

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY TOWARD SPORT BRAND IN URMIA**

**\*Nouri Nagadeh Hadi and Najafzadeh Muhammad Rahim**

*Department of Physical Education, Sport Management M.A, Tabriz Branch,  
Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran*

*\*Author for Correspondence*

### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty toward sport brands in Urmia. For this purpose, the participants of the present study include all customers of sport shops in one-month time interval in Urmia. Therefore, 122 participants were selected as the sample size. Two questionnaires were used to collect information; Customer satisfaction of Moqimi and questionnaire of Brynk *et al.*, The method of the research is a correlation one. The information and data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed in descriptive and inferential levels. The hypothesis test using the Pearson correlation coefficient shows that the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty toward sporting brands in Urmia is significant and positive. The results of the partial hypotheses of the study also showed that the relationship between customer satisfaction and the loyalty cognitive components toward sporting brands, the emotional components, relationship management, time management, range of investment resources and the amount of relationship management contribution is significant and positive.

**Keywords:** *Customer Satisfaction, Brand, Loyalty, Urmia*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Customer satisfaction is a kind of insurance against any possible mistakes of institution and perpetual Customers overlook these kinds of mistakes. Because of previous pleasant experiences, it is easy for them to ignore the little mistakes and any unintentional errors of the institute and thus they do not go to the other competitor. Therefore, it is not surprising that customer satisfaction has been the most important task of organizations and economic agencies, as it has a direct relationship with customer retention, market share and profit organization. The lifetime value of a customer, the average shopping of the customer are multiplied by the time which the business can retain customers (Venus, 2004). Therefore, the customer satisfaction is an evaluation after purchasing of a service gained from the consumer experience (Sharma and Patterson, 2000). In the meantime, the role of brand can be significant. A brand signals products supplier to the customer and supports both the customer and the producer against competitors who will try to provide products that look like they produce.

A strong brand can also be extended to new product categories, and saves the cost of creating a new brand for the product. Consumer perceptions of a brand cause irritation of purchasing decision and impact on market share. The brand image of a strategic marketing tool is a powerful asset which generates more profit for the organization (Shin, 2000).

Powerful brands increase security and long-term growth and provide more viable profits because they have greater competitive differentiation, sales volume, economies of scale and reduce costs and achieve greater application security that they can be associated with customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be considered as the ultimate foundation for the modern marketing so that the agency's success depends on identifying and satisfying the superior and legal needs and demands over competitors. Customer satisfaction can lead to Behaviors such as loyalty and positive mouth to mouth advertising (Abdul, 2000).

Therefore, marketers only in this way will be able to provide a product that is more adapted to the needs and wants of consumers, in other words they provide a product that would be "the result of factors affecting consumer behavior" and would provide their satisfaction (Dick and Basu, 1994).

### **Research Article**

In marketing activities, communication with a customer is the basic principle and attracting customers is a priority of all companies. In a sense, clubs and sports teams have addressed the issue of loyalty to attract more fans and earning more money along with the rapid development of sports industry in the world that is one of the main elements of organizational success. Fan loyalty to the club or a particular team causes advantage for that club or team. A loyal fan is a source of income and is typically effective tools for advertising. As a result, today's organizations seek to identify, manage and implement effective methods and models in creating loyalty. However, fans spend more on the symbolic aspects in the sports industry and brand is one of the symbolic aspects in the sports industry. Brand is the main fruitful processes and it is the basis of the current economy. These strong brands will experience little difficulty due to having consumer's trust in the recession period. Thus fans loyalty to the brand's sports team is a key element of success in the sports industry (Soltan *et al.*, 2011).

Competitive advantage is created due to concerted effort in order to create a distinction in the market, operations and culture of the organization (Seyyed and Shams, 2007). To achieve this goal, one of the most popular marketing concepts that have been investigated during the past decade by academics and marketing agencies is brand value. One reason for this reputation is the important and strategic role of brand merit in gaining competitive advantage and strategic management decisions. When the value of brand is accurately measured, it will be appropriate criteria for evaluating the long-term effects of marketing decisions (Simon and Sullivan, 1993).

Tajzadeh *et al.*, (2010) in a study titled Evaluation of customer loyalty (case study of Tehran Tejarat bank), providing a general attitude about customer loyalty, found that there is a significant and positive relationship between the ability of the customers to remove the problem and customers trust. They also recognized that there is a significant and positive relationship between commitment and quality of the relationship with the customer as well as the ability to solve problems and quality of the relationship with the customers.

Seyyed *et al.*, (2010) in a research named “evaluation of the brand's effect on the loyalty of industrial customers” showed that the brand value and trust is the most important factor in influencing customer loyalty and behavior patterns. However, the factors that influence the behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty may be different in the variant fields of research.

Karbasivar and Yardel (2011) in a study entitled Evaluation of commercial brand equity and its influencing factors from the perspective of the consumer, using David Aaker's brand equity model, found that the factor of brand loyalty and the factor of brand associations directly affect on the commercial brand equity.

Kashkar *et al.*, (2013) in their research named as the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty with both internal and external characteristics of sports apparel in women's bodybuilding athletes came to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty of the athletes toward product and native brand of the product, In addition, it is inferred from the Pearson test that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty of female athletes toward the product.

Ross and Harradine (2010), in a study entitled “valuable brands in fashion: the relationship between identity and image” tried along with previous research on the creation of brand equity to expand through investigation of a potential difference between brand identity provided by brand owner and the way the images perceived by young consumers. Kim *et al.*, (2010) in their paper entitled the effects of customer perception of the brand in the random restaurants, consisting of 336 selected subjects, studied to examine the relationship between perceived brand personality, the brand excellence and attitudinal loyalty in chain restaurants of Gordon Olive and Chili. They found that the perception of the brand personality influences on attitudinal loyalty.

They also concluded that there is a direct relationship between brand excellence and time and content of advertising in these restaurants.

Silveira *et al.*, (2011), in their article titled conceptualization of brand identity in dynamic environments seek to redefine brand identity in dynamic environments and try to create a new management framework for reducing the challenge of brand identity in new markets.

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**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Methodology**

The purpose of the research is application and it is correlation due to addressing the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The population of the study includes all the customers of sports stores in one-month time interval in Urmia they number about 3600 people.

Since the number of samples in the description researches has to be at least 100 individuals (Homan, 2005), identifying shops and selecting a convenient sample, 246 clientele were invited to complete the questionnaire in this study. The questionnaire of Brynk *et al.*, (2006) is used for the measurement of brand loyalty. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and professors and its reliability gained via Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0/877.

Questionnaire of Moghimi (2011) was used to measure customer satisfaction. Before conducting this research, the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and professors and its reliability gained via Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0/819.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used for statistical analysis of the results of the study. In the descriptive level we can indicate to frequency tables, graphs, measures of central such as mean and dispersion measures such as standard deviation and the variance. Pearson correlation analysis was used in statistical inference.

**Table 1: Test data normality**

Variables	The mean	Standard deviation	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Significance level
Satisfaction	23.6	3.6	1.025	0.119
Brand loyalty	74.6	6.6	0.750	0.627

According to Table 1, since the significant level in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was higher than 0/05, the distribution in the variables is normal. There is a significant relationship between customer satisfactions and the cognitive components of loyalty toward sports brands in Urmia. Analysis showed that a significant positive correlation exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction represent the large amount of loyalty cognitive components toward sports brand in the whole sample. The following table shows a summary of the correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows the issue.

**Table 2: The summary of the Pearson correlation coefficient test**

Variable	Number	Correlations	Significant level
Customer Satisfaction	122	0.239	0.008

There is a significant relationship between the levels of satisfaction with the emotional component toward sports brands in Urmia. Analysis showed a significant positive correlation exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction represent the large amount of loyalty emotional components toward sports brand in the whole sample. There is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and the level of sports brands relationship management with the customer in Urmia. The relationship between customer satisfaction and the level of sport brands relationship management with the customer has been evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Analysis showed a significant and positive correlation exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction represent the large amount of sports brands relationship management with the customer in the whole sample. There is a significant relationship between the levels of satisfaction with the time management level of sports brand in Urmia.

The relationship between the levels of satisfaction and the time management level of sports brand was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Analysis showed a significant and positive correlation

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exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction indicate a high degree of time management of sports brands in the whole sample. The table below shows a summary of the correlation coefficient.

**Table 3: Summary of Pearson Correlation Coefficient test**

Variable	Number	Correlations	Significant level
Customer satisfaction	122	0.226	0.012
Time management	122		

There is a significant relationship between the levels of customer satisfaction and the amount of resources invested in sports brands in Urmia. The relationship between customer satisfaction and the amount of resources invested in sports brands was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Analysis showed a significant and positive correlation exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction indicate high levels of resources invested in sports brands in the whole sample. There is a significant relationship between senior customer satisfaction and sports brands management involvement in Urmia. The relationship between senior customer satisfaction and sport brands management involvement using Pearson's correlation coefficient has been examined. Analysis showed a significant and positive correlation exists between the two variables. In other words, high levels of customer satisfaction indicate high levels of sport brands management participation in the whole sample. The following table shows the summary of the correlation coefficient test.

**Table 4: Pearson's correlation coefficient test**

Variable	Number	Correlations	Significant level
Customer satisfaction	122	0.299	0.001

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Due to the fact that as a customer satisfaction toward sport brands increases, the level of brand loyalty increases. In the meantime, professional sports have been changed into big business. Sport managers benefit from marketing concepts and concepts related to "customer demand", (i.e. the trust derived from quality management) more than before. Researchers have therefore increased efforts towards planning and long-term strategies indicated the importance of customer satisfaction and sport brand loyalty. Thus, the main hypothesis is that there is a relationship between the level of customer satisfaction and the level of sport brand loyalty in Urmia. For this purpose, statistical population of the present research included all customers of sport stores in one-month time interval in Urmia. It is important to note that the priority or preference of a customer to buy a particular brand of a product display brand loyalty. Customers have found that their intended brand offers them safe product design and composition with the highest levels of quality at affordable prices. The customer perception will be the basis for repeating the next shopping. Customers are beginning to buy a product with a specific brand, if they satisfy with that brand, they will continue to buy the same brand, because it is familiar and safe product. Brand loyalists are thinking so: They are committed to giving more money for their intended brand compared to other brands and they tend to recommend that brand to the others (Javanmard and Sultanzadeh, 2009).

Customer expectations are defined as predictions rather than normative standards or criteria. Expectations have a direct relationship with customer satisfaction, since they are used as cognitive support in the evaluation process (Johnson *et al.*, 2001). When a customer feels excitement and pride toward a sport brand, he has a better feeling, he gets interested in it and thus buying that brand is important for him. In fact, his satisfaction toward that brand is high. Doney and Canon have suggested that creating confidence includes a process based on the ability of an organization to perform its obligations and to stay in the estimated cost of a relationship saving current benefit. Trust to brand leads to brand loyalty or

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commitment because trust creates exchange relationships that are highly valued. Commitment is defined as a tool to maintain a lasting and valued relationship. So the loyalty or commitment results in continuing and maintaining a valuable and important relationship created by trust. In other words, trust and commitment must be relevant, because trust is important in communicative exchanges and commitment is a support of such valuable communication. Thus, we can conclude that trust to a brand helps to both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Quoting and others, 2011).

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