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A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMERS DECISION-MAKING AT DECATHLON SPORTS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED ANNA SALAI, CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT:

The study aimed to understand the influence of the brand image on consumer decision-making at Decathlon Sports India Private Limited, Anna Salai, Chennai. A strong brand image fosters trust and loyalty among consumers, enhancing brand loyalty and fostering long-term relationships. The objectives of the study included analysing brand recognition levels, studying the impact of brand image on consumer decision-making, evaluating the significance of the brand image on the consumer decision-making process and examining consumer perception of brand value. A simple random sampling method was used, and various data analysis tools were used, including frequency tables, diagrammatic presentations, pie charts, and statistical tools like T-test, ANOVA test, and Friedman test.

The study found a significant connection between brand image and consumer decision-making, emphasising the importance of maintaining a positive brand image. A positive brand image significantly influences consumer behaviour, leading to increased loyalty, word-of-mouth promotion, and ultimately higher revenue. The study reveals that 41% of respondents learned about Decathlon through friends and family, and they believe it offers quality products and services at reasonable prices. Decathlon is preferred by customers for sports equipment, and they continue to shop there even when prices rise.

Based on the findings, recommendations are made to enhance the influence of brand image on consumer decision-making at Decathlon Sports India Private Limited, Anna Salai, Chennai.

INTRODUCTION

BRAND IMAGE

Brand images are the perceptions and opinions of a brand over time, formed through product experiences and established brand identities. These images can differ significantly from the brand identity and are influenced by both internal and external factors. The way a consumer perceives a brand depends on their mental creation and can be influenced by other individuals' experiences and the brand's history. Brand image can also be influenced by time and a single positive or negative encounter. Generally, a brand's image develops through various experiences, viewpoints, ideas, and facts, forming a holistic view of the brand.

BRAND VALUE

Brand value is the monetary worth of a brand, including tangible and intangible assets. It includes factors like brand recognition, customer loyalty, perception, and market strength. Measured by revenue, consumer willingness to pay, and future earnings, brand value is crucial for businesses to boost customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and profitability.

CONSUMER DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The consumer decision-making process involves customers identifying their wants, obtaining information on the best ways to meet those needs, evaluating alternatives, choosing a product, and evaluating their purchase before making a purchase.

IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR :

Brand image significantly impacts consumer behaviour, with a positive image increasing recommendations and loyalty. It fosters trust between a brand and its consumers, fostering long-term relationships. A positive brand image encourages repeat business and referrals, while a negative one may lead to customers avoiding the company or even avoiding it altogether. A company's brand image can be positive or negative, influencing consumer behaviour and decision-making.

DECATHLON

The tagline '**Sport for all, all for sport**' effectively conveys the essence of Decathlon. Decathlon, the world's largest sporting goods company, is known for its customer-centric approach, innovation, and rapid expansion. Founded by French billionaire Michel Leclercqin in 1976, it has over 1600 stores in 50 countries and has expanded into the Asian market. With over 87,000 employees and 20 brands, Decathlon offers a wide range of sports items under one roof. The company's success is attributed to its unique business model, which includes private labels, R&D units, supply chains, and sales channels. Decathlon aims to make sports accessible and inclusive for all, unlike other premium brands that cater to experts. Companies Mission is “**move people through the wonders of sport**”.The company is expanding globally to convert beginners into lifetime customers, offering an extensive product range, affordable prices, and a customer-centric approach.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The market is saturated with competitors offering similar products, and customer decisions are influenced by psychological, social, and cultural factors. Brand image plays a significant role in customer decision-making. Merchants face challenges in maintaining brand identities due to competition and changing consumer expectations, because before making a purchase, retail buyers give careful consideration to a product's brand name or image. Around 71% of European retail buyers prefer brands with a strong industry reputation. This study aims to determine if brand image influences consumer decision-making and the relationship between them.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the level of brand recognition among consumers.
- To study the impact of brand image on consumer decision - making.
- To evaluate the significance of the brand image on the consumer decision - making process.
- To examine the consumer's perception of brand value.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Durrani, Baseer Ali, Godil, Danish Iqbal, Bai, Mirza Uzair, Sajid, San (2015)** the study explores the influence of brand image on teenagers' buying behaviour, revealing a correlation between advertisement, brand loyalty, and brand image, suggesting marketers can develop targeted marketing strategies to better target teenagers.
- **Ramamoorthy.R (2019)** the study highlights the influence of consumer opinion, family, friends, and reference groups on brand selection, suggesting that brands need improvements, innovation, and differentiation for success.
- **Dr. Supriya Singh (2022)** the research on brand image impacts consumer buying behavior in Katni city on OTC products. Global footprint is a significant factor, with customers choosing brands they've used for days due to trust and experience. Global footprint products are crucial for convenience and accessibility.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis 1 : There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers.

Hypothesis 2 : There is a significant mean difference between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipments.

Hypothesis 3 : There is no significant difference between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers.

Hypothesis 4 : There is a significant mean difference in the consumer's perception of brand value across different age groups.

SOURCES OF DATA

The data collected from both primary and secondary data

Primary data :

This study used original, specific primary data collected directly from the source, specifically from customers at Decathlon branch in Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai.

Secondary data :

This study utilized secondary data from existing sources like journals, books, internet, and related articles, which can be reused for other research purposes.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The researcher utilised data analysis tools like frequency tables and diagrammatic presentations, including pie charts, and statistical tools like the T-test, ANOVA test, and Friedman test, using SPSS software to analyse the study's factors.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

- **T - TEST :**

The independent samples t-test is a statistical method used to compare two unrelated groups, assessing significant differences in means and determining if the difference is statistically significant or random.

- **ANOVA TEST :**

Analysis of variance, or ANOVA is a statistical technique used to compare differences between means or components, allowing multiple comparisons of populations and comparing variation within each sample.

- **FRIEDMAN TEST :**

The Friedman test is a non-parametric statistical test used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of three or more paired groups. It is commonly used when the data are ordinal or ranked and the assumptions of parametric tests such as ANOVA are not met.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table No. 1 Gender of the respondents

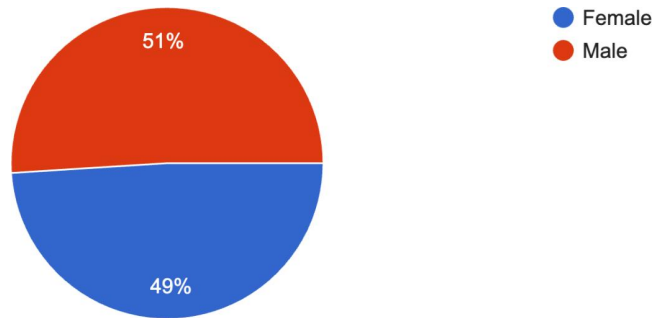
Gender	Frequency	In Percentage
Male	51	51
Female	49	49
Total	100	100

Source : primary Data

Interpretation:

The above table reveals that out of 100 respondents, 51% of the respondents are Male and the remaining 49% of the respondents are Female. Therefore, the majority of the respondents are Male.

Diagram No. 1 Gender of the respondents



Source : Primary Data

Table No. 2 Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	In Percentage
Below 20	5	5
20 - 34 Years	86	86
35 - 50 Years	7	7
Above 50	2	2
Total	100	100

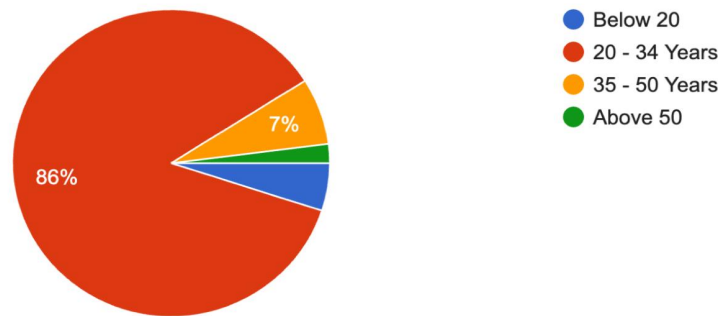
Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents, 86% of the respondents fall under the age group of 20 - 34 Years, 7% of the respondents fall under the age group of 35 - 40 Years, 5% of the respondents fall under the age group of Below 20 and 2% of the respondents fall under the age group of Above 50.

Therefore, the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 - 34 Years.

Diagram No.4.2 Age of the respondents



Source : Primary Data

Table No. 3 Monthly Family Income of the respondents

Monthly Family Income	Frequency	In Percentage
Below Rs. 15,000	21	21
Rs. 15,000 - Rs. 34,000	29	29
Rs. 35,000 - Rs. 55,000	18	18
Above Rs. 55,000	32	32
Total	100	100

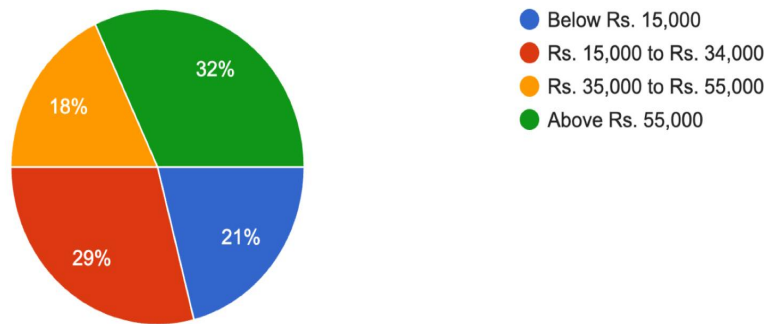
Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents, 32% of the respondents earn an income above Rs. 55,000 per month, 29% of the respondents earn an income of Rs. 15,000 - Rs. 34,000 per month, 21% of the respondents earn an income below Rs. 15,000 per month, and 18% of the respondents earn an income of Rs. 35,000 - Rs. 55,000 per month.

Therefore, the majority of the respondents earn an income above Rs. 55,000 per month.

Diagram No. 2 Monthly Family Income of the respondents



Source : Primary Data

Table no. 4 The level of brand recognition among consumers

Brand recognition among consumers	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Decathlon advertisement noticed recently	24	24	32	32	23	23	14	14	7	7

Decathlon products are widely recognised	37	37	43	43	16	16	4	4	-	-
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Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents,

- Decathlon advertisements noticed recently :** 56% of the respondents agreed that they have noticed Decathlon advertisements recently, 23% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 21% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that they have noticed Decathlon advertisements recently.
- Decathlon products are widely recognised :** 80% of the respondents agreed that Decathlon products are widely recognised, 16% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 4% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Decathlon products are widely recognised.

Table No. 5 The impact of brand image on consumer decision-making

Impact of brand image on consumer decision - making	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Decathlon Provides high quality products to its consumers	41	41	46	46	13	13	1	1	-	-
Decathlon provides quality service to its consumers	43	43	36	36	16	16	4	4	1	1
Decathlon is always preferred by customers when it comes to sports equipment	37	37	37	37	24	24	2	2	-	-

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents,

- Decathlon Provides high quality products to its consumers :** 87% of the respondents agreed that Decathlon provides high quality products to its consumers, 13% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Decathlon provides high quality products to its consumers.

- 2) **Decathlon provides quality service to its consumers** : 79% of the respondents agreed that Decathlon provides quality service to its consumers, 16% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 5% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Decathlon provides quality service to its consumers.
- 3) **Decathlon is always preferred customers when it comes to sports equipment** : 74% of the respondents agreed that Decathlon is always preferred customers when it comes to sports equipment, 24% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 2% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Decathlon is always preferred by customers when it comes to sports equipment.

Table No. 6 The significance of brand image on consumer decision-making process

Significance of brand image on consumer decision - making process	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Consumers switch from decathlon to another brand if they receive a promotional offer	22	22	40	40	30	30	7	7	1	1
Decathlon products reflect the social status of its consumers	21	21	42	42	28	28	7	7	2	2
Consumers continue to shop at Decathlon even when the price rises	26	26	32	32	31	31	8	8	3	3

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents,

- 1) **Consumers switch from decathlon to another brand if they receive a promotional offer** : 62% of the respondents agreed that Consumers switch from decathlon to another brand if they receive a promotional offer, 30% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 8% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Consumers switch from decathlon to another brand if they receive a promotional offer.
- 2) **Decathlon products reflect the social status of its consumers** : 63% of the respondents agreed that Decathlon products reflect the social status of its consumers, 28% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 9% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Decathlon products reflect the social status of its consumers.
- 3) **Consumers continue to shop at Decathlon even when the price rises** : 58% of the respondents agreed that they continue to shop at Decathlon even when the price rises, 31% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, 11% of the respondents disagree with the same. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that they continue to shop at Decathlon even when the price rises.

Table No. 7 The factors contributing to positive brand value

The factors contributing to	Frequency	In Percentage
Quality products or services	63	63
Ethical business practices	7	7
Open communication and	7	7
Strong customer relationship	13	13
Positive brand image	10	10
Total	100	100

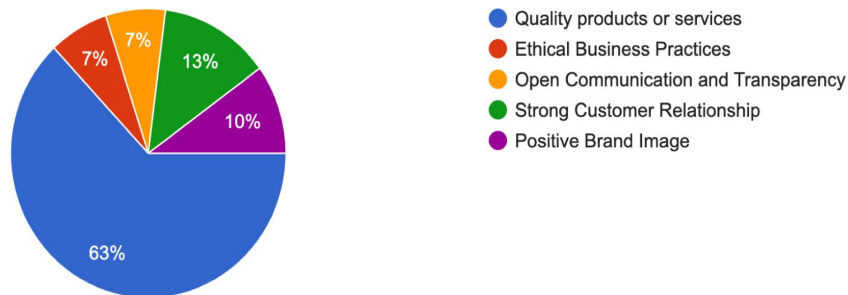
Source : Primary Data

Interpretation :

The above table shows that out of 100 respondents, 63% of the respondents said that quality products or services contribute to positive brand value, 13% of the respondents said that strong customer relationship contributes to positive brand value, 10% of the respondents said that positive brand image contributes to positive brand value, 7% of the respondents said that ethical business practices contributes to positive brand value, 7% of the respondents said that open communication and transparency contributes to positive brand value.

Therefore, the majority of the respondents said that quality products or services contribute to positive brand value.

Diagram No. 3 The factors contributing to positive brand value



Source : Primary Data

T-TEST

H₀ : There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers.

H_a : There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers.

Table No. 8 (i) Results of T-Test between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Decathlon products are widely recognised	Male	51	4,24	0,839	0,117
	Female	49	3,98	0,803	0,115

Source : Computed Data

Table No. 8 (ii) Results of T-Test between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers

		Levene's Test Equality of		T - Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence	
									Lower	Upper
Decathlon products are widely recognised	Equal Variances	3,620	0,060	1,556	98	0,123	0,256	0,164	-0,070	0,582
	Equal variances			1,557	97,999	0,123	0,256	0,164	-0,070	0,582

Source : Computed Data

Interpretation :

Since the calculated value (1.556) is lesser than the table value {Critical Value} (1.984), the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, there is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the level of brand recognition among consumers.

FRIEDMAN TEST

H₀ : There is no significant mean difference between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipment.

H_a : There is a significant mean difference between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipments.

Table No. 9 (i) Results of Friedman Test between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipments.

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Rank
Decathlon provides high quality products	100	4,14	0,910	1,98
Decathlon provides high quality services	100	4,26	0,691	2,13
Decathlon is always preferred by consumers for sports equipment	100	4,07	0,832	1,90

Source : Computed Data Interpretation :

From the above table, we can conclude that Decathlon is always preferred by consumers for sports equipment, which is the most influencing factor among all with a mean value of 4.07; the second most influencing factor among all is that Decathlon provides high-quality products with a mean value of 4.14; and the least influencing factor among all is that Decathlon provides high-quality services with a mean value of 4.26.

Table No. 9 (ii) Results of Friedman Test between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipments.

N	101
Chi - Square	6,213
df	2
Asymp. Sig	0,045

Source : Computed Data

Interpretation :

Since the calculated value (6.213) is greater than the table value (5.991), the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.. So, there is a significant mean difference between the quality of Decathlon products and services and consumer preference for Decathlon products for sports equipments.

ANOVA TEST

H₀ : There is no significant difference between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers.

H_a : There is a significant difference between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers.

Table No. 10 (i) Results of ANOVA Test between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers

Occupation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self Employed	12	3,75	0,866
Full Time Employed	37	3,92	0,829
Part Time Employed	7	3,14	1,345
Homemaker	5	3,80	1,095
Students / Academics	39	3,59	0,938
Total	100	3,71	0,935

Source : Computed Data

Table No. 10 (ii) Results of ANOVA Test between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers

	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between	4,490	4	1,123	1,299	0,276
Within Groups	82,100	95	0,864		
Total	86,590	99			

Source : Computed Data

Interpretation :

Since the calculated value (1.299) is lesser than the table value {Critical Value} (2.47), the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, there is no significant difference between the occupation of the respondents and the social status of Decathlon products compared to its consumers.

FRIEDMAN TEST

H₀ : There is no significant mean difference in the consumer's perception of brand value across different age groups.

H_a : There is a significant mean difference in the consumer's perception of brand value across different age groups.

Table No. 11 (i) Results of Friedman Test between the age of the respondents and the consumer's perception of brand value

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Rank
Age	100	2,06	0,445	1,01
Decathlon consistently delivers high quality products and services	100	4,11	0,723	1,99

Source : Computed Data

Interpretation :

From the above calculation, it was noted that the respondents were highly satisfied with the quality products and services offered by Decathlon to meet their expectations. The significant mean value was 4.11, which was considered favourable among different age categories of consumers.

Table No. 11 (ii) Results of Friedman Test between the age of the respondents and the consumer's perception of brand value

N	100
Chi - Square	98,000
df	1
Asymp. Sig	0,000

Source : Computed Data

Interpretation :

Since the calculated value (98.000) is greater than the table value (6.635), the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So, there is a significant mean difference in the consumer's perception of brand value across different age groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- Awareness about the Decathlon is majority through Family and Friends.
- According to majority of the respondents Decathlon consistently provides high quality products and services that meet the consumers expectations.
- Most of the consumers prefer Decathlon products when it comes to sports equipment.
- 63% of the respondents feel that Decathlon products reflect their social status.
- Respondents feel that quality products and services contribute to the positive brand value.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decathlon should utilise various advertising channels such as television, newspapers, etc, to reach a large customer base and enhance brand recognition among consumers.
- To further familiarise the brand, more events and collaborations with businesses should be conducted.
- Decathlon can effectively utilise on screen advertising to engage a captive audience, creating a comfortable environment where customers can fully focus on the ads, thus enhancing brand recognition and generating more sales.
- Decathlon should increase the number of employees in their store which is located in Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai, in order to offer a more personalised customer experience and enhance its brand image.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- A larger sample survey could uncover new segments with enhanced analytical possibilities.

- As this research is conducted only in Decathlon Sports India private Limited, which is located in Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai, it would be better to conduct further research in other Decathlon stores, which are located in various locations.
- As this research is conducted only to determine the influence of brand image on consumer decision-making, it would be better if further research were conducted on other factors that influence consumer decision-making.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that brand image significantly influences consumer decision-making and there is an intense connection between brand image and consumer decision-making. A positive brand image is formed through emotional and psychological relationships, leading to increased customer loyalty, word-of-mouth promotion, and higher revenue. Consumers often perceive the brand image as reflecting their social status, leading to increased spending. A good brand image results in high-quality goods and services, creating positive brand value. Companies should use various marketing strategies and advertisements to engage with consumers and enhance brand awareness. This study concludes that brand image is a significant factor in consumer decision-making and the relationship between brand image and consumer decision-making is highly significant, emphasising the importance of maintaining a positive brand image.

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