

AN ANALYSIS OF BRAND EQUITY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF A FOOTBALL TEAM AMONG FEMALE FANS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract: The increasing competition in the business sector requires that teams that are involved in developing the brands come up with brands that consumers can easily differentiate from those of the competitors to make their brand stand out. Football teams rely on fans for their success, providing income through ticket sales, television viewing and purchasing team branded products. Yet this area remains unexplored in Kenya hence the researchers desire to assess the influence of brand equity on customer satisfaction of football team among universities female fans in Public Universities in Kenya. The specific objective to be undertaken for the research was: To examine the influence of brand awareness on customer satisfaction of a football team among female fans in public universities in Kenya. The study adopted explanatory research design to determine the influence of brand equity on customer satisfaction of a football team. A target population of 1846 respondent was investigated. A sample of 319 was then used for the study. Stratified and snowball sampling techniques were employed. Semi-structured questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. Content validity was measured through expert judgment while reliability was measured by use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient method at $p < 0.05$. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics comprising of chi-statistic, multiple regression analysis and Anova. The objective sought to determine the influence of brand awareness on customer satisfaction among female football fans in public university. The p-value of the test statistic was $p = 0.009$ since the p-value is less than the chosen level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. The study recommends to football that they should design fitted jerseys for female fans with appealing colors and teams should sign world class players to ensure good performance.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Customer Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Brand awareness and Customer Satisfaction:

Guillaume and James (2014) argue that awareness plays a greater role in making one support a team since it encourages two way communication and not all fans want to establish a long time relationship with the team. His findings suggest that physical features of a team lead to increased fan loyalty to a team. Basic factors such as the accessibility of a product and the prices attached to a product greatly influenced support in Armenia and Lithuania.

Otieno (2010) notes that the invention of social media s has led to the growth of businesses since brands can be sold online, the flow of fans to official team website has greatly impacted on proper channel of communication since firms can now gain control of the presence of brand and hence improves the image of the club in the eyes of its consumers, Striking between gaining short term income and ensuring customers are loyal to a brand.

Michael and Peter (2013) argue that rivalry among fans in opponents clubs is often experienced in form of humor, ridicule, malice and intense hostility and occasion. They argue that while rivalry is here to stay, certain events and occasion serve to heighten latent tensions between communities.

Pedro and Carmo (2008) believe that the behavior of the fans of football is caused by the desire for them to be seen among members in same age group, feeling of belongingness and what they want to represent in the society. Committed fans have proper knowledge of club including players in that club, the management teams and properties owned by the club. They recommend that clubs need to be open with its supporters by updating them of what is happening to their favorite club.

Saad and Abdel (2010) argue that football gains the largest share of interest and consumer usage therefore football has a large share of universal sport market. Football content considers a very important property product if it was managed in a good way, it could increase its value and generate great streams of revenues. They argue that besides attracting new consumers of players, sponsors, suppliers, various partners for sports entities in football such as media supporters comes in the heart of the items that has achieved the highest satisfaction levels followed by competition position in media.

Jonathan (2010) contends that changes that occur to a club whether good or bad has an effect on the identity of the football team they support. It is in the team's interest to stay involved with the associated groups and portray them in a positive light. He recommends that they should base their marketing strategies within these two associated communities. Team identification predicts consumer behavior and can play a pivotal role in increasing revenue for a sports team.

Brendan and Eamon (2013) explore that football fans are anecdotal evidence suggesting tenaciously loyal to their teams. Self-monitoring may have an impact on fans spending on the team branded merchandise including replica jerseys the wearing of which facilitates the basking in the reflected glory process. They recommend that sports marketers should consider self-monitoring as a possible basis for segmentation of their fan base as high self-monitors would apparently represent a more ready market for replica jersey and other merchandise. Revenues of many clubs are heavily dependent on sales of not only match tickets but also team merchandise.

According to a research carried out by Wang, Lo, and Yang (2004) they note that satisfaction is more important in getting to know how consumers behave and its relationship top organizations performance. When a customer is satisfied then it means that there is increase in sales and as a result of that profit is realized by the organization. Customer satisfaction is one of the most studied areas of marketing, and is perhaps the most important area of focus of organizations world over. If customers are satisfied with a product, they will buy it again and again, show brand loyalty and pass on the good word to others, but if on the other hand, they are dissatisfied with the product, they may either switch over to other brands, or may complain and show their displeasure to the firm initially and to others, which may harm the company in the long run. Customer Satisfaction has been defined variously as an outcome and as a process. The outcomes of customer satisfaction are increased use, repeat purchase, brand loyalty or brand switching, while the process includes the customer decision making process, the superior expected value of the brand over others, the sales and the perceived value delivered. Customer satisfaction is therefore the performance-expectations index, wherein if there is a match, the customers are satisfied, and a mismatch will mean customers are dissatisfied, so firms need to ensure that at least the performance is equal to the expectations, and if possible exceed it. Thus the very existence of a firm depends on how satisfied its customers are with its products and services. If the brand is able to satisfy the customer and develop a psychological attachment in him to the brand, then the customer would stay loyal to it, no matter what enticement the competition has to offer. Such customers would in turn pass on their experience with the brand to others who might be tempted to try it. These word-of mouth communications are more valuable to the firm than any advertisements; therefore firms always try to create committed customers rather than satisfied customers.

2. METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design:

Cross sectional survey design was employed in this study. Cross sectional survey was used since its ideal to analyze the characteristics of the variables and investigate the cause effect relationship between variables by looking at how things come together and interact, zikmund (2012). The researcher further affirms that Cross sectional survey play an important part in terms of identifying procedures for a certain occurrence and finding out the consequences of changes in existing practices.

2. Target Population:

The research targeted 1846 second year and third year female students’ football fans from the public universities in Kenya. Second year and third year students were chosen because they are familiar with the university system and they had not exited the system at the time of data collection.

3. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure:

Both stratified and snowball sampling was used in the study to arrive at the sample size. Stratified was used to categorize groups into homogeneous while snowball was used to select respondents from each strata. Snowballing was used because it’s difficult to identify second year and third year female football fans hence relied on referrals to identify the respondents. The required sample size was arrived at by application of Krejcie& Morgan (1970) formula.

4. Data Collection Instruments:

Semi-structured questionnaires were employed to collect primary data from the respondents.

5. Data Analysis and Presentation:

Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze data. The data obtained was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The descriptive statistics like percentage and frequency table was used to present the demographic profile of the research participants. Inferential statistics determined whether there is any association between the variables.

3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Brand awareness and customer satisfaction:

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of brand awareness on customer satisfaction among female football fans in public universities in Kenya. As an objective it was guided by indicators that were studied to outline their influences on customer satisfaction.

1. Brand recall and customer satisfaction:

The researcher sought to find out if brand recall influence customer satisfaction, the response shows that;

Table 1: Advertising and customer satisfaction

		amount of advertising directed at my team helps fan Total					
		recognize the brand					
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	yes	3 1.9%	6 3.8%	33 20.9%	66 41.8%	50 31.6%	158 100.0%
	no	0 0.0%	6 6.1%	12 12.2%	40 40.8%	40 40.8%	98 100.0%
	Total	3 1.2%	12 4.7%	45 17.6%	106 41.4%	90 35.2%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans agree that the amount of advertising directed at their team helps them to recognize the brand and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans 66 (41.8%), 50 (31.6%) strongly agree that the amount of

advertising directed at their team helps them to recognize the brand and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans, 3 (1.9%) strongly disagree that that the amount of advertising directed at their team helps them to recognize the brand and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans. This implies that most fans believe that the amount of advertising directed at their team helps them to recognize the brand and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans. This study concurs with a survey carried out involving 2000 fans of English premierhips football clubs the findings were that, Soccer clubs should not just pay attention to getting profit but raise the level of awareness of its club in order to increase the number of fans and as a result of that the fan base will motivate other fans to be part of the team leading to increased trust to a team among its fan base. (Pavia 2007).

Rita (2012) also asserts that a brand name affects teams' image. Her recommendations are team sought to pay more efforts in advertising its products to be able to create awareness among its customers so that customers can consider that brand among the so many brands in the market.

Table 2: Teams trademark and customer satisfaction

		the trademark of my team makes me satisfied with my Total football team					
		strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	yes	3	15	34	64	42	158
		1.9%	9.5%	21.5%	40.5%	26.6%	100.0%
	no	0	5	18	38	37	98
		0.0%	5.1%	18.4%	38.8%	37.8%	100.0%
Total		3	20	52	102	79	256
		1.2%	7.8%	20.3%	39.8%	30.9%	100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans agree that the highly visible trademark of a football team makes them satisfied and hence can make referrals to potential football fans 64 (40.5%), 42 (26.6%) strongly agree that the highly visible trademark of a football team makes them satisfied and hence can make referrals to potential football fans, 3 (1.9%) strongly disagree that the highly visible trademark of a football team makes them satisfied and hence can make referrals to potential football fans. This implies that majority of fans agree that the highly visible trademark of a football team makes them satisfied and hence can make referrals to potential football fans.

2. Team familiarity and customer satisfaction:

The researcher wanted to know if familiarity with the team leads to fans being satisfied with the team they support and results shows that;

Table 3: Football team is fixed on mind and customer satisfaction

		my football team is fixed on my mind					Total
		strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	Yes	6	24	34	49	45	158
		3.8%	15.2%	21.5%	31.0%	28.5%	100.0%
	no	5	13	18	29	33	98
		5.1%	13.3%	18.4%	29.6%	33.7%	100.0%
Total		11	37	52	78	78	256
		4.3%	14.5%	20.3%	30.5%	30.5%	100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans agree that their favorite football team is fixed on their mind and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans 49 (31.0%), 45 (28.5%) strongly agree that their favorite football team is fixed on their mind and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans, 6 (3.8%) strongly disagree that their favorite football team is fixed on their mind and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans. Majority of fans agree that their favorite football team is fixed on their mind and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans.

Table 4: Quality of brand and customer satisfaction

		one is satisfied with the quality of the brand of a football team					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	Yes	4 2.5%	11 7.0%	38 24.1%	56 35.4%	49 31.0%	158 100.0%
	No	0 0.0%	2 2.0%	23 23.5%	39 39.8%	34 34.7%	98 100.0%
Total		4 1.6%	13 5.1%	61 23.8%	95 37.1%	83 32.4%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans agree that they are satisfied with the quality of brand of their football team and can make referrals to potential football fans 56 (35.4%), 49 (31.0%) strongly agree that they are satisfied with the quality of brand of their football team and can make referrals to potential football fans, 4 (2.5%) strongly disagree that they are satisfied with the quality of brand of their football team and can make referrals to potential football fans. This implies that Majority of fans agree that they are satisfied with the quality of brand of their football team and can make referrals to potential football fans.

This study agrees with that carried out by Guillaume and James (2014) who argue that awareness plays a greater role in making one support a team since it encourages two way communication and not all fans want to establish a long time relationship with the team. His findings suggest that physical features of a team lead to increased fan loyalty to a team. Basic factors such as the accessibility of a product and the prices attached to a product greatly influenced support in Armenia and Lithuania.

Table 5: Fans are disciplined because they are aware of consequences

		as fans we are disciplined because if we misbehave our teams will be deducted some points					Total
		strongly disagree	Disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	Yes	16 10.1%	23 14.6%	34 21.5%	48 30.4%	37 23.4%	158 100.0%
	No	9 9.2%	18 18.4%	20 20.4%	22 22.4%	29 29.6%	98 100.0%
Total		25 9.8%	41 16.0%	54 21.1%	70 27.3%	66 25.8%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans agree that they are disciplined because when they misbehave their teams will be deducted some points and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans 48 (30.4%), 37 (23.4%) strongly agree that that they are disciplined because when they misbehave their teams will be deducted some points and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans, 16 (10.1%) strongly disagree that that they are disciplined because when they misbehave their teams will be deducted some points and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans. This implies that most fans believe that they are disciplined because when they misbehave their teams will be deducted some points and are satisfied to make referrals to potential football fans.

Table 6: Fans aware of team’s performance and satisfaction

		Iam aware of my team performance					Total
		strongly disagree	Disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	Yes	5 3.2%	17 10.8%	25 15.8%	54 34.2%	57 36.1%	158 100.0%
	No	0 0.0%	6 6.1%	15 15.3%	30 30.6%	47 48.0%	98 100.0%
Total		5 2.0%	23 9.0%	40 15.6%	84 32.8%	104 40.6%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans strongly agree that they are aware of their teams performance and can make referrals to potential football fans 57 (36.1%), 54 (34.2%) agree that they are aware of their teams performance and can make referrals to potential football fans, 5 (3.2%) strongly disagree that they are aware of their teams performance and can make referrals to potential football fans. This implies that most fans are aware of their team’s performance and can make referrals to potential football fans. This study agrees with that carried out by Madrigal (2008) who asserts that satisfaction in soccer is influenced by team performance, the type of game played by opposition, soccer schedules, all which may influence the rate at which the game is attended and fans are satisfied. His recommendations are that stakeholders should pay more attention on product extension services such as entertainment at the venue, teams branded merchandise for which should be supplied consistently to the place that can easily be accessed by its customers; this will ensure that many customers will be satisfied and are likely to make repeat purchase

3. Team recognition and customer satisfaction:

The study also sought to find out if team recognition leads to customer satisfaction and the findings show that;

Table 7: Distinction of teams and customer satisfaction

		one can distinguish one football team from another					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	Yes	0 0.0%	4 2.5%	22 13.9%	65 41.1%	67 42.4%	158 100.0%
	No	1 1.0%	2 2.0%	6 6.1%	39 39.8%	50 51.0%	98 100.0%
Total		1 0.4%	6 2.3%	28 10.9%	104 40.6%	117 45.7%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans strongly agree that they can distinguish one football team from another and can make referrals to potential football fans 67 (42.4%), 65 (41.1%) agree that they can distinguish one football team from another and can make referrals to potential football fans, 1 (1.0%) strongly disagree that they can distinguish one football team from another and can make referrals to potential football fans. This implies that most fans know about the details of the team and can make referrals to potential fans.

Table 8: Players in a team and customer satisfaction

		I know all players in my favorite team					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
satisfied with making referrals to potential fans	yes	3 1.9%	16 10.1%	30 19.0%	43 27.2%	66 41.8%	158 100.0%
	no	1 1.0%	9 9.2%	12 12.2%	36 36.7%	40 40.8%	98 100.0%
Total		4 1.6%	25 9.8%	42 16.4%	79 30.9%	106 41.4%	256 100.0%

Source: Researcher (2017)

Majority of fans strongly agree that they know all the players in their favorite team and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans 66 (41.8%), 43 (27.2%) agree that they know all the players in their favorite team and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans, 3 (1.9%) strongly disagree that they know all the players in their favorite team and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans. This implies that most fans agree that they know all the players in their favorite team and are satisfied with making referrals to potential football fans.

Table 9: Chi square

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.008 ^a	6	.009
Likelihood Ratio	17.579	6	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	.406	1	.524
N of Valid Cases	256		

Source: Researcher (2017)

The objective sought to determine the influence of brand awareness on customer satisfaction among female football fans in public university. A hypothesis was formulated with the assumption of no significant effect. The results in table 4.36 show that the value of test statistic is 17.008. The p-value of the test statistic is p=0.009 since the p-value is less than the chosen level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between brand awareness and customer satisfaction.

4. CONCLUSION

The current study contributes to both the scholarly and practitioner worlds. As an academitioner it is believed that bridging academic theory with sport business industry application is a key approach to problem-solving and approaching business challenges in sport and entertainment with innovative, actionable solutions. By listening to the nuances of women as women first and their influential consumer behaviors second, the data in this study enables the researcher to connect respondents responses to corporate brands and future partnerships that deliver business solutions based on this feedback from female football fans games.

The issue facing football clubs, therefore, is which female sports fans they should try to attract. Here, football clubs may find themselves in a dilemma. Clubs that decide to orient themselves according to the more traditional, and arguably stereotypical, view of the female football fan would take steps to emphasize the family friendly aspects of their sport highlight improvements in terms of infrastructure and fan safety and seek to leverage on the potential civilizing influence of female fans. Such an approach, however, would inevitably, in the case of more established sports, involve a certain shift away from the sport’s traditional base, a move that is likely to be met by opposition from some of the more long standing fans, be they male or female. On the other hand, clubs may fear that to adopt strategies that address the concerns of the more serious modern female fan, the fan whose primary interest is in the sport itself and not the packaging that surrounds it, may prevent them from being sufficiently innovative to reach out to more family oriented female fans, an admittedly lucrative market’. To further complicate the issue, the modern fan may also be a mother and even a single mother and so demands that her chosen sport addresses her needs in a holistic fashion.

The researcher suggest that regardless of the approach football club may wish to take, clubs can attract and retain more female fans if they do the following; recognize the existence of female fans, listen to what they have to say, look to and learn from other sports and act promptly by inviting and encouraging women to be part of their sports. While sports organizations should take the lead in engaging with female fans, the media, the legislature and female fans themselves can all play their part.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teams should be ready to sign world class players to ensure good performance because performance is one aspect of brand loyalty that leads to fans satisfaction.
- Football teams should design fitted jerseys for female fans with appealing colors as compared to the unisex jerseys they have
- Stadiums should be safer so that many female fans feel free to enjoy the game without any fear.
- Female fans should be used as ambassadors to promote the team to make sure these fans feel recognized and appreciated.

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