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## A STUDY ON BRAND AWARENESS AND INFLUENCE OF BRAND LOYALTY ON WOMEN FOOTWEAR IN SANGLI CITY, MAHARASHTRA

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**SANGLI**

### ABSTRACT

*A consumer's decision to buy a product is the result of interplay of many factors. . In recent days India is witnessing a change in brand awareness and brand loyalty. The market is now predominantly consumer driven. The focus is shifting for product based marketing to need based marketing. Consumer has given many options to decide. An effective market communication is imperative for reaching the target audience. The study throws light on various features that the manufacturers should concentrate on to attract the prospective buyers. The purpose of this research is to investigate how the women are influenced by factors of brand loyalty and brand awareness towards footwear brands. In this research paper, brand awareness of women respondents and the factors influencing on brand loyalty i.e. brand name, product quality, price, style, promotion, service quality and store environment were studied. Convenience sampling method was followed and Questionnaires were distributed and self-administered to 100 women respondents belonging to twin cities of Sangli city i.e. Sangli and Miraj. Pearson Correlation, Frequencies such as mean, standard deviation and percentage analysis, Garret's ranking techniques were used to obtain the factors that influence respondents' brand loyalty and brand awareness. Brand name has shown strong correlation with brand loyalty. In order to increase customer satisfaction and drive them to be brand loyalists, marketers are encouraged to develop aggressive marketing programs. The results are discussed in terms of implications for store management and future research.*

### KEYWORDS

Brand Awareness, Brand loyalty, Footwear.

### INTRODUCTION

In Sangli City, footwear brands such as Bata, Metro, Woodland, Khadim and Action are popular among women footwear. Footwear has become a common and popular category among women as it identifies them with a more relaxed lifestyle, greater versatility, variety, fashion, colors and comfort. This has prompted manufacturers like Bata and Metro to start expanding their business particularly in Asia as it has the potential to give them in higher volume of sales for their products. Many companies, especially those in the footwear industry try to enhance brand awareness and brand loyalty among their customers. Brand loyalty is a consumer's conscious or unconscious decision that is expressed through the intention or behavior to repurchase a particular brand continually. Brand loyalty has been proclaimed to be the ultimate goal of marketing<sup>[1]</sup>. In marketing, brand loyalty consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase the brand through repeated buying of a product or a service or other positive behaviors such as word of mouth. This indicates that the repurchase decision very much depends on trust and quality performance of the product or service<sup>[2]</sup>. This will lead to better and effective marketing strategies rather than focusing solely on lucrative schemes. In this context, this paper aims to deduce the factors influencing brand loyalty (brand name, product quality, price, style, promotion, and service quality and store environment) on women footwear that customers perceive to be the most important while utilizing the services of footwear brand. It is assumed that it will affect the way in which women in Sangli City purchase and consume things. Therefore, keeping in view the importance acquired by the footwear, the present research work entitled, "A Study on Brand Awareness and Influence of Brand Loyalty on Women Footwear In Sangli City, Maharashtra". The purpose of this research is to investigate how the respondents are influenced by factors of brand loyalty towards footwear brands. Questionnaires were distributed to 100 women respondents in Sangli and Miraj City, Maharashtra.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bloemer and Kasper (1995) stated that true brand loyalty as having six necessary conditions which are: 1) the biased (i.e. non-random); 2) behavioral response (i.e. purchase); 3) expressed over time; 4) by some decision-making unit; 5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands; and 6) a function of psychological processes<sup>[3]</sup>. Amine (1998) in her literature distinguishes two main approaches to define the loyalty construct: the behavioral one suggests that the repeat purchasing of a brand over time by a consumer expresses their loyalty, and; the attitudinal perspective which assumes that consistent buying of a brand is a necessary but not sufficient condition of 'true' brand loyalty and it must be complemented with a positive attitude towards this brand to ensure that this behavior will be pursued further<sup>[4]</sup>. Lau *et al.* (2006) in his article mentioned that there were seven factors that influenced consumers' brand loyalty towards certain footwear brands. The factors were: brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment, promotion and service quality<sup>[5]</sup>. Cadogan and Foster, (2000) noted that consumers may prefer to trust major famous brand names. These prestigious brand names and their images attract consumers to purchase the brand and bring about repeat purchasing behavior and reduce price related switching behaviors<sup>[6]</sup>. According to Kohli and Thakur (1997), brand name is the creation of an image or the development of a brand identity and is an expensive and time consuming process. The development of a brand name is an essential part of the process since the name is the basis of a brand's image<sup>[7]</sup>. According to Frings (2005), the components of product quality of fashion merchandise include size measurement, cutting or fitting, material, color, function and the performance of the merchandise. Fitting is a crucial aspect in garment selection because some fitted garments such as swimsuits and aerobic wear can ideally enhance the consumers' general appearance. Material is important in product quality because it affects the hand feel, texture and other performance aspects of the product<sup>[8]</sup>. According to Duff M. (2000), price is probably the most important consideration for the average consumer. Consumers with high brand loyalty are willing to pay a premium price for their favored brand, so, their purchase intention is not easily affected by price. In addition, customers have a strong belief in the price and value of their favorite brands so much so that they would compare and evaluate prices with alternative brands<sup>[9]</sup>. According to Abraham and Littrell (1995), a composite list of apparel attributes has been generated and one of the conceptual categories is style. Consumers' judgment depends on the consumers' level of fashion consciousness, so judgment will be conditioned by their opinion of what is currently fashionable. Brands that supply stylish footwear attract loyal consumers who are fashion conscious<sup>[10]</sup>. According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), fashion consciousness is generally defined as an awareness of new styles, changing fashions, and attractive styling, as well as the desire to buy something exciting and trendy<sup>[11]</sup>. Omar (1999) emphasized that the store environment was the single most important factor in retail marketing success and store longevity. Positive attributes of the store, which includes store location, store layout, and in-store stimuli, affect brand awareness and brand loyalty to some extent. Store location and number of outlets are crucial in altering consumer shopping and purchasing patterns<sup>[12]</sup>. According to Rowley (1998), promotion is an important element of a firm's marketing strategy. Promotion is used to communicate with customers with respect to product offerings, and it is also a way to encourage purchase or sales of a product or service<sup>[13]</sup>. Gronroos (1990) noted that the quality of a service as perceived by customers had three dimensions: functional (or process) dimension, technical (or outcome) dimension, and image<sup>[14]</sup>.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio-economic condition of women in Sangli City.
2. To identify the sources of awareness of footwear brands in Sangli City.

3. To study the factors influencing brand loyalty (brand name, product quality, price, style, promotion, service quality and store environment) on women footwear.

**HYPOTHESIS**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between brand name and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between product quality and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between price and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between style and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between promotion and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between service quality and brand loyalty on women footwear.
- H<sub>7</sub>: There is a significant and positive relationship between store environment and brand loyalty on women footwear.

**METHODOLOGY**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design for the study is descriptive. Women of various age groups have been interviewed for the research survey using a structured questionnaire.

**PERIOD OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in the period of August 2011 to October 2011.

**SAMPLING DESIGN AND SAMPLE SIZE**

Sampling technique used for the study was convenience sampling method and total sample size was 100. The research instrument used was open and close ended questionnaires. Personal interview was conducted among the target women using the questionnaire.

**TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY**

To conduct the study, primary data and secondary data are used by the researcher to analyze and identify the brand awareness and brand loyalty on women footwear. Pearson Correlation, Frequencies such as mean, standard deviation and percentage analysis were used to obtain the factors that influenced respondents' brand loyalty and brand awareness.

**Percentage Analysis Method:** Simple percentage analysis method refers to special kind of ratio. With the help of absolute figures, it will be difficult to interpret any meaning from the collected data, but when percentages are found out, and then it becomes easy to find the relative difference between two or more attributes.

**Percentage = No. of Respondents/Total No. of Respondents x 100**

The **5 point Likert Scale** was used in the questionnaire.

1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree. The result is derived from the highest mean score of factors of brand loyalty based on the respondents' answers.

**Garret's ranking techniques** was used to rank the factors influencing footwear preferred by women. According to this technique, the order assigned to different factors by the respondents were converted into ranks by using the formula-

$$\text{Percent Position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where R<sub>ij</sub> = Rank given for the i<sup>th</sup> variable by the j<sup>th</sup> respondents.

N<sub>j</sub> = Number of variable ranked by the j<sup>th</sup> respondents

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE WOMEN RESPONDENT'S**

Personal Profile	Respondents (n=100)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age:</b>		
18-25	27	27
26-30	52	52
31-35	13	13
Above 35	08	8
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	43	43
Government Sector	12	12
Private Sector	17	17
Self Employed	18	18
Housewives	10	10
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
School Level	10	10
Graduate	55	55
Post Graduate	35	35
<b>Income</b>		
Less than Rs. 10,000	52	52
10,000-20,000	24	24
21,000-30,000	20	20
Above 30,000	04	04

Source: Primary Data

From the 120 women respondents in this study, 52 (52%) were in the age group of 26-30 years and majority of women were students (43%) whose educational qualification were graduate (55%). Majority of women income level were less than Rs. 10,000.

**TABLE 2: BRANDS OF FOOTWEAR**

Brand	Number of Respondents (Women)	Frequency (in %)
Bata	41	41
Metro	28	28
Woodland	23	23
Khadim	03	3
Action	02	2
Other*	03	3

Source: Primary Data \*Others (Spice, Paragon)



From the table 2, it is found that Bata was the popular brand of footwear preferred by the women which accounted for (41%) followed by Metro (28%), Woodland (23%) respectively. Among different brands, women in the Sangli city preferred Bata.

TABLE 3: AWARENESS ABOUT THE BRAND

Sources	Mean	Rank
Advertisement	75.25	I
Friends/Relatives	38.35	IV
Past Experience	64.65	II
While Shopping/ Just by looking around	42.55	III
Online	34.25	V

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, it could be inferred that respondents came to know about the brands through advertisement (Mean-75.25, Rank I) followed by Past experience (Rank II), While shopping/ Just by looking around (Rank III), Friends/Relatives (Rank IV). It is interesting that Women were least interest in online shopping (Rank V).

TABLE 4: FACTOR INFLUENCING OF BRAND LOYALTY

Factors	Mean	Rank
<b>Brand Name</b>		II
1. The brand is reputable.	3.79	
2. Brand reflects my own personality.	3.83	
3. A brand name is selected according to price.	3.87	
4. Brand name and image attract me to purchase.	3.75	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.81</b>	
<b>Product Quality</b>		I
1. The materials used for the brands are comfortable.	4.03	
2. The size of footwear fits me.	3.72	
3. The brand has sufficient colors.	3.74	
4. The brand has good functional quality.	3.87	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.84</b>	
<b>Price</b>		VI
1. The brand provides reasonable price and good discount.	3.73	
2. Increase of price not changes my decision of purchase.	3.10	
3. The brand provides good value for money.	3.62	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.48</b>	
<b>Style</b>		III
1. The brand provides wide verity of styles.	3.75	
2. Styles of brand are trendy and fashionable.	3.49	
3. Styles of brand are suitable for me.	3.47	
4. Styles of the brand have unique features.	3.87	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.65</b>	
<b>Promotion</b>		V
1. Window displays and advertisement are attracting me to purchase.	3.56	
2. Advertisement of brands is attractive.	3.61	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.59</b>	
<b>Service Quality</b>		VII
1. Salespersons of the store are friendly and courteous.	3.35	
2. Salespersons of the stores have neat and clean appearance.	3.43	
3. Salespersons of the store are well trained.	3.19	
4. Salespersons are ever ready to help you.	3.33	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.33</b>	
<b>Store Environment</b>		IV
1. The brand has good prime location.	3.75	
2. The brand has sufficient outlets in the City.	3.87	
3. The interior display is attractive.	3.47	
4. The color and decoration of store are attractive.	3.46	
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.64</b>	

Source: Primary Data

The overall results show that product quality was perceived the First rank (Avg.Mean-3.84) by women as the most important factor affecting their brand loyalty followed by Style (3.81), Brand name (3.65), store environment (Avg. Mean-3.64),Promotion (3.59).

**HYPOTHESIS TEST**

TABLE - 5

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Significance*
Brand Name	0.564	0.000
Product Quality	0.304	0.002
Price	0.457	0.000
Style	0.139	0.160
Promotion	0.402	0.000
Service Quality	0.332	0.001
Store Environment	0.386	0.000
<b>*Significant at 0.01 Level</b>		

1. The research results showed that consumers favored brand image when they perceive positive benefits or function from the product. They would then recommend the brand, have positive reaction on the price premium and are willing to accept brand extensions to other product categories within the same brand. As shown in Table 4, brand name was found to have significant positive relationship with brand loyalty, hence H<sub>1</sub> is accepted.

2. The correlation between these two variables is shown in Table 4. The correlation is considered a moderate correlation ( $r=0.304$ ). This finding indicates that product quality is significant in the consumer decision making process. Product quality was shown to have positive relationship with brand loyalty, hence  $H_2$  is accepted.
3. The research findings showed that price and brand loyalty had a positive relationship, hence  $H_3$  is accepted. Price was an important consideration for the average women consumer. However, consumers with high brand loyalty were less-price sensitive. The result suggested that as long as the women respondents were satisfied with a particular brand, they would repurchase the product with the same brand name even if it was highly priced.
4. From the seven variables identified, style was not considered an important factor for women of Sangli City to be loyal to particular footwear brand. Women have preferred comfort more as compared to style in footwear. However, the findings showed that there was no relationship between style and brand loyalty, hence  $H_4$  is rejected.
5. Promotion was considered as one of the most important factors in determining a women' brand loyalty. It includes the use of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and publicity. From the study conducted, it was seen that female respondents actually spent more time reading product labels before buying products. The results showed that promotion and brand loyalty were positively related, hence  $H_5$  is accepted.
6. Service quality was an important factor in influencing and encouraging women to patronize a store. The results indicated that the salesperson-consumer relationship will generally result in long-term orientation of women toward a store. At the same time, trust in the salesperson appeared to relate to the overall perception of the store's service quality which resulted in the women total satisfaction with the store. The finding also showed that service quality and brand loyalty had a positive relationship, hence  $H_6$  is accepted.
7. The Store environment is considered one of the factors that can influence women brand loyalty. From this study, it is observed that women paid much attention to store attributes such as merchandise display, variety of selection, parking space, easily accessible by car and the reputation of the store in purchasing products. Store environment was positively related to brand loyalty, hence  $H_7$  is accepted

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to investigate the brand awareness and how the women are influenced by factors of brand loyalty towards footwear brands. Brand loyalty is important for an organization to ensure that its product is kept in the minds of consumers and prevent them from switching to other brands. The research showed that it was not easy to obtain and maintain consumer loyalty for a company's product because there were many forces drawing consumers away such as competition, consumers' thirst for variety, etc. From the analysis of this study, it was shown that there are six factors of brand loyalty that were appropriate in the environment of Sangli City which are, the brand name, product quality, price, promotion, service quality and store environment. The findings revealed that product quality plays a significant role in influencing consumers to be brand loyal customers. Additionally, the overall findings of this study also show that amongst others Sangli customers prefer brand name, product quality, price, promotion, store environment and service Influence of Brand Loyalty on women footwear quality as relevant factors attributable to brand loyalty. All these factors showed positive relationships with brand loyalty except style which had no relationship. Undeniably, the footwear industry is one area which offers vast potential in the women market. More reliable and positive findings on this topic would impact on consumers, marketers and policy makers.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Service Quality was shown to be the weakest dimension of Influencing of Brand Loyalty. Therefore, store management should arrange special courses to improve effective communication of salesperson.
2. Product quality was shown to be the strongest dimension of Influencing of Brand Loyalty. Therefore, store management should maintain the attributes of service quality at their stores.
3. Store management should promote the attractive ranges of ladies footwear with high discount like Bata, so that women will attract towards other brands also.
4. Store management should concentrate on comfort factor other than style like Bata to attract and retain women.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

A consumer prefers a particular brand based on what benefits that brand can offer to him/her. Because of such preferences, the brand can charge a higher price and command more loyalty. So, a marketer must understand how the customer made her purchase decision towards the brand. Hence, information provided from this study will assist those companies already existing in or planning to enter the market, in selling and increasing their market share. Further research in these areas would contribute to overall improvement of service standards throughout India.

## LIMITATIONS

Chances of the respondent's bias are involved in the research. As the research is restricted to Sangli and Miraj city of Maharashtra, the results are not applicable to other parts of the District or State or Country.

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