

# Assessment of Gender Differences in Brand Loyalty of Sportswear Consumers (Case Study: A Sport Shops in the City of Rasht)

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research, assess how the impact of brand loyalty on Male and female sportswear consumers and the gender breakdown of the consumer's perspective it is to these factors. To this end with each of the seven factors of brand loyalty Research hypotheses were formulated. To collect the necessary data to test hypotheses, a standard questionnaire was used and Between 280 buyers of sportswear were distributed in the Rasht city. To analyze the data and hypotheses of the ANOVA test was used. Hypotheses Test results showed that the between gender of consumers and their perceptions of the brand loyalty factors, there are significant differences and sportswear Male and female consumers perspective to each of these factors varies. Finally, according to ranking each of these factors from the perspective of these two groups of consumers, Suggestions to increase their loyalty to sports brands were presented.

**KEYWORDS:** brand loyalty, brand loyalty factors, sportswear brands, gender differences.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the Iran market orientation has increased towards sportswear. These days, sportswear has become a common and famous issue, as more Convenience give to young people's lifestyle and Makes them feel relaxed and more comfortable. Consumers, not only sportswear in sport activities, But at home, school, work or the use of leisure time. In addition, sportswear Industry Located in a significant period and Common design with the design of sports is integration. Interested to sports, to combine sport Activities with their Convenient clothes so when do Practice and sport, Stylish and fashionable look. In The sportswear market, Brand names Continuously On strengthening brand recognition, Maintaining brand loyalty and Developing a line of new sports products invest to acquire a larger share of the market(Lau et al.,2006, pp1-11). One of the most important strategies of these companies, attention to the gender difference is its consumers. Product sportswear Proportional of each group of consumers, According to their gender differences, In addition, it can be important in the formation of competitive advantage for companies, also Brand loyalty brings to the company. So research about gender differences in consumers' brand loyalty, one of the most important research topics in the marketing department has become.

### Importance and necessity of research

Brand loyalty, attention target of the business and academic sector has been (Reichheld, 2001).

Actually, the concept of brand loyalty located in the heart of customer relationship management (Rust et al., 2002). Academic research significant differences in cognitive processes and behavior of male and female consumers are obvious. This differences in widespread use of sex, as a variable in the marketing division is reflected. Despite the importance of customer loyalty on the one hand and, gender differences on the other hand Little awareness about the existence and the nature of gender differences in customer loyalty there are. It is surprising that If brand loyalty of men and women consumers to the are different from each other, May Men and women in need different Sales approaches are and

And Different responses to Brand loyalty programs and other activities the aims to show increase loyalty. So the main objective of this study assessment gender differences in sportswear consumers loyalty and Eventually Ranking Each factors of brand loyalty From these two groups of customers.

### Research Background

Most previous studies, The distinction between true loyalty and non true loyalty(Bloemer and Kasper,1995,pp311-329), Relationship between service quality, Customer satisfaction and store loyalty(Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt,2000,pp73-82), The purchase models (Lawrence, 1969,pp137-144),assessment characteristics of consumer Based on the consumer buying behavior, Self-image and to purchase multiple brands(Ehrenberg,A

and Goodhardt, 1970, pp77-84), And Has focus evaluate brand loyalty among very loyal and unstable consumers (Lau et al., 2006, pp1-11). To review literature and previous research results, these Study factors of the brand loyalty in terms of Gender differences among sportswear consumers can be evaluated to can provide useful information for productive companies this type of clothing to develop branding competitive strategies.

## **Research Theoretical**

### **Brand loyalty and its constituent factors**

Brand loyalty, is a very important concept in understanding consumer behavior (Lee et al., 2001, pp35-48; Wood, 2004, pp9-24). This meaning personal to rebury deeply and Or maintain Prefer to a product or service in the future will encourage accordingly despite the Environmental impact and marketing efforts that will lead to a change in buying behavior,

The person Select the same brand again (Oliver, 1999, pp18-26). Thus, brand loyalty financial return is clear. Loyal consumers only buy the same brand, even when there is other brand in the market (Ryan et al., 1999, 18-26). To make consumers loyal to brand and to maintain thier to be identified the main factors that impact on brand loyalty are essential. This research has focused on the seven factors of brand loyalty that Continue to each will be described:

### **Brand Name**

The famous brand can advantages of product has published And lead to a further remember of the benefits Advertised Against a non-famous brand is (Keller et al., 1998, pp48-57). There are many other non famous brand names and are available for others in the market. Very loyal Consumer confidence are to their favorite brands And they frequently buy this brand. Trusted brand name and its image, Attract consumers to buy brands and affect on their repeat purchase behavior and reduce behavioral changes associated with rising prices (Cadogan and Foster, 2000, 185-199). On the other hand the fashion magazines and fashion news, described designed the sets carefully and therefore facilitate better to strengthen consumer recognition (Colborne, 1996).

### **Product Quality**

Many consumers frequent to buy a brand or to buy different brands because the quality of the product sold. Factors of product quality in the business of fashion Includes Size, suitability of materials, colors, performance and business Effectiveness. Suitability of clothing because it can for the consumer appear to be ideal one critical aspect is the selection of sportswear (Frings, 2005). Materials because on the tissue and other functions that affect in product quality is important (McCormick and Scorpio, 2000, p16). Modern technologies are playing an important role in the sportswear market. Where new products and applications are used for complex styles. Functional characteristics of sportswear Include being lightweight, waterproof, being the anti-sweat, anti-microbial and finally it is durable. For example, the same consumer of sportswear for its heavy activities and some for leisure and sport, So many moves are required And thus has considerable durable in the purchase of sportswear (Garvin, 1988).

### **Price**

Probably the cost most important factor for the average consumers and as the most powerful directing loyalty is considered (Ryan et al., 1999, 18-26). Consumers are very brand loyal, less sensitive than to price (Cadogan and Foster, 2000, 185-199). If consumers are brand loyal, buying interest could not easily be influenced by price. These are consumers who want a good price to pay for their favorite brands. Furthermore, it may have a strong trust on price and Favorite brand value. So they can compare and evaluate prices with other brands (Evans et al., 1996).

### **Style**

Style, visual effects that include lines, shapes and details that will affect the consumer's perception of a brand (Frings, 2005). Consumer's judge depends to the level of awareness of fashion. So judging them based on trust that what fashion is commonly done. Brands that offer Fashionable sportswear loyal consumers who are conscious to the fashion attracted. Duff in 1999, assessment the market's of women's sportswear And Percept that sportswear stores have everything to Fashionable, will increase demand for the styles of the fashion products.

### **Store Environment**

The positive features of the store, including store location, the decor and the other is stimulating, effect on brand loyalty, and somewhat it is developing. Position and number of its stores, and shopping places in changing consumer buying patterns is essential If consumers have access to the stores the circulation of are buying And have the satisfaction of the stores and its services may this Consumers be loyal (Evans et al., 1996). So the Store Environment is one of the factors that affect consumer buying decisions (Abraham and Littrell,

1995, 65-74). As a result, may on decide to buy the consumer and his attitudes toward the brand is also effective.

### Promotion

Promotion the factor in the marketing mix is that considered a form of communication with consumers. Promotion includes the use of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and advertising. Advertising the effect of increased on consumers' image, beliefs and their attitude towards the products and brands and changes their purchasing behavior. Advertising can be to help the formation of ideas or perceptions in the minds of consumers and products distinct against other brands. So good advertising can attract fickle consumers and consumers to become brand loyal (Czemiawski and Maloney, 1999).

### Service Quality

Service quality is a kind of personal sales and is involves direct interaction between a seller and potential buyer. Consumers because of its quality of services provided and ensure they are buying from a particular store. The Seller functions Lead to formation of trust and integrity in relation between Sales staff and consumers are, Can that on the feel of consumer to the stores or brand is effective (Leung and To, 2001, pp324-329).The character of a sellers will significant effect on the consumer experience and evaluation of service quality and The effective is in change consumer loyalty.

### Conceptual model for research

With review literature on brand loyalty, research model examined two groups of consumers in terms of gender were presented. These two groups of consumers, different perceptions of brand loyalty factors. When consumers feel satisfied with the factors that affect brand loyalty and to be strengthened. Bottom figure are described the model used in this study.

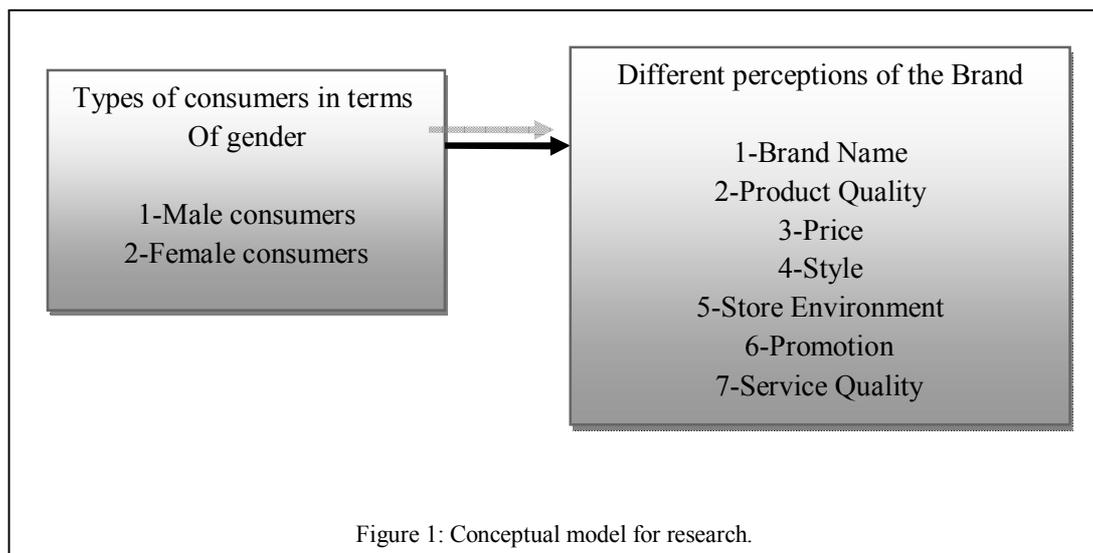


Figure 1: Conceptual model for research.

In this model, consumer's gender is (male and female) as independent variables and the seven components of brand loyalty as the dependent variables are considered.

### Research hypotheses

This research, a preliminary study of brand loyalty in the sportswear market has been in Rasht city. The main objective of this research is Understand the different perceptions of brand loyalty factors among male and female sportswear consumers. Based on research literature and conceptual model presented, the following hypotheses were formulated:

#### Main hypothesis

Between consumer's gender and their perceptions of brand loyalty, there are significant differences.

#### Subsidiary hypothesis

H1- between consumer's gender and their perceptions of brand name, there are significant differences.

H2- between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Product Quality, there are significant differences.

H3- between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Price, there are significant differences.

- H4- between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Style, there are significant differences.  
 H5-between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Store Environment, there are significant differences.  
 H6-between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Promotion, there are significant differences.  
 H7- between consumer's gender and their perceptions of Service Quality, there are significant differences.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research In terms of purpose is as an applied research. It tries to analyze the results, to present strategies for increasing customer loyalty (according to gender) to sports brands. As well as a method is comparison research. To collect information needed to research background of the library way has been used And to collect data necessary to test hypotheses Statistical Society of the customers (men and women) were referred to the sports shops Was selected. The number of samples, 280 was determined. Was chosen so that the buyers in study shop, to the purchasers Referred and the purchase did, the questionnaire was given randomly. This questionnaire as the main tool for gathering information on the two sections was designed. In the first section, In addition to general questions, Questions are also desirable brand from the perspective of the respondents were asked. In the second part of the questionnaire 26 questions were designed that Respondents from the five options on a Likert range (from very much agree to very much disagree) are marked. To verify the validity of the questionnaire was used of the management experienced teachers. In order to calculate the Reliability questionnaire, before the final distribution of 30 questionnaires were distributed among the customers eventually to help SPSS software that the value of Cronbach's alpha %88 was calculated. So we can say that the question of validity is adequate.

### Describe the demographic variables

To more Awareness about the respondents And classified data from the first part of the questionnaire, were presented in the table below. In this table Demographic variables with desire brand of the respondents view have been described.

Table1: describes the demographic variables.

Percent	Frequency	Variable
%71	Male:200	gender
29%	Female:80	
%40	18-25: 111	age
%37	25-32: 105	
%23	32-40: 64	
%34	Diploma:95	Education level
%48	Ba:134	
%17	MA:50	
%1	PhD: 1	
%40	Nike: 112	Desirable brand
%36	Adidas:103	
%11	Umbro:29	
%13	Reebok:36	

### Analysis of data and information

SPSS software is used for information processing. Test data by using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is analyze And analysis trend (ANOVA) shows that Whether average of different groups of consumers in terms of gender, To each other are significant differences or not.

### Examination the research hypotheses

ANOVA test results of all research hypotheses are presented in table 2 below:

As noted. All test results of the research hypothesis shows that consumers' perceptions of male and female sportswear in any of the brand loyalty factors include: Brand name, Product quality, Price, Style, Store Environment, Promotion, Service quality is different. In this tests, the significance level (Sig) of less than 0.05 and therefore reject the hypothesis H0 and H1 hypotheses is accepted. So Between gender and perceptions of consumers of the brand loyalty and its factors there are significant differences.

Table2: Examination the research hypotheses.

Brand loyalty	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	1.69	1	1.69	43.99	0.000
Within groups	10.69	278	0.038		
total	12.38	279			
Brand name	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	0.72	1	0.72	21.79	0.000
Within groups	9.19	278	0.033		
total	9.91	279			
Product quality	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	2.52	1	2.52	82.72	0.000
Within groups	8.47	278	0.030		
total	11.00	279			
Price	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	6.03	1	6.03	163.40	0.000
Within groups	10.27	278	0.037		
total	16.31	279			
Style	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	6.79	1	6.79	220.21	0.000
Within groups	8.57	278	0.031		
total	15.37	279			
Store Environment	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	2.02	1	2.02	66.13	0.000
Within groups	8.49	278	0.031		
total	10.51	279			
Promotion	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	0.49	1	3.51	18.58	0.000
Within groups	7.35	278	0.026		
total	7.84	279			
Service quality	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Between group	3.51	1	3.51	109.63	0.000
Within groups	8.91	278	0.032		
total	12.43	279			

**Ranking of brand loyalty factors**

Since Between male and female sportswear consumers view the any of brand loyalty factors difference exists, so in this section each of these factors from the perspective of these two groups of consumers to Ranking Based on the Current Ranking to be able present appropriate advice and executive recommendations. This ranking provided is based on average responses these two groups have been done to any brand loyalty factors.

Table 3: Ranking of brand loyalty factors from the perspective of male and female consumers.

Rank	Female consumers (responses Average)	Female consumers (responses Average)
1	product quality(4.29)	Style(4.44)
2	Price(4.28)	Store Environment(4.17)
3	Service quality(4.05)	Brand name(4.11)
4	Style(4.03)	Service quality(4.07)
5	Brand name(4.02)	Promotion(4.01)
6	Promotion(3.93)	product quality(3.93)
7	Store Environment(3.89)	Price(3.90)

**Recommendations based on research findings**

To make consumers loyal to brands it is very difficult. Consumers are constantly exposed to new information and products and Manufacturing companies also are trying Continuing improve their marketing programs, the more this customers attract to their side. This study tried to examine gender differences in sportswear consumer’s new valve in the field of marketing and brand development This type of products provide. Evaluation of the results of sample analysis data also showed between sportswear male and female consumers view about brand loyalty exists a significant difference. In This section briefly The Ranking of these factors at two groups of consumers the following suggestions are offered:

- 1- Reform, Recovery, and sportswear design with the different needs both groups of consumers, In particular, that The Ranking of brand loyalty from the consumer's perspective The show the high trends of them to clothing the suit fashion and new style both in terms of both design and color are. This despite the fact that male consumers are the average trend of the mode factor or style of showed.
- 2- Provide high quality sports products and durable, to maintain long term customers is very important. Although this factor the considered by many consumers, but surely any consumer with a any gender and perspective, Want is a quality product and durable. Thus the production of quality sportswear and adding to its

unique features (Such as being anti-sweat-and waterproof) In addition to attracting customers to the brand Functional features, it also increases.

3- One of the most important factors identified by the sportswear men consumers is the price factor. While female consumers much attention to of these factor don't have shown. Adopt different pricing strategies for different products In addition to the various consumers with different income status also the increase they power of choice. Using a variety of pricing practices, especially for men's sportswear, for both these factors has been introduced in the second priority and both Often men are considered income is very important.

4- Service quality is factor of brand loyalty that from two groups of consumers the gap is located near each other. From both groups, the quality of service in the sports store is located at the middle level. Provide adequate and accurate information to consumers, free them to choose or purchase (not impose buying), cause to increase consumer trust and confidence to sellers and the offered brands in stores are.

5- Store environment, including factors that strongly about sportswear women consumers has given. Improve and beautify sport stores indoor environment, Attractive decor and soft music

Because more attract are women customers and Increase their presence time in store and On the other hand, also adds to their visit. These factors in long term cause the formation of buying habits in this category of customers and hence on their loyalty to the brands offered by such stores add.

6- The research result shows that promotion factor from the perspective of women consumers is in higher rank. This can be due to the fact that this group of consumers more time devoted to watching television or other available media and more are susceptible to various sports advertising. Hence impact advertising on them against to the man consumers is high. Therefore use of different advertising media and widespread use of communication channels with suitable these groups of consumers and presentation sports products in this way can be very effective in attracting them. Along with the advertising, using other promotion methods as Present a gift with purchased products and Seasonal Discounts Can also is effective in attracting both customers. The result of these promotional strategies loyalty to the brands that are offered in such stores.

7- Brand name, as one of the most important brand loyalty factors with a close distance, the more is considered by woman consumers. Application Brand-building techniques and Combining it with some of the above factors Such as product quality and advertising can be added to the credibility and brand loyalty it earned.

## Conclusion

Brand loyalty, in this respect that they will ensure to company that their product remains in the minds of consumers and change the current brand and to choose other brands avoids, it is important. The present study showed that achieving and maintaining customer loyalty, due to various forces such as competition and consumer interest in diversity, it is for companies producing sportswear very difficult. The findings also revealed views of male and female customers than any of the brand loyalty factors is distinctive and priorities and preferences every one of thier are different from each other. Thus, companies producing sportswear, in developing their marketing strategies and brand development gender differences in production and in introducing and selling it to consider. Thus, in addition to gaining customer loyalty to your brand, and gain more potential customers.

## RESOURCES

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