Investigating the Moderating Effect of Advertisement Liking on the Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Indian Organized Retail Sector

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Abstract: The basic purpose of this study was to investigate the causal relationship of Indian organised retail customer satisfaction and their perception towards liking of advertisement content with the customer loyalty levels in the eastern region of India. A sample consisting of 370 customers was drawn of various retail malls situated at different cities. After collecting the responses through a well tested survey instrument, hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the existence of moderating effect of Ad liking on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Findings indicated that Ad giving more information about sales offer had some moderating effect in the defined relationship. Lastly, managerial implications of the study results are discussed.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Customer loyalty, Advertisement, Organized retail sector, India

JEL Classification Codes: M370, M310, C310

INTRODUCTION

Retailing includes every business that sells goods to customers. These establishments are usually referred to as shops or stores. From small departmental stores to hypermarkets, there has been massive growth in the retail industry. Retailing is the most important part of marketing where the marketer meets the supreme consumer who exchanges value with the product and therefore sanctions the very existence of business. Now, every retail store tries to attract customers by trying to satisfy the customer's needs both by making the right product available for its customers and by making it easy for the customer to make the buying decision. One main reason for the same is that the retail industry has a lot of competitors and in order to

be successful, any retail store should make sure that they have an edge over the others. In the present day's retail business, ensuring customer satisfaction in delivering the right product and service to the end-users is the major concern for the future growth of the organized retail stores.

The Indian retail industry is the fifth largest in the world comprising organized and unorganized sectors. Retail industry is one of the fastest growing industries in India, especially over the last few years. The Indian retail industry is a promising one and competition is currently intensifying. It is one of the world's major and most varied industries. It indicates additional "head-to-head" competition with inside local business regions along with above individual buyer transaction. Competition comes from all directions equivalent keep varieties, heavy price discounters, different types of retail stores along with non-store suppliers. This critical challenge turns into how to carry business far away from this progressively aggressive along with threatening opposition though safeguarding one's recent buyer bottom.

Customer satisfaction is often a marketing term that measures exactly how products and services supplied by a company to meet or exceed the customer's expectation. Customer happiness is essential since it delivers entrepreneurs as well as businesses using a metric they can utilize to handle as well as enhance his or her companies. Moreover, retailers must retain existing customers while aimed towards new customers. Customer satisfaction provides a foremost signal of consumer purchase intentions and loyalty also. Customers get satisfaction both from the experiences in the retail store and also usage of each item and service purchased from the retail store. The requirement for customer loyalty in retail business has been perceived by numerous researchers. Customer loyalty is a standout amongst the most every now and again talked about subjects in the showcasing and administration writing (Eshghi et al., 2007; Heskett and Sasser, 2010). Research studies by Rasmey et al. (1997) contend that consumer loyalty and customer satisfaction are correlated. Some different researchers demonstrated that consumer loyalty assume indispensable part in upgrading and keeping up long haul relationship among organizations and their clients (Haq and Amin, 2009).

Another aspect which is of major concern for retailers, is giving good advertisement about their provisions through mass media, so that their promotional activities must take a right kind of shape. However, it is also seen from major research studies that advertisements have a significant impact on customer loyalty. The trust of customers toward the information of television commercials directly affects customers' loyalty (Khuong M. N *et al.*, 2016). Khuong M. N *et al.*, 2016, recommended that advertising manager must improve the content of advertisings to induce brand awareness as well as loyalty. However, very little research evidences are found, explaining the moderating role of customers' liking status towards different types of advertising attributes in the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in Indian retail sector.

In the above context, the present research study aims to investigate the direct effect of customer satisfaction (CS) on customer loyalty (CL) in retail sector and also to study the existence of moderating effect of customers' level of liking towards advertising content (Ad_liking) in the relationship between CS and CL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Satisfaction and its determinants are very significant areas of thrust for any marketing effort (Hanif Muzammil *et al.* 2010). That is the reason for which it becomes the core of concern for any

organization. The efforts of the organization gets geared up to satisfy the customer by using multiple means. In such a competitive scenario of retail sector, it is the loyal customers who would stay and bring more customers only if the level of customer satisfaction is significantly improved (Khan Inamullah, 2012). The mode of communication by a satisfied customer would be higher and positive level of word of mouth, alternatively a higher level of positive word of mouth indicates a higher level of satisfaction. Similarly a lower level of negative word of mouth also could indicate a higher level of customer satisfaction (Ranaweera Chatura, 2007).

Customer satisfaction has also been found to be multi-dimensional in nature and takes multiple experiences encountered with service provider. Thus overall satisfaction consists of multiple service encounters. Parasuraman et al, 2000, indicate that the general satisfaction is based on the information from all separate prior experiences with the service provider and can be considered as a function of all prior transactions and information. Satisfaction has been conceptualised as an outcome which comes out of the comparison of cost and rewards of any purchases with respect to any anticipation (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). According to Wicks & Roethlein, (2009), customer satisfaction may be created via an affective evaluation practice and also this affective evaluation is done following this buy experience from the purchaser. Firms that will regularly gratify his or her buyers take pleasure in better retention ranges in addition to higher profitability on account of greater customers' devotion.

Organizations which have a strong focus on customer value will form a sustainable competitive advantage (Parasuraman, 1997; Woodruff *et al,* 1997). The rationale behind this concept is, delivering better value to customers might result in a higher likelihood of purchase, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth communication (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Grisaffe and Kumar, 1998). In other words, if the organizations know what drives value for their customers and provide superior customer value, they have a greater probability of obtaining and retaining customers (Slater and Narver, 2000). Oliver (1999) recommended that a firm's emphasis on satisfaction should be shifted to a focus on customer loyalty. Bhote (1996) states that, "it is now becoming apparent that it is no longer customer satisfaction but customer loyalty that is the dominant key to business success". Rosenberg and Czepiel, 1984 indicated that expense of keeping an existing customer is the less than one sixth of winning a new customer. Customer loyalty now is one of the key factors can help a company win long-term success (Andres Kuusik, 2007). Customer loyalty can be classified into proactive loyalty and situational loyalty. Oliver suggested that proactive loyalty occurs when a consumer frequently buys a brand and settles for no other substitute while situational loyalty exists when the buyer purchases a brand for a special occasion (Oliver, 1999). Loyalty as a concept has its root from the consumer behaviour theory and is something that consumers may exhibit to brands, services or activities. Often customer loyalty is used as opposed to brand loyalty to emphasize that loyalty is a feature of people, rather than something inherent in brands.

Customer satisfaction is a key factor in formation of customer's desires for future purchase (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001). Besides, Liljander & Strandvik (1993) say that experience is not needed for evaluating service quality, and service can be evaluated on the basis of the knowledge about service provider, while satisfaction is an inner view, resulted from customer's own experience from the service. Caruana (2002) argues that behaviour is a full expression of loyalty to the brand and not just thoughts. The operational definition of this approach often refers to the first product or service which comes to the mind of a person, while making decision for purchase. In the growing service industry of India, customer satisfaction

has a positive impact on maintaining loyalty level, ultimately creating growth of business in long run (Mishra U. S. et al, 2016). The efficient optimization of both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty positively impact an organization's market performance (Taylor C.S, 2013). Customer satisfaction has remarkable positive effects on customer loyalty intention in the retail supermarket chain (Neupane R., 2015). At this backdrop, the current research study set the first hypothesis as:

H_1: *Retail Customer Satisfaction (CS) positively affects Customer Loyalty (CL).*

Understanding the path through which advertising influence consumer choice is vital for researchers and practitioners (Clark *et al.* 2009). Advertising, sales promotion and public relations are mass-communication tools available to marketers. The matchup hypothesis (Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 1983) goes well with the social adaptation theory as it says that the message conveyed by the image of the celebrity and the product have to come together in an effective advertisements. Lasch, 1978 and Mander, 1977 discussed that advertising presents an idealized and an unreal picture of people and their lives. The dimension of physical and personality attractiveness is important in social interactions which has a great influence on a person's perception and his or her achievement in life. The defensive role of advertising in maintaining current loyal buyers and in preventing their erosion is not as glamorous, and often goes unrecognized and un-appreciated (Raj S.P, 1982). Assael and Lipstein (1978) are one of the researchers and practitioners who have stressed on the relation of loyalty and advertising. MacDonald *et al.* (2000), in his unique study using individual level TV advertising exposure and purchase data, found that consumers exposed two or more times to an advertisement were 5 percent more likely to switch to the advertised brand. Mitchell and Olsen, 1981 found that even if the repetition of the ads did not increase consumer's attitude towards the brand but their attitude towards the advertisement itself contributed to the brand attitude.

Advertising plays a very important defensive role in retaining customers. Advertising serves two functions at the same time for both loyal and non-loyal consumers; the loyal customers are retained through advertising while the non-loyal consumers have to be induced into changing their attitudes. The content of the advertising must be favourable for the loyal customers in terms of mood advertising. The mood advertising creates a favourable mood and links positive associations with the brand, enhancing the pleasure of the consumption of the brand (Shimp, 1981; Percy and Rossiter, 1980). It is evident that advertising managers should enhance certain factors related to Ad content when they decide to advertise their products or services on television to induce customers' brand awareness as well as loyalty (Khuong M. N et al, 2016). Therefore it may be realized that, since advertisement plays a major role in making a customer more loyal which is the effect of satisfaction level; the perception of customers on Ad content might have some moderating effect on the relationship between CS and CL. In this context, the current research study set the second hypothesis as (see fig. 1):

H_2: *Retail Customers' level of liking towards Ad (Ad_liking) has moderating effect on the relationship between Customer Satisfaction (CS) & Customer Loyalty (CL).*

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

The study was mainly based on field survey and was exploratory in nature. The sources of data were mainly primary and data were collected through one tailor-made questionnaire. The data for the study were collected
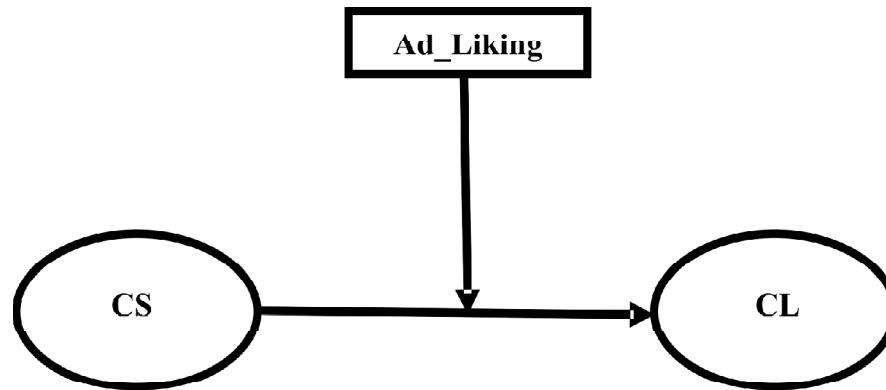
Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model

through the structured questionnaire from 370 organized retail customers covering major cities of eastern India during the year of 2016. While choosing a customer, the method of random sampling was followed and the respondents were approached personally. Initially 500 samples were planned, but because of less accessibility to customers and unwillingness of the customers to provide data restricted the sample size to 370. Data related to CS and CL were collected in a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from one indicating strongly disagreed response category to seven indicating strongly agreed. However, the responses related to Ad_liking were dichotomous, where 2 represented 'like' and 1 represented 'dislike' categories. The questionnaire containing all the items related to customer satisfaction & loyalty (Xuan Zhang *et al.*, 2009), and customer response about advertisement (Mariam Jamshed, 2010) were developed with minor modifications, which was used for customer survey and administered keeping the broad objectives in mind. The data collected through measurement instrument were entered into an Excel spread sheet and then transferred to SPSS data sheet for further processing. Cross tabulations were made to understand the underlying relationships among the variable under study keeping the broad objectives in mind. Statistical tools like hierarchical regression analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, etc were used to make data analysis and draw some other useful findings.

MEASUREMENT SCALE VALIDATION

The questionnaire was mainly adapted from previous studies, and modified according to the study requirements. For the scale items of customer satisfaction and loyalty, the key parameters were identified and modified by making thorough investigation of the literature given by Xuan Zhang and Yuanguan Feng (2009). Items related to customer perception about the advertisements liking of retail services were derived and modified from the study of Mariam Jamshed (2010). The two constructs namely, customer satisfaction and loyalty were having 4 & 5 items respectively. For Ad_liking, there were 6 items were taken, namely, liking level towards Ad visibility, music used, celebrity endorsed, concept used, story used, and information about sales offers.

SPSS version 20 statistical software was used to perform a Cronbach's alpha test to test reliability of two latent variables CS and CL, for which data of pilot study got used. The alpha value was found to be 0.843 and 0.851 for CS & CL respectively, which are greater than 0.800, generally suggested as the minimum alpha value to be considered reliable for group research.
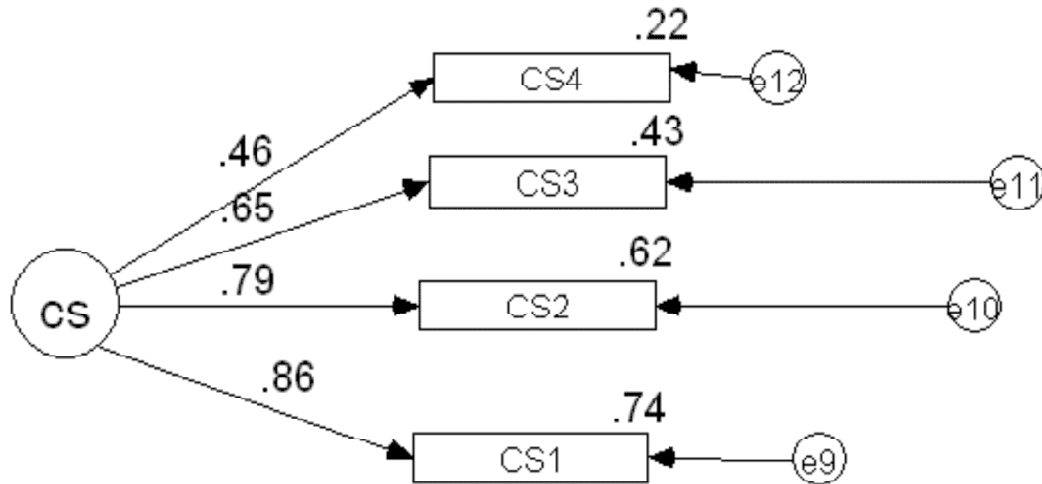
Figure 2: CFA of Customer Satisfaction

For construct validity check of the constructs customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was done (see fig 2 and 3). The fit indicators used were normal chi-square (CMIN/df), normed fit index (NFI), relative fit index (RFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RAMSEA). As illustrated in fig. 2 & table 1, the normal Chi-square value was 2.99 (less than 3) for customer satisfaction. The RMSEA was also less than 0.08. These values showed a good model fit. In addition, NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI and CFI were more than 0.9. The values of factor loading were also acceptable (above 0.50 as shown in the fig 2) for CS, except fourth item CS4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in case of CS was also found to be 0.56 (more than 0.5) for all the items.
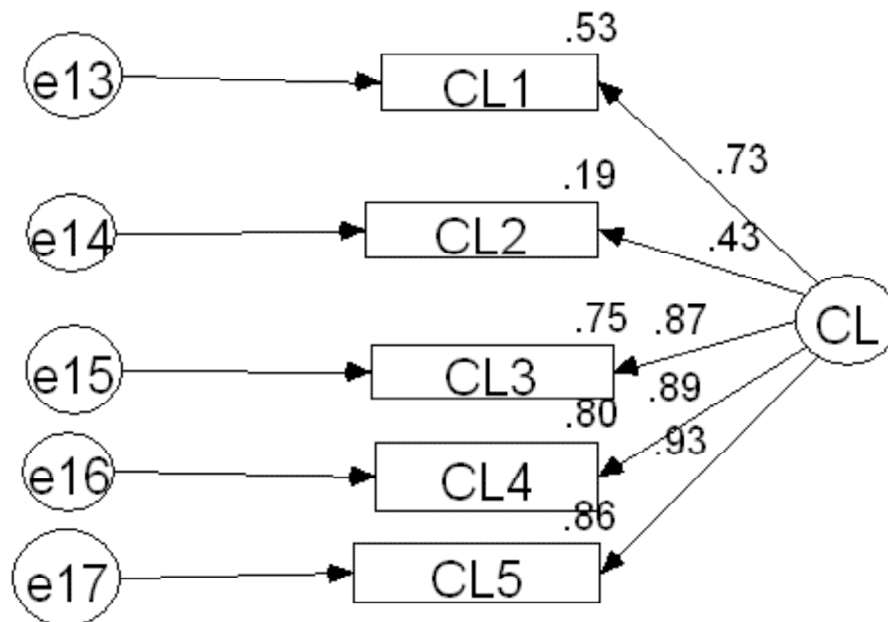

Figure 3: CFA of Customer Loyalty

In the same way all the indices for customer loyalty construct were also found to have acceptable values (table 1). In addition, the standardized factor loadings for all items were more than 0.50 except the second item (CL 2, fig 3) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was 0.65 (more than 0.5) for all the items. Hence, there was almost a good correlation between the items and construct.

Table 1
Goodness of fit indices for CS and CL

Constructs	Normal Chi-square	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RAMSEA
Customer Satisfaction	2.99	0.983	0.953	0.984	0.960	0.974	0.079
Customer Loyalty	2.05	0.984	0.973	0.987	0.901	0.970	0.076

As mentioned earlier, the value more than 0.9 for NFI and RFI would be good for model fit (Chin and Todd, 1995). CFI also needs to have the values of more than 0.9. In addition, both RAMSEA below 0.08 and normal chi-square (CIMIN/df) below 3 show a good model fit (Ghasemi, 2010). However, as p-value of chi square is required to be larger than 0.05, it depends on the number of variables which are indicated in the model, and in many cases it may not reach the needed level (Hair et al., 2009). Therefore, good values of other indicators can show a good model fit.

Therefore, based on the result of confirmatory factor analysis through Amos 17, it was found that all the items of CS & CL were having good construct validity after few modification in final model, so that almost all the concerned items are the perfect measuring variables of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Customer were asked to rate their level of satisfaction and loyalty with respect to all measurement items on a seven-point likert scale. A summary of descriptive statistics is presented in table 2. It indicated that both CS and CL were having almost same value of average response and variance.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of CS & CL

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	370	5.706	1.143
Customer Loyalty (CL)	370	5.759	1.133

In order to indentify the high and low level of CS and CL of the customers under study, a one sample t-test was used to test the significance of the mean rating at 0.01 significance level and with a specified constant or cut-off value of four (4) to split both constructs into high and low level of customer response. The results are summarized in table 3.

Table 3 indicated that all the mean differences of both constructs were significant ($p < 0.01$), from the rating score of 4, and t values were also positive. Hence, it can be concluded that for both CS and CL, customers' response scores were at high level.

Table 3
One sample t-test for accessing levels of CS and CL

Constructs	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	28.715**	0.000	High Level
Customer Loyalty (CL)	29.833**	0.000	High Level

** significant at 1% level

Table 4
Frequency analysis of Ad_Liking

Ad_Liking Factors	Liking Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Ad visibility	Like	212	57.3
	Dislike	158	42.7
Ad music	Like	226	61.1
	Dislike	144	38.9
Celebrity endorsed	Like	172	46.5
	Dislike	198	53.5
Ad concept	Like	208	56.2
	Dislike	162	43.8
Ad story	Like	193	52.2
	Dislike	177	47.8
Information about Sales offer	Like	188	50.8
	Dislike	182	49.2
Total		370	100

Table 4 described about the frequency distribution and their respective percentage figures of both like and dislike options which the respondents had given related to six parameters of advertisement content and design. It was seen from this table that, most of the customers liked the background music used in Ads of retail malls and disliked the celebrity endorsed. This might be due to the reason that since most of the urban customers were surveyed, they rarely get inclined towards the effect of celebrities.

Hierarchical regression analysis was applied to investigate the moderating effect of liking levels towards Ad contents on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in retail sector (table 5). Prior to apply this regression method, interaction terms were created by taking the product values of Ad_liking parameters and CS after standardization. These interaction terms were of most concern for investigation the required moderating effects. In total, six parameters were taken of Ad_liking variable and each of these was separately regressed along with CS, to know the effect on CL. Out of six parameters, only three (concept, story & sales offer) were found to have significant direct influence on CL along with CS. But again, out of these three parameters, only information about sales offer was found to have moderating effect on the relationship between CS and CL. Hence, it may be concluded that if customers are more exposed to retail store Ads giving information of amusing sales offer, they will be not only satisfied more, but also become more loyal.

Table 5
Hierarchical regression output showing the existence of moderating effect of Ad_liking on the relationship between CS and CL

Model	R^2	F	Predictors	B	β	t	p
1	0.424	135.661**	Constant	2.139		9.264	.000
			CS	.618	.621	14.560	.000
			Ad visibility	.165	.071	1.675	.095
2	0.424	90.307**	Constant	2.174		8.878	.000
			CS	.613	.616	13.975	.000
			Ad visibility	.165	.071	1.669	.096
			Interaction	-.021	-.018	-.438	.661
1	0.420	133.785**	Constant	2.098		9.123	.000
			CS	.633	.636	15.094	.000
			Ad music	.078	.033	.792	.429
2	0.422	89.480**	Constant	2.156		9.066	.000
			CS	.627	.630	14.738	.000
			Ad music	.070	.030	.702	.483
			Interaction	-.046	-.039	-.962	.337
1	0.422	134.762**	Constant	2.114		9.193	.000
			CS	.629	.632	15.260	.000
			Celebrity	.126	.055	1.327	.185
2	0.425	90.790**	Constant	2.015		8.412	.000
			CS	.643	.647	15.169	.000
			Celebrity	.110	.048	1.149	.251
			Interaction	.072	.059	1.438	.151
1	0.432	140.340**	Constant	2.094		9.240	.000
			CS	.616	.619	15.283	.000
			Ad concept	.268	.116	2.870	.004
2	0.434	94.099**	Constant	2.048		8.901	.000
			CS	.621	.624	15.321	.000
			Ad concept	.271	.118	2.906	.004
			Interaction	.054	.046	1.162	.246
1	0.436	142.736**	Constant	2.116		9.362	.000
			CS	.610	.613	15.168	.000
			Ad story	.307	.134	3.320	.001
2	0.438	95.501**	Constant	2.062		8.878	.000
			CS	.618	.621	15.095	.000
			Ad story	.305	.133	3.291	.001
			Interaction	.047	.040	1.009	.314
1	0.427	137.314**	Constant	2.117		9.274	.000
			CS	.620	.623	15.187	.000
			Sales offer	.204	.089	2.174	.030
2	0.431	93.078**	Constant	2.043		8.828	.000
			CS	.629	.632	15.329	.000
			Sales offer	.200	.087	2.133	.034
			Interaction	.083	.069	1.751	.041

** significant at 1% level, **Moderators:** Ad visibility, Ad music, Celebrity, Ad concept, Ad story, Sales offer

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The twenty-first century will go down in the business history as the era of profuse attention to customer expectations and to profitability through higher customer retention. The purpose of a business is to create and to keep a customer (Levitt, 1960). The success or failure of a business depends on what of customer relationship it practices. In the modern world of competition, growing consumerism, and information explosion, the one single element that stands out as the factor of success is the customer. After all, customer is the life-blood of a business. Present day customers are better educated, additional delicate to price-value human relationships, additional discerning, and much more individual inside likes as compared to any prior age group. For that reason, retailing is usually an important marketing activity with growing significance.

Indian retail sector has witnessed a paradigm since last two decades. Today, the retail industry has become highly competitive in India. It is not only focusing on providing wide range of products to create competitive advantages; but also emphasises on the importance of services. The Indian retail customer is now searching for a passionate association, a feeling of having a place. Subsequently, to be fruitful any retail outlet must be confined. The customer ought to feel that it is a piece of his way of life, his apparent values, and does not attempt to force outsider qualities or ideas on him. Indian client is not quick to purchase something since it is sold by a worldwide organization. Eventually, it comes down to how much limitation and adjustment the organization will accomplish for India.

The present research study revealed that customer satisfaction is the major target to achieve by any organized retailers in order to retain customers, make them loyal, and create advocates for spreading well about the business. Although, advertisement is the major promotional tool of any kind of business, in the current study it was found that it also acts like one catalyst in increasing the effect of customer satisfaction on loyalty level. Therefore Ad designers should be of more concern in designing the basic contents of advertisement, and give more priority what customers like to see, so that they would be more happy and loyal.

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