

Brand Image, Satisfaction and Loyalty towards Samsung Smart Phones among College Students in Koothattukulam Municipality

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 15April2019

Keywords

brand image, satisfaction, loyalty, customer, Samsung smart phone.

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ABSTRACT

Brand image is the key driver of brand equity, which refers to consumer's general perception and feeling about the brand and has an influence on consumer behaviour. Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on the profitability of the firm. Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectation. Brand loyalty is attributed to brand image and brand equity. It is also worth noting that brand commitment is the substantial expression of brand preference and brand loyalty. The present study examines the brand image, brand loyalty and the influence of i) perceived brand quality, ii) brand image, iii) brand experience, iv) social media marketing and v) satisfaction on the brand loyalty of college students in Koothattukulam Municipality towards Samsung smart phone.

1. Introduction

Brand image is the key driver of brand equity, which refers to consumer's general perception and feeling about the brand and has an influence on consumer behaviour. For marketers, whatever their companies' marketing strategies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumer perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumer's mind, and stimulate consumer's actual purchasing behaviour of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity (Yi, 2015).

Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on the profitability of the firm. Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectation (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Customer satisfaction is major driver of the customer's desires for future purchase. Customer satisfaction is the overall accumulation of customer expectation before the purchase and after the purchase of the product. Customer satisfaction is the result of purchase expectation and the experience after purchase. The customer might have low, high or no expectation. It depends on brands importance for customer and cost of the brand. If customer has high purchase expectation, then customer satisfaction will be shown after experiencing with that product. A brand loyal satisfied customer does not care for high price of the product (Mula, Muhammad, Sufyan, & Mehran, 2016).

Brand loyalty is often ascribe to a behavioural sense through the number of repeat purchases, it entails consumer stocking with the brand and reject the overture of competitors. Strong brand equity holds consumer loyalty because consumer values the brand on the basis of what it is and what it represents. Brand loyalty is attributed to brand image and brand equity. It is also worth noting that brand commitment is the substantial expression of brand preference and brand loyalty (Keller, 1998).

With the concentration of market share of industry, Samsung Electronics Company Limited continued to be the market leader in the Asia- Pacific region with 24 percent market share in the smart phone segment till the last quarter of 2016, even though its shipment growth was lower than the industry average (Prasad, 2016).According to the industry analysts, the company has been trying to maintain its first position in the Indian market as it faces a real possibility of losing its position to home grown brands. Samsung Electronics has lost its crown as the top smart phone seller in India for the first time in six years, as it was outsold by China's Xiaomi in the final quarter of 2017. Now it secures only second position in the market share with 23 percent and the first position captured by Xiaomi with 25 percent market share.

2. Review of literature

The concept brand image has drawn significant attention from academics and practitioners since it was put forward, because it played an important role in marketing activities. Although brand image was recognized as the driving force of brand asset and brand performance, few studies have elaborated on the relationship between brand image and brand equity (Yi, 2015).

Brand loyalty is one of the key element to success for the business organization. There is a high competition between the brand of the smart phone companies, so it is necessary to develop customer trust to build brand loyalty (Bikash, 2016).

In recent times, smart phone plays a significant role among the users to meet up their numerous objectives by operating their desired smart phone. Brand name variables have statistically significant relationships with consumer preference variables. Battery backup, camera resolution, durability and price have significant impact on the overall preference of the customers (Nushrat, 2017).

Smart phone is not just a common one but provides the most services just like old computers and can be used as a mini computer for daily routine work. It has now become the necessity of life. Young and middle age group of people shows great interest for smart phone brand. They are always in search of the best quality brands and social connectivity. It is not much more attracted by older people. The product short life cycle, fast technological development and unstable consumer behaviour leads towards the dynamic and unstable market (Mula, Muhammad, Sufyan, & Mehran, 2016).

Brand image, brand trust and customer satisfaction have significant influence on brand loyalty simultaneously. Only customer satisfaction has significant influence on brand loyalty, whereas brand image and brand trust does not have any significant influence on brand loyalty. Samsung should create customer trust toward brand because brand trust is an important factor to make the consumer loyal with that brand (Detha, David, & Ferdinand, 2015).

To gain customer loyalty, companies can apply for service quality in accordance with the expectations of consumers in order to create appositive brand image in the minds of consumers, so that the brand can be more trusted and able to increase customer loyalty (Thomas, 2017).

From the review of literature it is seen that a considerable number of studies have been conducted so far in the field of customer satisfaction, brand trust, customer loyalty, etc. But studies concerning the brand image, satisfaction and loyalty towards Samsung smart phones among college students in Koothattukulam Municipality are rarely found in the literature. The present study is directed to fill such research gap.

3. Significance of the study

In rapidly changing business environment today, customer satisfaction is a critical factor for mobile phone industry to maintain and improve their profitability. Customer satisfaction is central to customer behaviour concept and it is now common to find customer satisfaction as one of important goals in company politics. Customer satisfaction is generally assumed to be a significant determinant of repeat sales, positive word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty. Creating satisfied customers, and thus future sales, requires that customers continue to believe that the brand meets their needs and offer superior value when they use it. Hence the present study gets its relevance in this context.

4. Statement of the problem and scope of the study

Mobile phone has gained huge popularity throughout the world and has millions of users. There is constant development of new products, changes in the technology and design and shortens the life of the smartphone. The features, functions, and looks of the smart phone changes through the short span of time. Therefore, most of the population is reinforced to consume new model. As far as the new generation in concerned, they love to busy with their smart phone all the time. It becomes a very necessary instrument in their life so before choosing their instrument of passing time they spent considerable amount of time for selecting smart phone. There

are many factors to consider and brand is one of them. Smart phones are getting really popular in this advanced world. Everyone wants to carry his own personal data and information with him all the time which smart phone makes possible. The present study examines the brand image, brand loyalty and the influence of i) perceived brand quality, ii) brand image, iii) brand experience, iv) social media marketing and v) satisfaction on the brand loyalty of college students in Koothattukulam Municipality towards Samsung smart phone.

5. Objectives

1. To examine the confidence of the respondents on the brand image of the Samsung smart phones.
2. To examine the extent of brand loyalty holding by the respondents towards Samsung Smartphone.
3. To measure the influence of i) perceived brand quality, ii) brand image, iii) brand experience, iv) social media marketing and v) satisfaction on the Samsung brand loyalty of the college students in Koothattukulam Municipality.

6. Hypotheses of the study

1. The respondents hold a moderate level of confidence on the brand image of Samsung smart phone.
2. The respondents hold a moderate level brand loyalty towards Samsung smart phone.
3. The extent of brand loyalty of customers is not significantly dependent on i) perceived brand quality, ii) brand image, iii) brand experience, iv) social media marketing and v) satisfaction.

7. Methodology of the study

The study is empirical in nature and has made use of both secondary as well as primary data. The secondary data has been collected from scholarly articles and books. The primary data have been collected from randomly selected respondents in the colleges of Koothattukulam Municipality. Stratified random sampling technique has been applied to pick the samples. Three colleges (BTC College, Marygiri College and TMJM Govt College) in the Municipality have been identified initially and all these three colleges were considered as three different strata. 25 samples (final year students) each are selected from these three strata totaling 75 samples. The collected data have been analyzed using simple percentage, one sample t-test and multiple regression.

8. Results and discussions

From table 1 (below), it is clear that majority (70.67 percent) of the respondents are females. More than half (53.33 percent) of the respondents belong to the age group of 19 to 21 years. A good number (50.66 percent) of the respondents are from commerce background. 50.66 percent of the respondents are studying in graduate degree. Many (33.33 percent) of the parents of the respondents are engaging in jobs other than agriculture, business or salaried jobs. 62.67 percent of the respondents' family earns up to 15000 rupees a month. 68 percent of the respondents save up to Rs. 5000 in a month out of their income. Most of the respondents (58.67 percent) are using Samsung smart phone since last two years.

Table 1: General profile of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	22	29.33
	female	53	70.67
Age	Up to 19 years	25	33.33
	19 -21 years	40	53.33
	Above 21 years	10	13.34
Subject	Commerce	38	50.66
	Arts	11	14.66
	Science	26	34.66
Course	Graduate	53	70.66
	Post graduate	16	21.34
Occupation of parent	Agriculture	20	26.66
	Business	6	08.00
	Salaried	24	32.00
	other	25	33.33
Monthly income of family	Up to Rs 15000	47	62.67
	15000-30000	24	32.00
	Above Rs 30000	4	5.33
Monthly savings of the family	Up to Rs 5000	51	68.00
	5000-10000	14	18.67
	Above Rs 10000	10	13.33
Duration of use	Up to 2 years	44	58.67
	2-4 years	20	26.67
	Above 4 years	11	14.66

Source: Field survey

Confidence on the brand image of Samsung Smart Phone

In order to examine the confidence put on by the respondents on Samsung smart phone one sample t-test has been administered. The test result along with the hypothesis is shown in table 2 below:

Ho: the respondents hold a moderate level of confidence on the brand image of Samsung smart phone.

Ha: the respondents do not hold a moderate level of confidence on the brand image of Samsung smart phone.

Table 2: Confidence on the brand image of Samsung smart phone

Particulars	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Brand performance as per the functions designed	3.33	.89	3.06	.003**
Social image associated with the holding of such brand	3.30	1.09	2.29	.025*
Recognition and sentimental attachment with the brand	3.50	1.16	3.59	.001**
Balance between brand's value and its functionalities	3.46	.83	4.61	<.001**
Customer's trust in the brand	3.63	.87	6.03	<.001**

Source: Field survey

Note: ** denotes significant at 1percent and * denotes significant at 5 percent level

From table 2 above, it is clear that confidence kept by the respondents on Samsung Smart phone is not moderate level (p-value <0.05, mean value >3.00). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that the respondents hold high level of confidence on various aspects of Samsung smart phone (mean value >3.00 in all the cases).

Extent of brand loyalty

In order to know about the extent of brand loyalty of the respondents towards Samsung smart phone, one sample t-test has been administered. The test result along with the hypothesis is shown below:

Ho: the respondents hold a moderate level brand loyalty towards Samsung smart phone.

Ha: the respondents do not hold a moderate level brand loyalty towards Samsung smart phone.

Table 3: Extent of brand loyalty towards Samsung smart phone

<i>Brand loyalty</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Favourable attitude towards the brand	3.44	.98	3.75	<.001**
I recommend it for others	3.31	.95	2.75	.008**
It is my first choice	3.19	1.12	1.38	.170
I am loyal towards it	3.53	.98	4.47	<.001**

Source: Field survey

Note: ** denotes significant at 1 percent level of significance

From table 3 above, it is clear that the opinion of the respondents as regards the extent of brand loyalty towards Samsung Smart phone is not moderate level (p-value <0.05, mean value >3.00 in all variables other than one variable). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that the respondents hold high/ good opinion about the extent of brand loyalty towards Samsung smart phone (mean value >3.00 in all the cases).

Extent of influence of various aspect of Samsung smart phone on the brand loyalty of the customers

In order to measure the influence of various aspects of Samsung smart phone on the brand loyalty of the customers, multiple regression has been administered. The test result along with the hypotheses is as follows:

Ho: The extent of brand loyalty of customers is not significantly dependent on the various aspects of Samsung smart phone.

Ha: The extent of brand loyalty of customers is significantly dependent on the various aspects of Samsung smart phone.

Table 4: Influence of various aspect of Samsung smart phone on the brand loyalty

<i>R-value</i>	<i>R-Square value</i>	<i>ANOVA</i>		<i>Standardized coefficients</i>	
		<i>F-value</i>	<i>P-value</i>		
0.618	.382	7.917	<0.001**	Perceived brand quality	.062
				Customer satisfaction.	.584
				Brand image	.095
				Brand experience	-.100
				Social media marketing	.040

Source: Field survey

Note: ** denotes significant at 1 percent level

As per the multiple regression result in table 4 above, it is clear that there is a positive relationship between the perceived brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, brand image, brand experience social media marketing and brand loyalty (R= 0.618). Further, 38.8 percent of the variation in brand loyalty is because of independents variables under consideration (R²= .382, p-value <0.001). The extent brand loyalty of customers is depended on various aspects of Samsung smart phone (P-value <0.001, F value= 7.917). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

The conclusion is that, for every unit increase in perceived brand quality, there will be 0.062 unit increase in the extent of brand loyalty. For every unit increase in customer satisfaction, there will be 0.584 unit increase in the extent of brand loyalty. For every unit increase in brand image, there will be .095 unit increases in the extent of brand loyalty. For every unit increase in social media marketing, there will be .040 unit increases in the extent of brand loyalty. But it is interesting to note that, for every unit increase in brand experience there will be .100 unit decreases in brand loyalty.

9. Conclusion

In the nutshell, since there is an inverse relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty and the opinion about the brand experience of the respondents is only moderate, effective measures like increasing the product performance in terms of functionalities and improved features are to be taken from the part of the company so as to enable increased brand experience to the customers. More over the situation of diminishing marginal utility is to be seriously considered and if possible, efforts are to be taken to bring down the cost so as to enable a reduction in the price of the product. Otherwise after some point of time the market share of such company will again be reduced to a considerable extent. Through the marketing information system of the organization, the exact requirement of the customer, their needs and preferences, change in taste etc are to be identified at the right time and sufficient changes are to be made accordingly in the product offerings. Otherwise the company has to face the same situation that had faced by the few of the famous market giants in the industry previously.

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