Measurement Of Brand Equity On Apparel Shopping Websites From Brand Engagement Outcomes

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Abstract

Online Shopping is found increased post COVID-19 in India for the very first time. Consumers have started to shop groceries, apparels, electronics, etc from online websites like bigbasket.com, myntra.com and amazon.com. The situation has created consumers' faster adoption of internet technology and online shopping. Apparel online shopping has got a new challenge such as fit issues and sizing of the clothes. Creating an omnichannel service would transform the apparel business model. This study discusses about leveraging of brand equity in online apparel sector from brand engagement outcomes which was measured through customer shopping experience in Chennai city. Brand image, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are the brand engagement outcomes which holds the responsibility in creation of brand equity.

Keywords: Online Shopping, Apparel, Omnichannel, Brand Engagement, Brand Equity.

1. Introduction

Indian e-commerce sector is found to reach as the second largest market in the world by 2034, according to the report of India Brand Equity Foundation. The report tells that the online grocery and apparel sectors will hold the responsible for the growth rate of India's CAGR with 27 per cent by 2024 and with the value of 99 billion US Dollar. Hence, this study needs to analyse the brand equity and brand engagement outcomes among online apparel sector where online business is the booming industry and very essential for the society especially in the current pandemic situation

Brand Engagement is the process of emotional stimulation that involves in engaging the brand to its customers and building the commitment within them. It is the process done in expecting the positive outcomes and to increase brand image, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty and brand equity. It is very crucial for the sectors to ensure their brand engagement process for the betterment of both company and consumers. Consumers are highly conscious about the brand and its features. A proper branding retains its own online reputation and gains customer delight which makes the customers to be pleasured and it leads to customer satisfaction. Always a unique selling proposition makes the best possible to gain the competitive advantage and follow the differentiation strategies. These always has a key responsible to sustain brand equity through brand image, customer satisfaction and appreciates brand loyalty.

2. Review of Literature

Lane and Anderson (2016) states about the brand loyalty and brand equity model. Brand equity is anticipated by the level of brand loyalty. The independent variables, moderating variables and dependent variables of the product or service leads to brand loyalty and thereby the tendency of leveraging brand equity gets increased.

Alkhawaldeh etal. (2016) investigated the relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty. Brand quality, brand trust, brand loyalty has positive impact on creating the brand equity of a product or services' brand.

Garvey etal. (2016) assesses the value of customer satisfaction and brand equity in generation of company's profit. The study's result showed that there exists a relationship between customer satisfaction and brand equity in developing the company's reputation and financial worth.

Susanty and Kenny (2015) examined the relationship of brand equity, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Consumer based brand equity model comprises physical quality, employee behavior, ideal congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence which leads to customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Sallam and Wahid (2015) reviews about the effects of customer satisfaction, brand identity on brand equity where brand loyalty mediates for the brand equity. Customers are loyal to the brand when they are satisfied with the product or service and thereby brand equity gets increased for the company. Therefore, brand identity and customer satisfaction are the responsible factors for brand loyalty and generates brand equity.

3. Conceptual Model
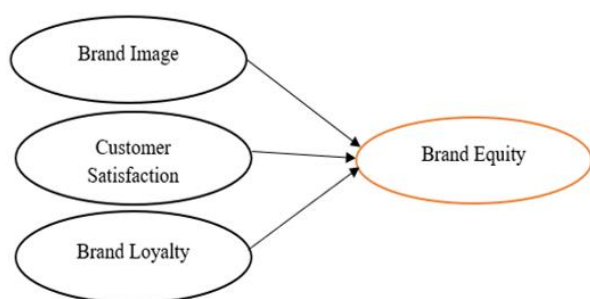
Brand Engagement Outcomes

This study shown the major factors such as brand image, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty that are responsible for brand engagement outcomes.

Brand Image

A Brand image is one of the keys to identify the goods or services and most importantly for brand equity (Isoraite, 2018). It is the total of all perception, association, thoughts, and feelings that people, or the customers have about the brand. It can be either positive or negative. But the positive image of a brand can gain various benefits and value. But the brand has to offer various benefits and features so that it can retain the reputation (Martineau. P, 1959). The overall brand image can be promoted by offering value-based products or services (Wu, 209). Brand image is very significant concept in marketing activities especially that plays an important role in brand equity (Zhang, 2015).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction is the result of Consumers' fulfilment response about any product or service (Giese and Cote, 2002). There are indefinite factors

that is accountable for Customer Satisfaction in different perspective like Quality, Price, Reliability, Tangible, Corporate image, etc (Karunakaran and Thusyanthy, 2016). Customer satisfaction positively influencing Brand Equity that helps the Managers to formulate the Brand Strategies (Basheer et al, 2017). Companies must make sure within themselves whether they are retaining the customer satisfaction and improving the performance of the Company (Suchanek and Kralova, 2018).

Brand Loyalty

Loyalty is the emotional bonding between customer and a brand. The loyal customers are willing to pay more for the brand even the price is too high. The brand gains Word of Mouth that also yields profitability (Shin et al, 2019). Brand loyalty for a product or service is resulted from customer trust and brand loyalty is also sourced from price consciousness and brand consciousness (Matzler et al 2006). When a brand is highly penetrating among the consumers, then it is achieving brand loyalty. Factors such as product or service quality, brand association, sales promotion, brand association are resulting to brand loyalty (Saif et al 2018). Service quality plays a significant role that improves the brand loyalty (Surapto, 2019).

Brand Equity

Brand Equity can be meaned as a total financial value of brand, a measurement on the consumers' attachment and associations with the brand (Wood, 2000). Brand Equity and the company's financial performance are influenced to each other by the mediating variable "Brand Loyalty" (Joo-Eon Jeon, 2017). The sources of brand equity are quality, associations, attitude, trust, satisfaction, esteem, and attachment (Shariq, 2018) and among these, brand image and brand loyalty are most crucial factors for brand equity (Dada, 2021). Companies must focus on strategic developments for enhancing quality, and other factors for customer satisfaction and thereby it influences brand equity (Pokhriyal and Sarabha, 2020).

4. Objectives

- Depiction on Role of Brand Engagement Outcomes in Enhancing Brand Equity of the Online Apparel Websites.
- Examination on Brand Engagement Outcomes to develop Strategies for the Online Apparel Website Services.

- Exploration of the Relationship between Brand Engagement Outcomes and Brand Equity.

5. Hypothesis of the Research

H1: There is a significant impact of brand image on brand equity
H2: There is a significant impact of customer satisfaction on brand equity
H3: There is a significant impact of brand loyalty on brand equity

Research Methods:

The Research is done with major Apparel websites like Myntra, Jabong, Ajio, Meesho and other Apparel Websites. A Structured questionnaire with five-point likert scale was utilized for data collection process and the data was collected in Chennai City among young people who are in the age category of 21 to 40. Judgmental Sampling Technique was adopted in this research, where only the online shopping respondents alone was considered in the study. The Final Sample size was 250 which is made validated out of all invalid responses. The Respondents were working people in IT firms, Corporates, and few Freelancers. Hence, this Research adopted the methodology which would be suitable for the pattern of the Study.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Impact of Brand Image on Brand Equity

Table 5.1 Linear Regression Values on the impact of Brand Image on Brand Equity

Standardized Coefficients β	T – statistics	R value	P value	R^2	Adjusted R^2
.71	10.836	.877	.000	.785	.785

The linear regression test is applied to analyse the significant impact between one independent variable with another dependent variable. Here, the significant impact of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty is tested. The results conclude with .877 of R value, the P-value of .000 is significant with 78 percent of variance found in the dependent variable (brand equity). The positive brand image will create brand equity in the end. Therefore, there is a significant impact of brand image on brand equity. Hence, the H1 is proved.

6.2 Impact of Customer Satisfaction on Brand Equity

Table 6.2 Linear Regression Values on the Impact of Customer Satisfaction on Brand Equity

Standardized Coefficients β	T – statistics	R value	P value	R^2	Adjusted R^2
.78	13.743	.844	.000	.724	.724

From the above linear regression Table 5.2, the significant impact of customer satisfaction on brand equity is tested. The results show the R value of .844 and the P-value of .000 which shows that it is significant with 72 percent of variance found in the dependent variable (brand equity). Therefore, there is a significant impact of customer satisfaction on equity. Therefore, the H2 is proved.

6.3 Impact of Brand Loyalty on Brand Equity

Table 5.3 Linear Regression Values on the Impact of Brand Loyalty on Brand Equity

Standardized Coefficients β	T – statistics	R value	P value	R^2	Adjusted R^2
.69	18.7	.775	.000	.781	.781

The above results shown in Table 5.3, explores that there is a significant impact of brand loyalty on brand equity. The statistical R value .874, the P-value of .000, and the 78 percent variance in the dependent variable (brand equity) results brand equity is depended on brand loyalty which is a source for company reputation and financial worth. It can be said that there is a significant impact of brand loyalty on brand equity. Hence, the H3 is proved.

6.4 Structural Equation Modeling
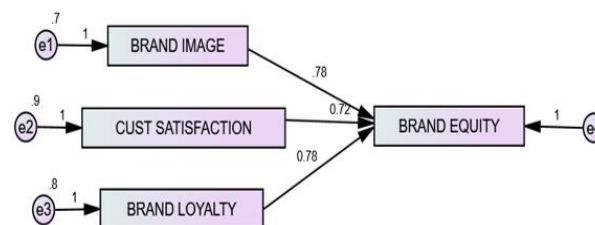
Model Fit Summary

Fit Indices	Acceptable Level	Observed Value
Chi-Square	<5	1529.989
GFI	>0.90	0.96
AGFI	>0.90	0.98
CFI	>0.90	0.96
TLI	>0.90	0.97
RMSEA	<0.80	0.63
RMSR	<0.80	0.67

From the above results of Fit indices Summary, the research model is found to be in good fit. The observed values from these fit indices are Chi-Square with 1529.989 is less than 5. The Goodness of Fit Indices = 0.96, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Indices = 0.98, Comparative Fit Indices = 0.96, Tucker Lewis Indices = 0.97, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = 0.63 and Root Mean Square Residual = 0.67 where all these values are adhered to the criteria and standard values.

Findings

The study has found that the impact between the dependent variable and independent variable exists positively. The brand equity is impacted by brand image, the brand equity is impacted by customer satisfaction and brand equity is impacted by brand loyalty.

- When the brand's image is highly evolving in the market and geographically, there is a positive result that it influences brand equity by driving out more penetrated sales and retaining value.
- Crucial factors such as product quality, availability, technological services, price influences customers' perception and purchase decision making that simultaneously improves brand image and customer satisfaction.
- Customer satisfaction is the value gained by the apparel website by offering the products and services which possess more benefits and potential advantages. The satisfied customers are happy about the brand, and they open an opportunity to increase the brand equity.
- The satisfied customers later turn as a loyal customer where they tend to go for repeated purchase and decided to be loyal for longer period or till their lifetime. Therefore, the brand earns customer lifetime value (CLV) and thereby they secure brand equity.

Recommendations

The recommendations are contributed to develop the technical aspects and other management practices of the apparel websites.

- The apparel websites can more focus on developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) based technologies that provides a powerful shopping experience for the customers.
- Customer assistance needs to be provided in major shopping activities like when they analyse the size, fit, colour of the clothing using Virtual Reality (VR) technology.

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) should be enhanced in their operations which can lead to the positive impacts like increased sales, customer loyalty, and customer lifetime value.
- Product quality should be improved, and the price must be decided accordingly which can favour customer purchase decision.
- Sales promotion is one of the strategical techniques that attracts and triggers the customers for visiting the apparel websites and decide for purchase.
- The company can focus on developing social affairs activities such as corporate social responsibilities that improve their brand image.

Implications

Marketing Implications

The Digital transformation is not only an outcome of fostered technology or innovation. It also a standing solution for any uncertainty or challenging situation around the world. As the technology is getting continuous updating from time to time, the day to day online based businesses and marketing should sustain the technological tools and the strategic management which would be a road map for their unique selling proposition. The online apparel retailers can re-design their technological services to cater the customers and simultaneously they can retain the customer delight.

Social Implications

In general, online shopping is being a convenient process for the consumers in the aspects like timeliness, ease of transaction and other cost cuts where they can focus on. Online apparel shopping has facilitated the consumers especially during the COVID-19 situation. When situations and future is uncertain, the online shopping can fulfil the needs of the society. The online apparel sector should ensure with unique and differentiated services provided to the customers that can satisfy them and the society's lifestyle can have a better change.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the importance of Brand Equity attainment through various factors such as Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty. These factors can be retained in the online apparel firms by incorporating the services that is based on Technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality that enhances a valuable

shopping experience for the customers. Both AI and VI supports for the best Personalization, Customization and Customer Relationship Management strategies and the various other factors like Quality, Sales Promotion and Corporate Social Responsibility which gives a positive impact for the society and customer. The further research can direct towards omnichannel strategies, its redesigning impact on online apparel sector.

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