ISSN: 2584-2366; SJBMS
Scienxt Journal of Business & Management Studies

Brand loyalty: why consumers choose the same brand again and again

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19248652

Abstract:

The concept of brand loyalty is among the most significant concepts of contemporary marketing and consumer behavior. It is a tendency where consumers tend to buy the same brand repeatedly as time goes by despite the availability of other competing brands of the same product or service. With the current competitiveness in the market, companies are also not interested in finding more customers, but also establishing good rapport with their current customers. Customer loyalty will make them purchase the same brand and refer to others, thus enabling companies to have long term growth and even stability.

This research paper will be aimed at understanding why consumers have the tendency to settle on a specific brand time and again. Past studies indicate that consumer loyalty is affected by a number of factors that are significant such as customer satisfaction, product quality, brand trust and emotional attachment. When people experience good experiences with a brand and when they are sure about the quality and reliability of a brand, chances are high that they may acquire that brand again in future.

This paper will analyze the existing literature work by renowned marketing scholars to analyze the effects of these factors on brand loyalty. Another key point that the research has brought to light is the need to establish good relationships between consumers and the brands. The more companies predict the expectations of consumers, and deliver on it continuously, the higher the chances of creating long term loyalty among their consumers.

This study can be used by the firms to formulate effective marketing strategies that are geared towards enhancing customer satisfaction, building brand trust as well as establishing greater emotional bonds with the consumers.

Keywords:

Brand Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Trust, Consumer Behavior, Brand Equity.

1. Introduction:

The consumers in the current global market place are being exposed to a broad range of products and brands. Businesses are always setting rivalry over each other to win customers and expand their market share. The challenge is to attract customers, though, that is not the only part. The businesses also have to make sure that the customers are loyal to their brands in the long-term. This has led to brand loyalty as an issue of concern to researchers and marketing practitioners.

Brand loyalty is the inclination of a consumer to use a specific brand that results in making purchases of the same product or service regularly. Once consumers are loyal to a brand, they will prefer taking that brand even in a situation where there are other alternatives in the market. Loyal customers are usually sure of the quality and reliability of the brand and that eliminates the necessity of having to find other alternatives.

As a marketing strategy, brand loyalty is invaluable as loyal customers lead to the success of businesses in the long run. Organisations capable of establishing high levels of customer loyalty are known to enjoy stable sales and better profitability. According to research conducted by Reichheld and Sasser (1990), it might be more cost effective to retain customers rather than to keep on attracting customers. The loyal customers are also likely to advertise the brand by spreading positive word of mouth communication that may contribute to other consumers to test the brand.

The emergence of brand loyalty is dependent on many factors. Customer satisfaction is one of the greatest factors. Consumers tend to repurchase a similar brand when they are satisfied with the performance of a product or service. When a brand is able to perform beyond expectations set by the consumers, satisfaction occurs. Good experiences with the brand improve the association between the consumer and the brand.

Trust is another factor that determines brand loyalty. Consumers have a tendency to buy brands which they consider to be dependable and steady in provision of quality products or services. Brand trust eliminates the aspect of skepticism towards a purchase and enables the consumer to be assured of the purchase they make. Consumers who have confidence in a brand find it difficult to switch to the rival brands despite the rival brands having low prices or offers.

Feeling between the consumer and the brand is also a significant part in the establishment of loyalty. Customers tend to attribute certain brands to their personal values, lifestyle or identity. Consumers can have a better attachment to a brand when the brand reflects such aspects. This emotional connection stimulates the consumers to resort to the same brand on repeated occasions since it gets into their personal preferences and habits.

Another variable that is capable of affecting loyalty is brand experience. Consumer relationships with a brand can be enhanced by positive experiences in various areas of contact with the brand including product usage, customer service, advertisements, and online platforms. By experiencing good experiences in the long term consumers are likely to buy the brand and even recommend it to others.

Brand loyalty has been researched over a long period of time so that researchers can be able to comprehend how consumers make decisions to buy a particular product and why they stay loyal to this brand. Other scholars like Keller (1993), Aaker (1991) and Oliver (1999) have stressed the close relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity, customer satisfaction and emotional attachment. These researches indicate that the development of good relationships between the brands must be targeted at both functional and emotional benefits which include product quality and trust and brand identity respectively.

Knowledge about brand loyalty is significant not only to the companies but also to scholarly studies in marketing and consumer behavior. Through the investigation of what drives loyalty, a researcher is able to comprehend consumer decision-making models. These insights can also be used by the businesses in developing effective marketing strategies to enable them establish better relationships with their customers.

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the primary reasons why people keep on patronizing the same brand. Along with the examination of the past research and the identification of the main variables that impact the consumer behavior, the paper aims at offering a better insight into the process of brand loyalty formation and the ways in which the loyalty may be reinforced by the companies.

2. Research objectives:

(1) The central questions of this research study are:
(2) In order to get the meaning and importance of brand loyalty in consumer behavior.
(3) To find the key elements which drive the consumers to buy the same brand over and over again.
(4) To test the relationship between customer satisfaction, brand trust and perceived product quality and brand loyalty development.
(5) The aim of the analysis is to determine the influence of emotional relationships between consumers and brands in the buying decisions.
(6) To investigate how organisations can achieve useful strategies to create and keep long term brand loyalty to their customers

3.Literature review:

Marketing and consumer behavior are two areas that have extensively researched brand loyalty. The scholars have tried to comprehend why consumers keep on buying the same brand despite having a variety of brands in the market. According to past research, it has been considered that brand loyalty depends on various factors such as customer satisfaction, brand trust, product quality, emotional attachment, and brand experience. The review below looks into key academic works that describe the role of these factors in determining consumer loyalty.

3.1 Concept of brand loyalty:

The brand loyalty concept has been changing over the years. Initial studies by Jacob Jacoby and Robert W. Chestnut defined brand loyalty as a series of frequent buying habits using a particular brand. Their effort pointed

to the idea that loyalty is not merely the repeated purchase of a certain product, but it also consists of psychological loyalty to the brand.This was further enlarged by the studies later on which brought in behavioral and attitudinal elements of loyalty. Brand loyalty is a brand that Richard L. Oliver described as a strong commitment to repurchase an individual preferred product or service regularly in the future regardless of marketing of an alternative brand. In this perspective, brand loyalty will take place when consumers are emotionally and behaviorally attached to a brand.The role played by brand equity as a factor affecting loyalty has also been pointed out by researchers. David A. Aaker described brand equity to be composed of a number of elements like brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Of these factors, the most valuable is seen as loyalty since it denotes a human relationship that is long run between the consumer and the brand.

3.2 Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty: One of the factors that have been most researched in relation to brand loyalty is customer satisfaction. Satisfaction describes the judgment of the consumer on whether a product or service is as good or better than his expectations. A study conducted by Valarie A. Zeithaml and A. Parasuraman showed that customer satisfaction caused by high levels of service quality leads to a stronger loyalty behavior. When customers get a consistent quality and reliability of a brand they develop positive attitudes towards the same brand

In the same vein, Frederick F. Reichheld opined that happy customers will be more willing and loyal to a business and will help it achieve profit in the long term. His studies revealed that those companies that are customer oriented when it comes to retaining customers usually realize greater long term profits than those companies that are forever busy seeking new customers.Content consumers are also likely to do positive word-of-mouth communication. They also refer others to the brand hence enhancing the reputation of the brand in the market.

3.3 Brand trust:

Brand trust describes the trust that the consumers placed in a brand to provide quality and reliability in a consistent manner. Confidence is significant in lowering doubts in the purchase decisions.

According to the commitment-trust theory, which was initiated by Robert M. Morgan and Shelby D. Hunt, trust is an important factor in the formation of long-term relationships between companies and their clients. Once consumers have confidence in a brand they would be more prepared to stick to it even when their competitors are trying to win their loyalty through offers or discounts. The work of Arjun Chaudhuri and Morris B. Holbrook also supports this argument. Their research established that brand trust results in an increase in brand loyalty, and brand performance. Customers with belief in a brand are assured of quality and dependability of the brand hence they buy again.

3.4 Emotional and brand relationship:

Emotional attachment of consumers to brands in addition to functional benefits is another factor that determines loyalty. Emotional attachments to consumable products have a strong association with certain brands that help consumers identify with the brand as an expression of their personal identity or way of life.

The brand relationships were introduced under the research of Susan Fournier. According to her work, the consumers tend to treat the brands in a manner that resembles interpersonal relationships. Emotional attachment of consumers to a brand will make them more loyal even in cases where the rivals have competitive alternatives.

Emotional attachment may arise as a result of different experiences with the product like advertising messages, brand stories, and personal communication with the product. Those brands that manage to generate emotional value tend to have a stronger bond with their customers.

3.5 Perceived product quality:

The quality in which consumers perceive the products is also critical in determining consumer loyalty. Consumers will tend to repurchase a brand when they have the perception that it can always provide them with high quality.

Kevin Lane Keller singles out perceived quality among the most important dimensions of customer-based brand equity. Brand associations are reinforced by high perceived quality which motivates consumers to form brand loyalty.

Product performance, durability, design, and reliability may give rise to quality perceptions. When these factors fulfill the expectations of the consumers, there is more trust and satisfaction and the end result is loyalty.

3.6 Brand experience:

Brand experience can be defined as general perceptions of the consumer as a result of engaging with a brand. This involves experiences in the use of the products, customer services, advertisement exposure, as well as online interactions.

According to research by Thorsten Hennig -Thurau, positive brand experiences result in better quality of relationships between consumers and companies. When the customers have repeated positive experiences with a brand, they tend to have higher emotional attachment and loyalty.

3.7 Brand loyalty on-line markets:

As the digital platforms and online shopping have expanded, there has been a shift in consumer behavior. Consumers have many substitutes at their disposal and this has complicated the process of developing loyalty.

According to studies developed by S. Srini Srinivasan, trust, convenience, and user experience are especially significant in the online context. To achieve the loyalty among consumers digital brands have to be dependable in service, simple to navigate and secure in transactions.On the whole, it is indicated in the literature that brand loyalty depends on a blend of psychological, emotional, and functional factors. Knowing these factors will enable businesses to come up with effective strategies to ensure that there is a long term relationship between them and their customers.

4. Research gap:

Despite the fact that numerous scholars have studied the topic of brand loyalty, a lot of gaps remain in the current literature. Much of the early research was behavioral in nature including frequent buying behavior. Nevertheless, recent studies put a lot of stress on the role of psychological and emotional considerations which affect consumers decision making.The other weakness in earlier studies is that most of them tend to look at each of the factors including satisfaction, trust, or quality individually. In actual sense, these variables interact and are all effective in influencing consumer loyalty. It is also necessary to conduct a study that will analyze the interaction of various factors and the formation of brand loyalty.Moreover, the rise in the development of digital technologies and online shopping platforms has altered consumer behavior tremendously. Contemporary consumers are exposed to brands via various platforms, such as social media, online shopping platforms, and mobile apps. These emerging forms of interaction can have an impact on loyalty that had not been fully addressed with regard to the previous research. Hence, this paper will discuss some of the most important aspects such as customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and emotional attachment in the hope that a better understanding of why people consistently stick to the same brand cannot be achieved.

5. Conceptual framework:

As suggested by the literature review, the proposed research suggests a conceptual framework that describes the relationship between the important variables that affect brand loyalty.

According to the framework, customer satisfaction, brand trust, perceived product quality and emotional attachment are the independent variables which influence the dependent variable which is brand loyalty.

Customer satisfaction takes place as long as customers believe that a product satisfies or surpasses their expectation. In cases where satisfaction is high and consistent, then the consumers are more likely to be able to form positive attitudes towards the brand.Trust is built on brand wherein consumers have a belief that a brand is trusted and can provide quality that can be fulfilling. Reliability decreases the doubt in purchasing and builds consumer confidence.Perceived product quality is a facet that is used to describe the perceived or judicial excellence or superiority of a product by the consumer. Consumers would tend to purchase a brand again when they feel that the brand is of high quality. Emotional attachment is the emotional attachment that the consumers have towards a brand. Those brands that play with emotions effectively can cement loyalty since the consumers will have a sense of personal attachment to the brand.he proposed conceptual framework is that these factors have a combined effect on consumer loyalty as they affect the consumer perception and experience of the brand.

6. Hypothesis development:

The hypotheses in this study are as follows based on the past research.

H1: There is a positive influence of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty.

Satisfied consumers will buy the same brand again because they are satisfied with the product or service. Pleasure gives good experiences that enhance the bond between the consumers and the brand.

H2: Brand trust has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

Consumers will have confidence in a brand when they believe that it is of good quality. This trust makes the consumers stay loyal even when they have alternative products.

H3: Brand loyalty is positively affected by perceived product quality.

The consumer confidence in the brand is high as a result of high product quality which is perceived. The more the consumers feel that a brand has been able to provide them with high accuracy in terms of quality, the higher the chances of them becoming long-term loyal to the brand.

H4: There is a positive effect of emotional attachment on brand loyalty.

Consumers tend to be emotionally attached to a brand that portrays the identity or a way of life. Emotional attachment helps build the relationship between the consumer and brand which results in repetitive purchasing behavior.

7. Research methodology:

The research design applied in this study is a descriptive research design in which it explores the factors that determine brand loyalty. The research mainly uses second hand data on the basis of academic publications, books and reputable research publications that deal with marketing and consumer behavior.

7.1 Research design:

The study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research assists in the comprehension of the features of a given phenomenon through the analysis of the already available information and tendencies. This paper applies descriptive analysis in order to determine the contribution of different factors on brand loyalty.

7.2 Data sources:

Secondary data were gathered using a number of credible sources and in this case; academic journals, books authored by marketing scholars and research articles that were published in reputable marketing journals were some of the sources.

These sources will give information on consumer behaviors and the elements that affect the brand loyalty. Recourse to existing research can be used to make sure that the results of the current research are backed by reliable evidence.

7.3 Data collection method:

The information used in this study was obtained by conducting a systematic review on scholarly articles concerning brand loyalty and consumer behavior. The past researches have been critically examined to determine the key issues that affect consumer loyalty.

7.4 Data analysis approach:

The analysis is aimed at common themes and patterns that need to be identified in the previous research findings. The paper evaluates the impact of various variables on consumer loyalty including satisfaction, trust, quality of product, and emotional attachment.

Through the comparison of the results of various studies, the study will come up with a superior idea of why consumers have the tendency of repurchasing the same brand.

8. Data analysis and findings:

The review of the existing literature indicates that there are a number of variables that have a significant impact on brand loyalty. These will play their roles in consumer perceptions and buying behavior.

8.1 Customer satisfaction:

It is always observed that consumers who are satisfied tend to stick with a particular brand. Consumers form good attitudes towards the brand when the products are of the expectations of the consumers.

8.2 Brand trust:

Trust is important in the establishment of long term relationships between the consumers and brands. Customers who have faith in a brand are assured of its quality and dependability.

9.3 Product quality:

The quality of the perceived product has a powerful impact on the decision of the consumer. Brands with a consistent track record of producing quality products have more chances of having loyal customers.

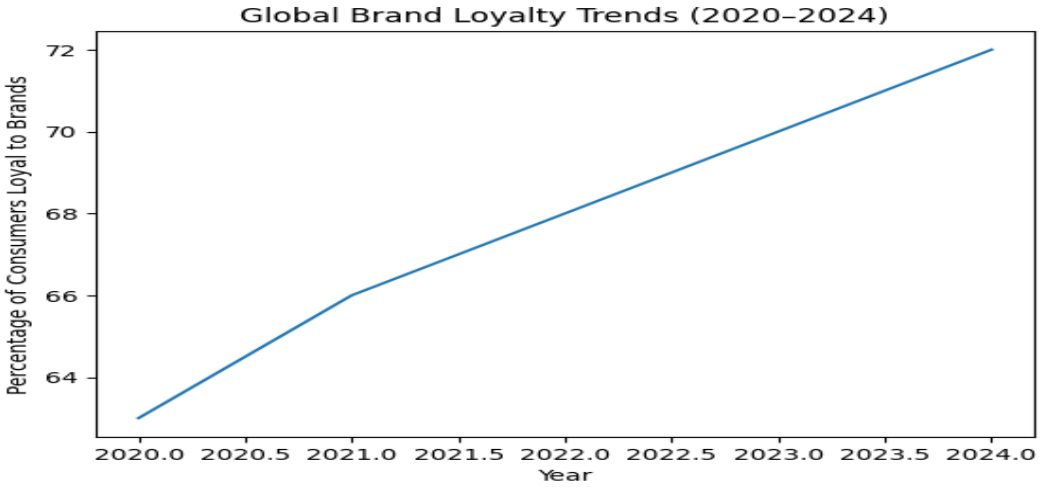
9.4 Emotional attachment:

Loyalty is also brought about by emotional attachments between consumers and brands. Emotional attachment to a brand is likely to make consumers buy it again.

In general, the results have shown that brand loyalty depends on the combination of both emotional and functional factors. Firms that aim at enhancing product quality, trust building and the establishment of positive consumer experiences have better chances of developing high brand loyalty among their consumers.

10. Discussion

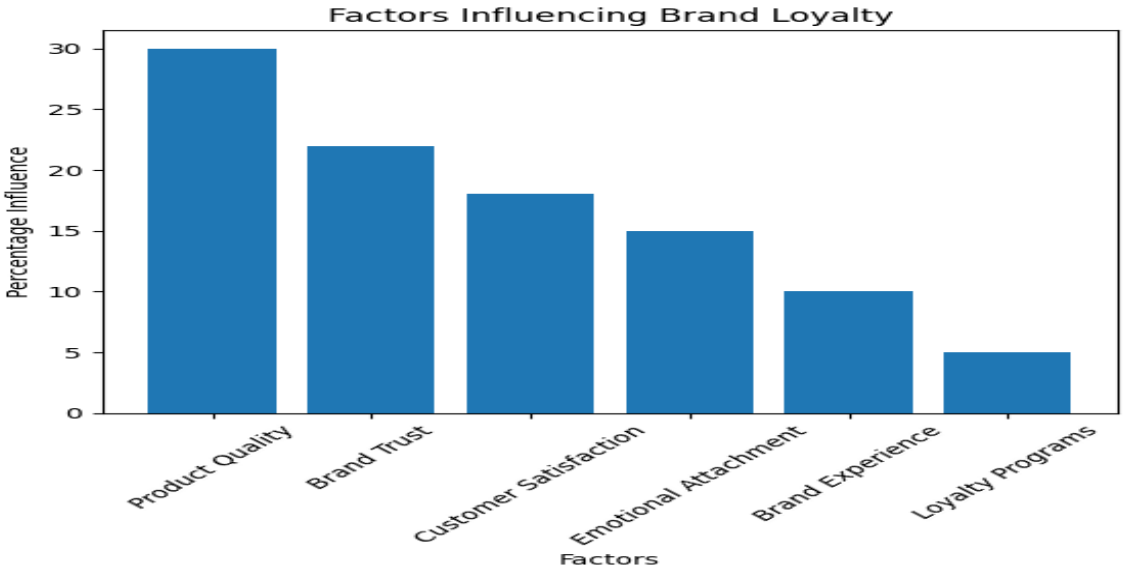
This study was done to get an insight into the reason why consumers use a particular brand over and over again and what aspects are involved in the process of developing brand loyalty. Considering the literature review and analysis of past research, it is evident that brand loyalty is determined by the various factors that influence consumer perceptions and experiences.Customer satisfaction is among the most important aspects that were revealed in the study. When customers are satisfied with a good or service, they develop good attitudes towards the brand. Satisfaction is obtained when a product satisfies or even surpasses consumer expectations on quality, performance as well as value. Past findings have indicated that contented consumers are prone to repurchase a product and have long-term associations with a brand. This embraces the concept that customer satisfaction is a significant element towards building loyalty.Brand trust is also another crucial driver of brand loyalty. Trust eliminates doubt during purchase and enables the consumer to feel good about their decisions. Consumers will have less reasons to change to competitors when they believe that a brand has a consistent delivery of reliable products or services. The review of the existing literature indicates that trust is important in enhancing a connection between consumers and brands. Trusted consumers tend to have a higher degree of attachment towards a given brand and thus the probability of re-buying the product is greater.Another point the research makes is that perceived product quality is important in brand loyalty. The consumers will have a higher likelihood of sticking to a brand that offers high quality products on a regular basis. Perceived quality assists in creating a good reputation of the brand and enhances consumer confidence. When consumers relate a brand to high quality, it is possible that they may have preference to the brand in comparison with the competing brands.Besides the functional reasons that may contribute to brand loyalty like satisfaction and quality, there are the emotional attachments that significantly influence brand loyalty. Most consumers have emotional attachments to brands which portray their personal values, lifestyle or identity. The advertisement message, experience with the brand and a long term interaction with the product can lead to the formation of emotional attachment. Emotional attachment tends to make consumers more dedicated to the brand, and they will not be apt to change to rival brands.The other valuable lesson of the study is the contribution of brand experience. Consumers engage with brands in various touchpoints, i.e., using the product, customer services, on-line platforms, and advertisement campaigns. Favorable experiences on all of these interactions contribute to enhancing consumer attachment to the brand. Such positive experiences in the long run form trust and emotional attachment, which leads to long term loyalty.The results of the research article provide the position that brand loyalty is no longer determined by one factor. Rather, it is the result of psychological, emotional and functional factors. Firms that have been able to build loyalty effectively are those that deliver value to the consumer continually in addition to developing meaningful brand experiencesIn the contemporary markets with consumers having access to a large range of products and information, brand loyalty has become difficult to develop. Online, consumers are able to easily compare products, read reviews, and to explore the alternatives. This has compelled businesses to strive to ensure that they have good relationships with their clients. The higher chances of retaining loyal customers are those with brands that are concerned with providing consistent quality, establishment of trust as well as the creation of positive consumer experiences.In general, the study demonstrates that consumers' expectations and experience are the keys to developing brand loyalty. Organizations that take the time to enhance customer satisfaction, build trust, and build emotional bonds with their consumers have the risk of developing lasting relationships, which are beneficial to both the brand and the customer.



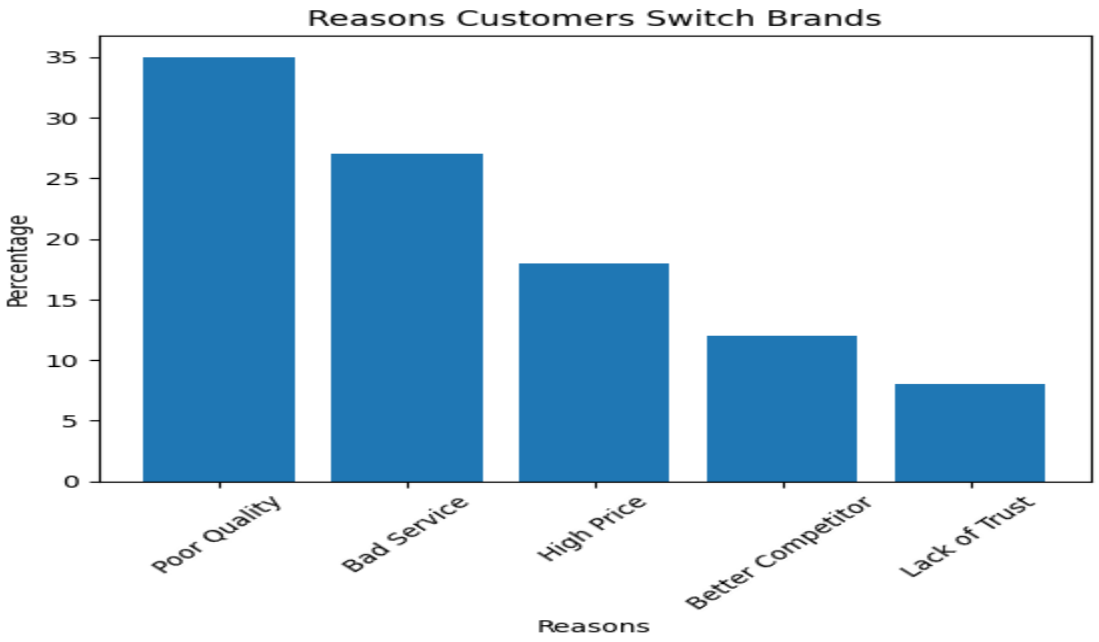
Graph 1: Global Brand Loyalty Trends (2020–2024)
Source: Statista (2024), Global Consumer Brand Loyalty Survey.

The graph shows that global brand loyalty has increased from 63% in 2020 to 72% in 2024, indicating that companies are increasingly focusing on customer satisfaction, trust, and emotional branding strategies to retain customers.

graph 2: factors influencing brand loyalty



Source: Deloitte Global Consumer Loyalty Survey (2024).
The graph shows that product quality is the most important factor influencing brand loyalty, followed by brand trust and customer satisfaction. Emotional attachment and brand experience also play significant roles in developing long-term loyalty among consumers.



Graph 4: Reasons Customers Switch Brands

*Source: McKinsey & Company Consumer Behavior Report (2023***)**

The graph shows that poor product quality and bad customer service are the main reasons customers switch brands, highlighting the importance of quality and customer experience in maintaining brand loyalty.

11. Conclusion:

One of the most significant concepts of marketing and consumer behavior is brand loyalty. In competitive markets, the companies are not confined to only attract new customers but also to retain old ones and develop long term relationships with them. The loyal customers will help the business to grow by purchasing the brand repeatedly and referring others to the same brand.This study aimed at examining the reasons as to why consumers purchase the same brand repeatedly, and what factors determine brand loyalty. According to the review of the existing studies, a number of most critical factors were outlined such as customer satisfaction, brand trust, perceived product quality, and emotional attachment.Satisfaction of the customers was identified to be a key determinant of loyalty. Consumers would develop positive attitudes about the brand when they are satisfied with their experiences which in turn would make them purchase the brand again, in the future. Confidence in the brand is created through satisfaction and induces consumers to have long term relationships with the brand.

The loyalty of the consumers is also influenced by brand trust. Customers choose brands that they find to be credible and predictable. When there is trust, there is less uncertainty when making buying decisions and the consumer can be assured of the product or service being good.Another factor that has a great implication on consumer loyalty is perceived product quality. Those brands that can consistently produce products of high quality stand a higher chance of earning the trust and satisfaction of consumers. Consequently, the consumers become fond of such brands and can easily stick to them.Another significant point that was raised in the research was the role of emotional attachment in the formation of loyalty. Customers usually associate themselves with products that identify them or represent their personality. These emotional attachments motivate consumers to stick to their brands even in situations where they are competing with other brands in the market.In general, the results of the present research indicate that brand loyalty is formed due to both functional and emotional attachments. Firms that aim at enhancing product quality, developing trust, and establishing positive experiences to consumers, have a high probability of forming a strong sense of loyalty among their consumers.The factors that determine brand loyalty can be used to understand what makes a business come up with a good marketing strategy and have an improved relationship with its customers. Customer satisfaction and trust are essential to the company in the long run as it stands a better chance of sustainable growth and long term success.

12. Managerial implications:

The results of this study have got a number of significant implications on businesses and marketing managers. The knowledge of what drives brand loyalty can enable the companies to come up with strategies that will enhance relationships with their customers.To begin with, the companies must concentrate on the satisfaction of the customers. Delivering quality products and services and satisfying the consumer expectation is the key to ensuring that good relationships are maintained with customers. Companies are advised to conduct customer feedback on a regular basis in order to know what their customers want and improve on what they have done.Second, companies must invest in developing brand trust. Transparency, honesty and consistency are key elements, which determine consumer trust. Products and services provided by the brands should have a consistent quality. Firms with stable performance tend to receive the favor of consumers, in terms of confidence and loyalty.Third, companies ought to focus on quality and innovation of products. Consumers do not always switch to other brands that offer high quality products. The constant improvement and innovation can assist the companies in preserving the competitive edge and retaining the loyal customers.The other implication is that there should be establishment of strong emotional links with the consumers. Marketing campaigns must be based on the features of the products, as well as on values and stories related to the brand. Companies can use emotional branding in order to establish stronger relationships with customers.The companies must also consider delivering the positive brand experiences that would be remembered in several channels. In the digital world today consumers are interacting with brands in websites, social media, and mobile applications. The manner in which the experience in these platforms is always positive and consistent would help to reinforce consumer relations with the brand.Lastly, companies ought to understand that their loyal customers are their assets. The loyal consumers will have a higher tendency of making a repeat purchase and referring others to the brand. Corporate relationship management programs fostering loyalty among customers should thus be invested by companies.

13. Limitations of the study:

Even though this study can offer important data about the aspects that determine brand loyalty, one should admit several limitations.To begin with, the research is based mainly on secondary data that is gathered through the existing literature and academic research. Although such a strategy can offer valuable information, it might not be in a position to capture the views of consumers in a given market or industry. In the future, the primary data collection technique that can be used in the research is a survey or interview to learn more about consumer behavior.Second, the research considers only a few aspects of brand loyalty. In as much as the customer satisfaction, trust, product quality, and emotional attachment are also crucial variables, there are other variables like pricing strategies, brand image, and social influence that can influence consumer loyalty.

The other limitation is that the study is not targeted at any particular industry or geographical area. The world is made up of consumer behavior that can differ in different markets and cultures. Further studies might be done on brand loyalty in particular industries or regions so as to have a deeper overview.Lastly, consumer behavior is also changing continuously because of the technological advancements and market conditions. Online purchase and development of digital platforms have had a profound impact on consumer-brand interactions. The next round of research ought to investigate the influence of digital experiences and social media interactions on brand loyalty in the contemporary marketplace.Nevertheless, it is possible to note that the limitations do not undermine the usefulness of this research to provide an overview of the most important factors that contribute to brand loyalty and emphasize the necessity to establish strong relations between brands and consumers.