
Factor Of Brand Loyalty In Sportswear Among Student Athletes

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Abstract

Sportswear is now a major and relevant debate among student athletes as it suits their unsophisticated lifestyle, versatility and ease. Brand loyalty is regular purchases of possessions or amenities or other beneficial habits in marketing, such as word of mouth. Therefore it is vital for the sportswear company to determine and monitor the factor of brand loyalty among their consumer. The objective of this study is to examine the factor of brand loyalty such as brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment, promotion and services quality that influences choice of sportswear among student athletes in term of gender. There were 108 student athletes form Universiti Teknologi Mara (Perlis campus) willing to participate in this study. The study design selected in this study was survey research design, quantitatively. Researcher has used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23, to evaluate inferential statistics of Independent T-Test. The result of this study report that there was a significant difference of promotion factor between gender. Moreover, male student athletes were highly influenced by promotion factor compare to female student athletes. In conclusion, the researcher found that promotion was the prominent factor of brand loyalty among male student athletes in Universiti Teknologi Mara, UiTM (Perlis campus).

Keyword:

brand loyalty, sportswear, sports management

1. INTRODUCTION

Parham (1993) in Gomez, Bradley, & Conway (2018) describes the student athlete with the additional requirements of an academic course to complement their athletic activities. Student athletes face additional obstacles on a regular basis as opposed to their non-student peers. Thus, student athletes require extra gear that is sportswear to be use during their daily training and daily life activities. Referring to Global Industry Analysts, Inc., (2015), the number of people in their everyday lives who want to obtain sportswear has boosted. This trend is particularly evident in youth of today who believe that dressing such clothes is a convenient lifestyle (Wong & Sidek, 2008). People wear certain brands' sportswear as that displays trendy tastes and is a friendly way to get along with others (Bouchet, Hillairet, & Bodet, 2013). In addition, the tendency of individuals to purchase a variety of sportswear has boosted the sales of the entire industry. Sportswear can be described as clothing, shoes and

accessories specifically designed for the purpose of sport and exercise (Jayarathne, 2019). The primary sportswear brands are Nike, Adidas, Speedo, Fila, Reebok, Puma and Umbra, and they currently dominate the sportswear industry.

The justification these companies take up the majority of consumers is that they do all they can to recruit new customers and often focus on turning old customers into loyal customers and student athletes, based on research by Sportswear Brands Strategies (2013). Manning (2012) claimed that student athletes are exceptional compared to non-athletes because, in addition to daily academic tasks and allocating ample time to meet personal social needs, they need to commit a substantial amount of additional time to their exercise programs with the athletic demands expected of them.

Branding aims to distinguish between diverse products and brand loyalty has become an interesting area in the understanding of consumer behaviour (Kinuthia et al., 2012). The concept is commonly used to define the degree to which, in contrast to other brands available on the market, customers purchase or use a brand. This happens because customers consider that the company has the right product features, photos, or quality standard in a specific brand category at the right price (Malinowska-Olszowy, 2005). Customers have been favoured by the globalisation of competition, market capacity, and development in information technology, according to Kinuthia et al. (2012). Consequently, this has led to large-scale rivalry in the fashion industry. In this scenario, rather than by optimised product prices and characteristics, companies have to shape their achievements on a long-term market relation. The growth and preservation of loyal customers has become a crucial factor in the long-term success of companies. Therefore, brand loyalty is a crucial element and marketers need to create marketing efforts that will attract clients at an individual level. Chegini (2010), who describes it as "personal philosophy and support and progressive actions along with repurchase, backing and purchasing that can control a prospective client."

In terms of gender differences between gender and brand loyalty, women appear to be so much more loyal than men across time (Melnyk, Van Osselaer, & Bijmolt, 2009). Interestingly, when their counterpart is a single individual, females tend to show greater levels of loyalty (Laroche, Saad, Cleveland, & Browne, 2000). Males, however, seem to display higher levels of group loyalty and trust (Melnyk, Van Osselaer, & Bijmolt, 2009). Despite this apparent paradox, this trend is synonymous with the fundamental assumption that men continue to search for freedom (Melnyk, Van Osselaer, & Bijmolt, 2009). Because of these significant differences, gender has also been generally accepted as a key factor in developing marketing strategies (Wolin, 2003; Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003; Heinrichs, Al-Aali, Lim, & Lim, 2016). Therefore, this study aimed to determine the brand loyalty factor that influences gender-based sportswear choice among student athletes.

2. OBJECTIVE

There was 1 objective in this study:

To determine the factor of brand loyalty that are brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment, promotion and service quality that influences choice of sportswear among student athletes in term of gender.

3. HYPOTHESIS

There was 1 null hypothesis in this study:

There are no significant differences among brand loyalty component that are brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment, promotion and services quality that influences choice of sportswear among student athletes in term of gender.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The effect of fulfillment on loyalty has been investigated in several studies. It has been found that there is a strong connection between satisfaction and loyalty. The argument put forward is that satisfied consumers continue to shift from one provider to another by being loyal and dissatisfied customers. A fundamental marketing structure is customer loyalty to brands, and it has been an area of study for academics and professionals (Sharma & Jain, 2019). Brand loyalty is a significant factor and marketers need to establish marketing campaigns that attract customers at an individual basis (Kinuthia et al., 2012). Brand loyalty has been described as integrating repeat buying (Oliver, 1997). While the definition of brand loyalty in literature is somewhat overlapping, most of the pioneering work in consumer loyalty distinguishes it from attitudinal and behavioural (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001 & Han et al., 2011). Attitude loyalty indicates that a consumer perceives a brand positively and there is an emotional connection between the business and its customers (Hong & Cho, 2011). In a given period of time, the behavioural component of loyalty helps determine daily consumer transactions, which may be due to a lack of options, customer desires, comfort and convenience (Cheng, 2011).

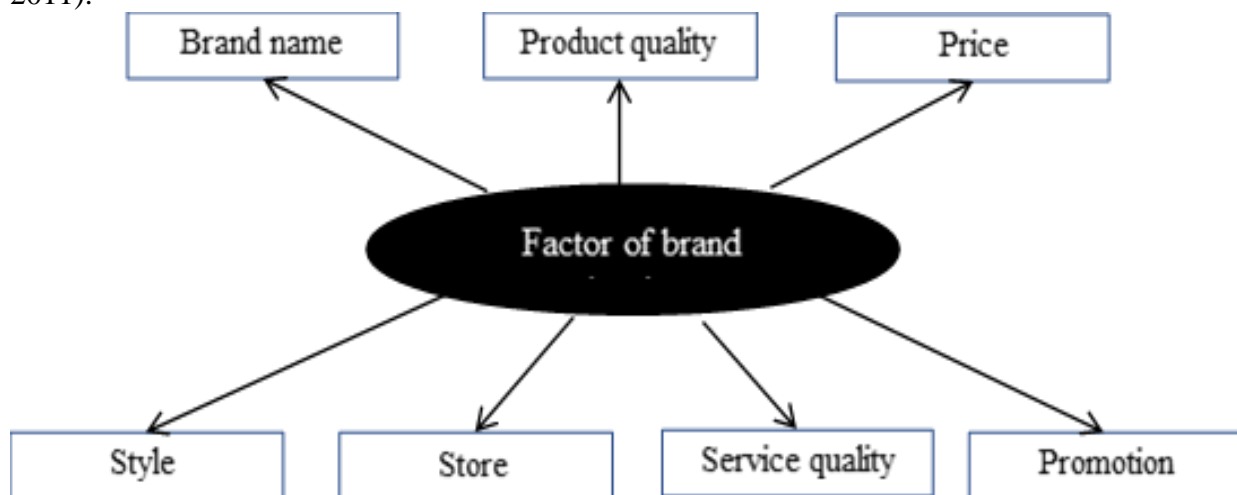


Figure 2.1: Seven factor of brand loyalty

According to Dai and Chen (2017), Within university students, Nike and Adidas are the most popular brands. The most crucial elements for student athletes are brand name and product quality, compared to other related variables (style, store atmosphere, service quality, and promotion). In other words, the brand loyalty of the respondents has a positive connection with the influencing factors in the Hong Kong sportswear industry, particularly brand names. It is fair and logical that individuals are excited about buying high-end branded goods because it is a part of the consumption environment of Hong Kong. Usually, Hong Kong university students like to purchase a product or service from a famous brand to get together

with their peers and display trendy taste, particularly when that brand may mean they are living a fabulous life. Since it plays an important role in brand loyalty, sportswear managers should pay more attention to developing their brand.

Lau et al., (2006) stated that brand name and style are the major factor shaping brand loyalty of hard core loyal customers in the research on brand loyalty of sportswear in Hong Kong. Promotion, on the other hand, is the dominant driver impacting the brand loyalty of brand switchers. Findings by Leong et al. (2012) on the inspiration of customer loyalty on sportswear buying behaviour of Malaysian male customers found that relation between brand equity, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty was declared and the results suggested that customer satisfaction is the qualifications of customer loyalty. Yee & Sidek's (2008) research on brand loyalty factors in consumer sportswear found that product quality appears to have a strong relationship with brand loyalty. In addition, the researchers' findings showed that there was a strong link between cost and brand loyalty. The findings showed that there was no correlation between style and brand loyalty. On the other hand, it was nicely linked to promotion and brand loyalty. There was a strong correlation between service quality as well as brand loyalty. Finally, the store environment is wonderfully connected to brand loyalty.

Reza et al. (2012), which investigated the measurement of gender disparities in sportswear customer brand loyalty, supports the essential relationship between promotion and gender. The promotion element ranks higher from the point of view of female consumers. This may be explained by the fact that this community of customers are vulnerable to different sports ads for more time spent watching TV or other available media and more. Therefore, the effect of ads upon them for the customer is strong. Consequently, in attracting them, the use of various advertising media and the widespread use of network technologies with appropriate target groups and sports presentation items in this way can be very successful. Using other promotional strategies as present, along with ads, a gift with purchased goods and sales promotions can also be successful in acquiring both customers. Lau et al. (2006) state that there was seven factor that influence the brand loyalty. Figure 2.1 distinguish the seven factor of brand loyalty:

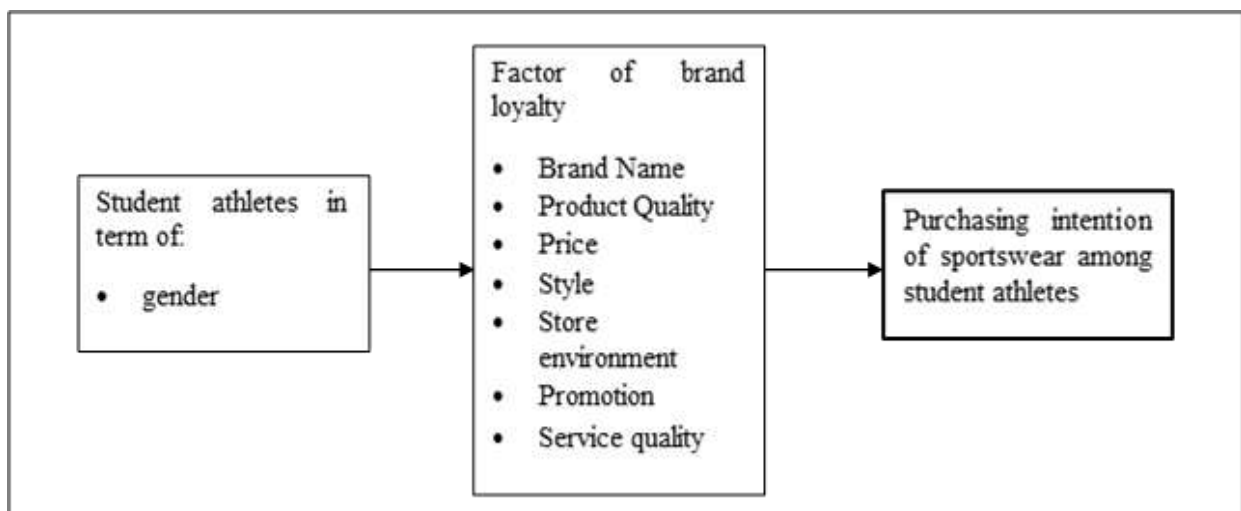


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework of the study

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is a generative framework that reflects the entire research process conducted (Adom, Hussain & Joe, 2018). Figure 2.2 below is a conceptual framework that describes the overall process of this study and the variables that underlie the study to produce new findings.

6. METHODOLOGY

The study design selected in this study was survey research design, quantitatively. In order to perform this study, firstly, researcher earn the permission and identify the suitable respondents from Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR), Universiti Teknologi Mara (Perlis campus). The sampling method used by the researcher was simple random sampling (randomized in the target group). This is because researchers are focusing on student athletes who represent Universiti Teknologi Mara (Perlis campus) on Karnival Sukan Mahasiswa UiTM (KARiSMA). The total respondent were 108 student athletes willing to participate in this study.

The instrument used to collect data was developed by the previous researcher in a quantitative analysis, or based on an existing instrument. Instruments were common terminology used by researchers for a method of measurement such as survey, examination, questionnaire, and others. This is to encourage the distinction between method and measuring instruments, given that the instrument is the tool and instrumentation is the production of action that is the process of the system being developed, tested, and used. In this study, researcher adopted a self-administered questionnaire, from Lau et al. (2006). This instrument (factor of brand loyalty) was measured on a 4-point Likert Scale format ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Table 3.1 showed the details of measurement:

Table 3.1 Details of measurement

Section	Details of Measurement	Number of Items	Statistic Procedures
A	Demographic	Gender (Items A1) Type of sport (Items A2)	Descriptive Statistics (frequency and percentage)
B	Factor of brand loyalty	Brand name (Items B1-B4) Product quality (Items B5-B9) Price (Items B10-B11) Style (Items B12-B15) Outlet Store (Items B16-B19) Promotion (Items B20-B22) Service quality (Items B23-B25)	Inferential statistics Independent T-test)

A pilot study was performed and one item was omitted from the original 26 items because the value of the variable matrix was less than 0.4. In the service quality component, the item deleted was "Salespersons of the stores are well-trained and knowledgeable." Then, for the reliability value, the 25 products were checked. Cronbach's Alpha results showed that .86 was the overall reliability value, above the .60 point value selected for the study.

7. RESULTS

Descriptive figures revealed that the proportion of male respondents was 59.3 percent, while 40.7 percent were female respondents. On the other hand, the percentage type of sport showed that badminton was 11.1 percent, volleyball was 3.7 percent, tennis was 3.7 percent, netball was 20.4 percent, rugby was 7.4 percent, football/futsal was 38.0 percent and athletics was 15.7 percent respectively. The form of respondent is reported in terms of gender in Table 4.1. Although Table 4.2 indicates the form of respondents in terms of participation in sports.

Table 4.1 Evaluation of respondents in term of gender (N = 108)

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	64	59.3	59.3	59.3
Female	44	40.7	40.7	100.0

Figure 4.1 showed the percentage respondents in term of gender:

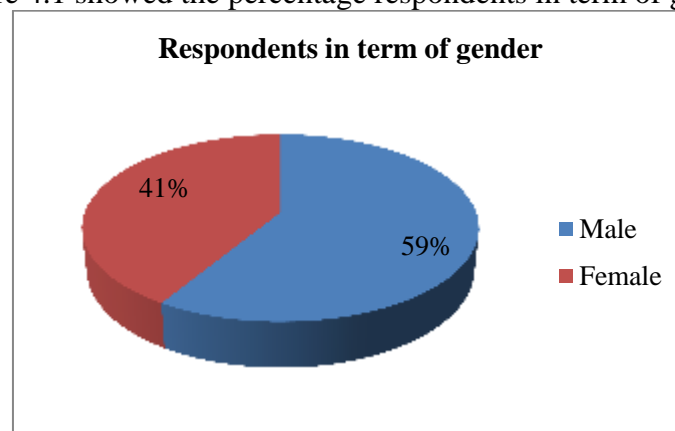


Figure 4.1: Percentage of respondents in term of gender

Table 4.2 Evaluation of respondents in term of term of sports participation (N = 108)

Type of sport	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Badminton	12	11.1	11.1	11.1
Volleyball	4	3.7	3.7	14.8
Tennis	4	3.7	3.7	18.5
Netball	22	20.4	20.4	38.9
Rugby	8	7.4	7.4	46.3
Football/Futsal	41	38.0	38.0	84.3
Athletics	17	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2 Percentage Respondents in term of term of sports participation:

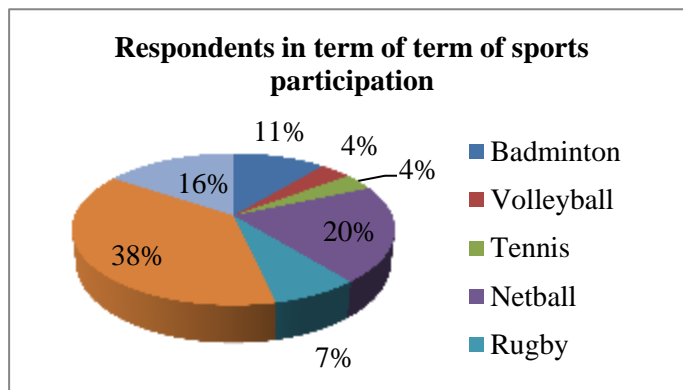


Figure 4.2: Percentage of respondents in regard to participation in sports

Table 4.3 Evaluation of Independent T-Test

Factor of brand loyalty		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Promotion	Equal variances assumed	.821	.367	-2.232	106	.028
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.355	105.248	.020

Regarding to the Table 4.3, Independent T-test has reported that there was only significant mean difference for promotion component between gender $t(106) = 2.23, p = .028 (p < 0.05)$. Compared to women student athletes, male student athletes ($M = 2.91$) were strongly affected by the promotion factor in the choice of sportswear brand ($M = 3.23$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result was endorsed by Reza et al. (2012), who studied the measurement of gender disparities in sportswear consumers' brand loyalty, supporting the key executives between promotion and gender. Besides that, Independent T-test has reported that there was no significant mean difference for brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment, service quality between gender ($p > 0.05$).

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The point of the study is to examine how respondents are impacted by brand loyalty indicators towards sportswear brands. In order to ensure that its product is kept in the minds of customers and discourage them from moving to other products, brand loyalty is very vital for a business. It was determined that seven brand loyalty variables were acknowledged, such as brand name, quality of product, price, design, outlet store, promotion and quality of service. The tool was adapted from an exploration of the brand loyalty of sportswear in Hong Kong by Lau et al. (2006).

Throughout this study, the results indicate that promotion was an important factor affecting the choice of sportswear across student athletes in terms of gender, which was reinforced by the promotional outcomes of Yee and Sidek's (2008) and Reza et al. (2012) on the effect of

brand loyalty on consumer sportswear. Primarily, male student athletes were strongly affected by advertisements to choose a brand of sportswear relative to female student athletes. Studies on other aspects underlying factors influencing sportswear selection should be based on non-athlete individuals for potential study recommendations. In addition, more analysis can be carried out using the qualitative approach, such as scientific studies for the brand of particular favourite sportswear, where some important aspects can be discovered. This approach will deepen the evidence base influencing student athletes and non-athletes in Malaysia's range of sportswear brands.

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