on global level. Studies has shown Adidas, Nike, Arazava, brands do have highest rank on priorities selected for participators, respectively.
**Table 1:** The result of study hypothesis test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand name</td>
<td>33.065</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>4.3125</td>
<td>3.0465 - 4.5785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product quality</td>
<td>12.377</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.46875</td>
<td>1.2267 - 1.7108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>28.496</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>4.40625</td>
<td>4.0909 - 4.7216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>10.849</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.34375</td>
<td>1.0911 - 1.5964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store environment</td>
<td>5.577</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.78125</td>
<td>0.4955 - 1.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>6.635</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.8125</td>
<td>0.5628 - 1.0622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>5.003</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.84375</td>
<td>0.4998 - 1.1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of others</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.8125</td>
<td>0.5312 - 1.0938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>5.326</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.90625</td>
<td>0.5592 - 1.2533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life style</td>
<td>5.075</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.03125</td>
<td>0.6168 - 1.4457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of advertising</td>
<td>9.188</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.34375</td>
<td>1.0455 - 1.642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2:** Weighting indicators by the aid of Shanon Enthropy method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Ej</th>
<th>dj</th>
<th>Wj</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Ej</th>
<th>dj</th>
<th>Wj</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>0.7284</td>
<td>0.0266</td>
<td>0.0315</td>
<td>X7</td>
<td>0.6891</td>
<td>0.0895</td>
<td>0.1017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>0.9971</td>
<td>0.0289</td>
<td>0.0342</td>
<td>X8</td>
<td>1.0951</td>
<td>0.0244</td>
<td>0.02889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>0.2334</td>
<td>0.0296</td>
<td>0.03505</td>
<td>X9</td>
<td>0.2583</td>
<td>0.0686</td>
<td>0.081231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4</td>
<td>0.8203</td>
<td>0.0335</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>X10</td>
<td>0.2418</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.101835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>0.6362</td>
<td>0.0453</td>
<td>0.0536</td>
<td>X11</td>
<td>0.2894</td>
<td>0.0695</td>
<td>0.07803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6</td>
<td>0.6235</td>
<td>0.0186</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ej: Shannon encropy; dj: Devi;uion degree; Wj: Normal weigh!; X1: Brand name; X2: Produce quality; X3: Price; X4: Appearance; X5: Score environment; X6: Advertising; X7: Service Quality; X8: Influence of others; X9: Social class; X10: Life style; X11: Volume of advertising

**Table 3:** Dimensions weight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Product Quality</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Store Environment</th>
<th>Advertising</th>
<th>Service Quality</th>
<th>Influence of Others</th>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>Life style</th>
<th>Volume of Advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>10.95</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows in general from respondent’s view, being influenced by other is on the first rank, product quality on the second rank, product style on the third rank and price is on the last rank in the amount of loyalty of national team’s athletes to the sport brands.

In this study, in order to prioritize any dimensions, we have used of anthropy shanon method based on described steps, the last result has been shown according to above stages on Table 2 & 3 and shows indicators weight.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The basic target of this study is to examine and rank influential factors on loyalty to sport brands among national team member of Iran’s female karate. The result of study has shown brand name factor is influential on the amount of athlets loyalty of national teams, of female to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Thompson et al. [36], Angelis & Rigopoulou [16], Wong & Sidek [15], Lau et al. [30] and Kharazmi et al. [23]. Thompson et al. [36] has found confidential business name and famous brand leads to customers’ loyalty on competitive markets and this loyalty is the strategy for increasing other customers progressively [36].

In market, we establish long term interests for economical establishments by planning and achieving correct strategies for being loyal customers and increasing their loyalty ratio, by progressing technology and more competition of market on different production and service sections, loyal customer has been determined as the basic investment of any company. The importance of establishing and maintaining loyal customer is the basic concentration in marketing. High level of customers’ loyalty to business name creates competitive advantages for companies and positive influence on increasing business name and decreasing marketing costs.

Product quality factor is influential on the amount of female’s national team of karate loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Wong & Sideck [15], Lau et al. [30], Borenmark et al. [10], Kharazmi et al. [23]. Lau et al. [30] has emphasized on products’ quality priorities than to other indicators of loyalty and brand popularity. Keshkar et al. [23] has found most of females (80%) has selected foreign sport clothes and their selection cause is quality, design and feasible price [37]. Also, there was meaningful relation among products’ characteristics (quality, price, beausty design) and its country about 95% confidence in which leads to being satisfied by product and at last being loyal to the mark.
Product price is influential on the amount of athlete’s loyalty on national teams of female karate to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Soltan hoseini & Azimi [24], Breffni et al. [38], Wong & Sidek [15], Lau et al. [30], Kharazmi et al. [23]. Breffni et al. [38], has found although the amount of customers’ satisfaction on service provided, paying price of a product, does have direct and negative influence on changing customers’ buy intend and loyalty [39].

Four factors of appearance form are influential on the amount of female national karate team’s loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Kharazmi et al. [23], Abraham & Littrell [25]. Abraham & Littrell [25] has indicated participators on looking to catalogue has paid more attention to the appearance form and its symbols and when they test clothes, appearance form characteristics was very important and symbolic was the least important for them.

Store environment factor is influential on the amount of female karate national teams member loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Kharazmi et al. [23], Baker et al. [26], Wong & Sidek [15], Lau et al. [30]. Baker et al. [26] has indicated environmental factors and social one in store environment leads to using quality observations of customers [26]. Yach & Spangenberg [39] has indicated music factor, Abraham & Littrell [25], Liang & Wang [40] has known vendor factor on store environment influential on customers’ loyalty.

Service quality provided factor is influential on the amount of athlete’s loyalty on female karate national teams to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Soltan hoseini & Azimi [24], Sheng & Liu [28], Baker et al. [26], Kharazmi et al. [23]. Tendency to service provided along with quality and customers’ expectation is very important on customers’ loyalty. today, improving service quality is important on customers’ loyalty of sport goods as a key strategy for survival, stability and profiting.

Publicity factor is influential on the amount of female national team’s member loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Soltan hoseini & Azimi [24], Lau et al. [28], Moudi et al. [6]. Kharazmi et al. [23]. In order to establish positive influence publicity consumers, we should design and establish publicity as mentally and correct to be influential on customer’s mind and behavior and not being only cost but also being an investment, too.

Be influenced by others factor is influential on athletes of national teams in female karate to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Kharazmi et al. [23]. The result of Kharazmi et al. [23] study has shown publicity does have the most influence on customers’ loyalty to the sport clothes and suggests marketers, store responsible, agencies and production companies to combine publicity to the life style and emphasize more on publicity volume on their marketing policies [23]. Forghani & Hasibi [23] has indicated publicity is more influential on loyalty and sport clothes brand popularity among athletes and non-athletes [31]. Publicity is influential on changing loyalty to brand and buy volume, in addition, publicity instead of inciting change of brand, leads to strengthening current customers to buy current brands. Also, increasing publicity increases business brand believing and the amount of loyalty.

Social rank factor is influential on the amount of female karate national team’s loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Soltan hoseini & Azimi [24], Kharazmi et al. [23]. Consumption pattern of consumers shows their social rank situation. This factor (consumption pattern) is more important than income on determining buy behavior. People have had tendency to reach themselves to the current social rank of society or even higher than it. Therefore, they probably buy products in which shows brands confidence, their welfare and social ranks; therefore, social rank is influential on their loyalty to the sport brands.

Publicity volume factor in important games is influential on the amount of female karate national teams’ loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Kharazmi et al. [23],24. The more publicity volume provided by medias, billboards, and other publicity factors especially in more important games and in higher levels from viewers number view, brand name survival or publicity brand would be more on customers’ mind and in continue buying products of publicized brand according to some other factors like product quality and service provided; this performance would lead to buying again and permanently produces loyalty behavior to the brand and used products. This factor has been emphasized by researchers along with study results.

Lifestyle factor is influential on the amount of female karate national teams’ loyalty to the sport brands. The result of this study is the same as Kharazmi et al. [23],24. Consumers’ lifestyle emphasizes on how he is living and is a patterned method of life in which is feasible to products, activities and different resources of consumers. It also determines how a person consumes his time and money for activities, interests and indicating his beliefs. Lifestyle characteristics of a consumer is influential on the activities of acquisition, consumption, putting away products in daily life in which includes being loyal to the sport brands used by consumers especially by athletes.

The result of examining priorities influential on female karate national team’s athlete’s loyalty to the sport brands has dedicated be influenced by others, product quality and product style by higher rank to other factors, respectively. The result according to the rank by Soltan hoseini & Azimi [23] result about product style (fourth rank) and Kharazmi et al. [24] about influenced by others (third rank), after brand name, publicity is on the first and second ranks, product style, product quality, and be influenced by other are on the next priorities.

The result has shown all factors are influential on the amount of loyalty of athlete’s member of national teams of karate, but influenced by others, product quality, product style, service quality, store environment does have the most influence, too.

Lau et al. [26], Kharazmi et al. [24], Soltan hoseini & Azimi [24] has shown brand name, product style, be influenced by others, product quality along with publicity are of the basic factors in which
distinguishes consumers from brand changers and brand name and product style does have the most influence on loyalty to the brand by consumers. Although publicity does have the most influence on brand changers. According to Bornmark et al. [10] reports, cultural and national differences are influential on loyalty factors, there is possibility to the existence of cultural differences among Iran society and other countries has been considered on study results [10].

These results suggest product quality, product style in which is mix of identity and content of product would create cut point for loyalty. It means, especially brands by higher quality, provide different styles and beauty for consumers. On the other hand, according to the result of study based on being influenced by others, confidence and special value of business brand are the most important factors influential on behavior pattern and consumers’ loyalty view.

References
