Survey of Internet Brand and Website Features and Assessment of Its Impact on Customer Loyalty
(Case study: Internet buyers of Laptop)

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ABSTRACT

In terms of economic and strategic, brands are as valuable assets in companies. Thus basic purpose of their businesses is to have loyal customers. The importance of creating and maintaining of customer loyalty has become marketing main concentration. High level of customer loyalty to the brand cause to create a competitive advantage for companies and positive impact on increase revenue brand and reduce marketing costs. The main objective in this study is survey of internet brand and website features and assessment of its impact on customer loyalty. This study is applied research. In terms of technique and execution, this study is descriptive - analytical research with emphasis on correlation branch and has been done as field. In the study internet customers of laptop products in Tehran have been considered as statistical society that 100 customers were selected as direct and accessible nonprobability. Measurement tool was questionnaire and effect and relationship between variables was evaluated by Pearson correlation and Regression test. Research findings show that there is relationship between websites features and customer loyalty and Features of the internet brand is an effective on customer loyalty.

KEYWORDS: Loyalty to the Brand, Website, Internet Shopping, Laptop.

1. INTRODUCTION

Compete in the global arena requires planning and implementing competitive strategies. One of the issues raised in each country's economy is achieving to a sustainable growth in long term (Gilaninia,et al,2012). Rapid changes in today's world, organizations are faced with different challenges, but organizations are successful that to help management tools and new technologies use from created opportunities to their benefit (Zanjirdar & et al, 2008, p10). Electronic commerce (EC) environment is one of these tools. That Internet-based e-commerce environment, this will enable customers to search for information and purchasing goods and services through direct contact with Internet shops. Today the internet as a powerful medium has been provided in advertising industry (Gilaninia & et al, 2011). Internet shopping is not based on actual experience of purchasing goods; but rather it is based on appearances, such as image, shape, qualitative information and advertising of goods. With the increasing spread of the internet in various affairs of life, one of the proposed topics is customer trust to conduct transactions using the internet that has been considered by many agencies and clients, and so many researches has been done to support the establishment of internet shopping (Saeednia, 2007, p. 45). Characteristics of web site effect on customer behavior and nowadays, trading needs to make a strategy for brand (Rowley, 2004, p.236; Javanmard and others, 2009). The most important characteristics of the website are: menus providing, website security, website color harmonies, layout and images composition (Griffith, 2005). Designing of websites is essential to promote the brand of a company. If a company considers its brand name only as a word, the role of the brand name in marketing would not be deeply understood by the company (Ismaeelpour, 2007, p. 190). After the presence of the company in internet, the internet can be used as a tool for advertising and then can help to promote the company and its products and services. Selling to customers are the most important aspects of the internet for companies and this aspect occurs when the deal is done over the internet and customer payments are received. Companies can use information networks to sell their products and make new direct distribution channels that customers can purchase whatever they are interested. The internet makes that even small companies are able to communicate with customers all around the world (Ismaeelpour, 2005, p.361-362). Loyalty is the result of favorable attitude towards a brand than other trademarks and repeat purchase. Website establishment is new opportunities and those characteristics that may impact on customers need to be identified and should be designed and managed optimally (Laurence, 2008). Websites have great role in business because they are very influential in promoting the image of brand, but most companies do not properly know the basics of electronic-commerce.

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This research aims to investigate the relationship between characteristics of internet brand and websites on the customer loyalty.

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

With increasing competition in trade, rapid technological changes and increasing power and consumer choice, the success will depend on the ability of the companies which capable to understand customer expectations and values, and respond them favorably (Wang & et al,2004). Currently, many organizations invest in create their own websites to deliver marketing messages (Gilanini & et al, 2011). Todays, information technology and communication has been the orientation of economic, social and cultural development in different countries. Electronic commerce is one of the most important factors of communication and information technology revolution in economic and emergence of the internet in recent decades changed the traditional trade (Ebadi & Eftekhari, 2007). E-commerce has opened a new field due to the speed, efficiency, reduce costs and exploit fleeting opportunities in the competition, one of the most important steps in planning for electronic commerce is identify its application obstacles in organizations(Gilaninia & et al,2011). Understanding the environment and the necessity of dealing with issues Arising from the pressures arising from environmental variables (Gilaninia & et al, 2011). Generally, the internet has caused different environment in business. Internet has conflicting effects to make and maintain relationships with customers. Internet enters companies in the global area and allows them to attract customers quickly and with minimal cost. On the other hand, it faces the industry with increasing competition and makes it difficult to maintain the customer for long time. Thus, one of the aspects of the success in the virtual world is the growth of the internet users and purchasers to provide a good environment and suitable products to their intrest (Babaei & Ahadi, 2010). Internet and initialize the digital century has created massive changes in various aspects of economic activity (Gilaninia & et al, 2011).

Considering the reasons for the importance of professional presence in internet, such as increasing credit availability at any time and place, comfort to refer new customers referred by others, increasing the value of advertising, communication with potential customers, and growth of brand credibility, and in order to achieve loyalty of customers, a website needs some certain characteristics. Generally, experts have divided the characteristics into six categories, including customer-related factors, factors relating to the website, company's affairs, business special model, internet-specific factors and factors related to government laws. Moreover, through the customer view website characteristics has been divided into three categories, including the quality of information, information security and quality of communication (Bansal et al, 2007). Trusting to a brand is important to increase customer loyalty in the network. For instance, when trust to brand is low while the satisfaction of the product and service is high, it results no effect on satisfaction and the trust to the brand could change customer satisfaction to loyalty (Youal Ha, 2004). However, previous studies have also shown that many unsatisfied consumers prefer to change brands or suppliers and tell friends or families about their bad purchase experience than to voice their dissatisfaction to companies (Day & Ash, 2007, Taleghani,Gilaninia & et al ,2011).The results show that the brand image has a special effect on customer's understanding of the quality and services of products. In all studies has been accepted the importance of customer loyalty in corporate profitability and about the correlation between loyalty and profitability have been conducted useful studies as theoretical and practical (Reicheld, 1999،Sasser ،Oliver). Researchers have suggested that customer loyalty has positive effect on profitability, and thereby also helping to reduce business costs and by increasing sales per customer. Reduced marketing costs occur due to that maintenance costs of loyal customer are lower than customer attraction. Service cost after sales to former customers is less than new customers (Rafig, 2005). Because keeping old customers is four to six times less costly than creating new customers, manager is better first priority for create a strategy that develops and maintains loyalty to brands(Mowen, Minor,2010). Today's contrary to our expectations, Internet is such another. Many primary dot coms are bankrupt and few of them have been able to profit through the web (Madhoushi & et al, 2005). Companies should have compared to effect of brand image on customer loyalty and therefore pay more attention to profitability. Companies found that they have their marketing strategies and branding again define according unique characteristics of the Internet and its capacity to change previous results (Ibeh, et al, 2005). Sometimes specific brands are more than product or service a symbol, a reminder of a particular person, special status or big idea (Pourkhasalian, 2007). So website design and to promote the brand was very important in organization and the website must be considered aspects of the technical and theoretical (Khaleghi, Davarpanah, 2004). A brand image has important role in attracting and retain of employees and customers (Ronasi, 2007). With increasing number of internet users, usage of this interactive tool as an effective part in purchasing decisions and actions, has attracted the attention of researchers and scholars (Didier & Robertson, 2006). Because nearly 72 percent of internet users at least once a month to pay online to search for different commodities (Meuter, Bitner, Ostorm & Stephen, 2005). In other hand business world, there are many factors that affect the decision and intend to purchase through websites. Factors such as lack of security in internet networks, low consumer confidence, cyber shopping, site quality and its

design especially in product presentation and product information is the cause customer disinclination to do internet shopping (Yazdanparast, Ardestani, 2007).

Thus main question is express so is there relationship between internet brand and website features on customer loyalty?

So present study is based on research that Caruana T Ewing (2010) and Brodie and et al (2009), and Javanmard & et al (2009) conducted a new conceptual model for this research has been presented as following:
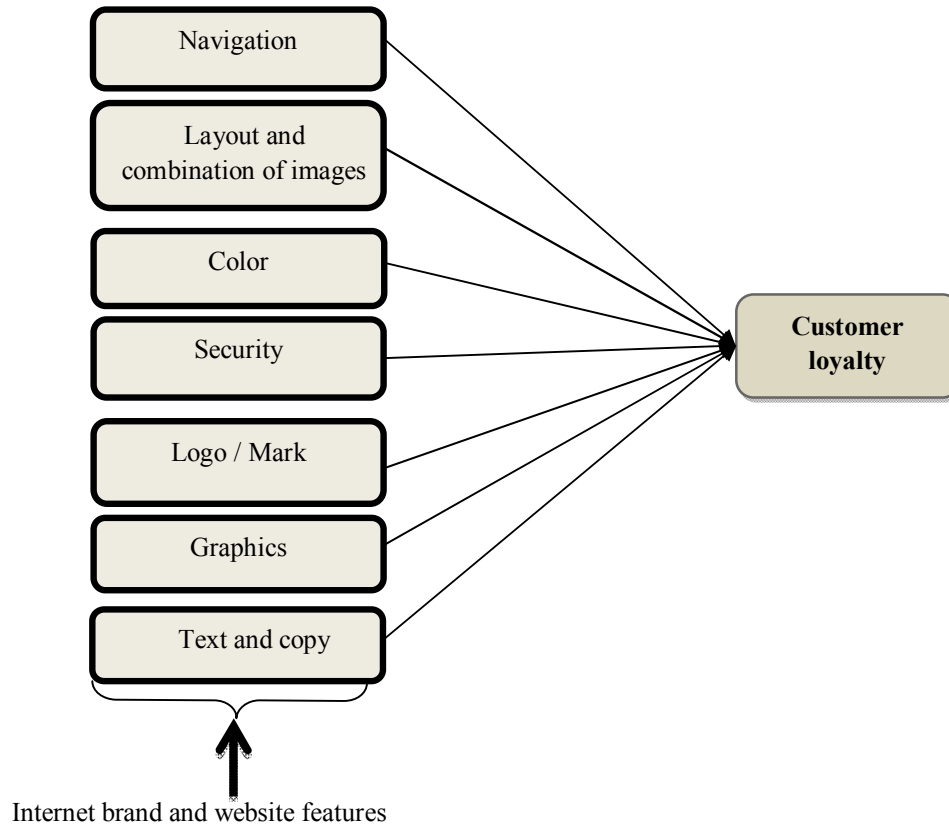
Fig (1) Conceptual model of research

Internet brand and website features:

1) Navigation: Theoretically, there are many ways to design a website structure. This structure may be different for each user. In any case, must be designed such that for fixed customers or customers who are familiar with the goods and services desired easily be applicable. This means that to most convenient form and with the least number of clicks to reach the desired page**.** Such a structure will have a direct impact on increasing customer confidence (Griffith, 2005, p1394).

2) Layout and combination of images: The overall design of the website can also be used as a symbol and a factor influencing the customer perceived. In addition to easily access the desired page based on well-designed structure, the apparent attraction the website are also effective in customer trust. Research has shown that form of images, graphics, buttons, menu forms, letters and format compatible with the images had an impact on customer perception and this overall layout could convey a general feeling to the customer (Javanmard & et al,2009).

3) Color: Color is considered emotional and mental component in the design and communications in each company. Even unconsciously, consumers their daily purchasing decisions are adopted based on their attitude compared to color. People tend to paint certain authentication. Marketers use from color to identify a brand, showing a mode or create, convey a specific associated and distinct brand from other (Roosta & et al, 2011). But to difference of color will vary attend for products, services and customers. For example, in products and services special for children are used colors of splendid combination (Sijun et al, 2009, p.611).

4) Security: Security is key factor for creating customer trust, sentences and phrases in the website is show to keep policies in relation customers and also use of trusted third companies to reduce customer concerns because

customers always are concerned provide financial information and their privacy on the internet. To resolve this problem, organizations can increase customer confidence with clarification their policies and ability (Bansal,et al,2007,p869).

5) Logo / Mark: Logo is graphical component used to identify the company, service or product. Also it is a sign, symbol or image distinct (usually for company or trade name) is that has permanent use and somehow to protect against abuse of other companies is converted to trademark logos are immediately identifiable and act as "brand ambassadors"; because as undeniable represents organization or specific brand (Mohammadian, 2010). Image a company is very significant impact in internet branding, in addition to shape, position and motion of logo and presence of logo in all pages in main website.

6) Graphics: Graphic images, logos and animation, which are displayed as a visual, enhance brand value and re-visit the corporate website users (Madhoushi & et al, 2005, p79).

7) Text and copy: Text along with company logo on the website, must to deduce a message of reasonable, understandable and relevant for creation confidence of customers and website visitors. Text along with logo helps to people for moving a correct understanding of brand identity and increasingly can strengthen brand value. This message speaks to a customer. Of course must be considered to style of letters and words and also be selected carefully, because has helped to good relationship with customers and cause their attention (Sepehri & Asadi, 2006, Pp5-7).

Internet customers' loyalty:
   Loyalty is achieved from more favorable attitude compared to a brand compared to other brands and repeat purchase behavior (Palmer, 2001, p125). By definition of Inter- brand institution, loyalty is acquisition continuous support for a brand; when this brand offers distinct and important benefits that cause repeat customers to buy it. Create loyalty to successfully be changed the term "brand that I used" to "my brand".

3. Research hypotheses
1- There is relationship between Navigation and loyalty of Internet customers.
2- There is relationship between Layout and combination of images and loyalty of Internet customers.
3- There is relationship between website color and loyalty of Internet customers.
4- There is relationship between website Security and loyalty of Internet customers.
5- There is relationship between website Logo / Mark and loyalty of Internet customers.
6- There is relationship between website Graphics and loyalty of Internet customers.
7- There is relationship between website Text and copy with logo and loyalty of Internet customers.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

   Terms of objective of this study is applied research. In terms of method and implementation is descriptive - analytic study with emphasis on the correlation. In terms of monitoring type and degree of control in this study is among the field research. Internet customers of Laptop products are considered as the statistical society in Tehran. To calculate sample size and the reliability of the questionnaire was a pilot study with 30 samples. Sample standard deviation value 0.457 was obtained. Sample size with regard to the initial information that was obtained from a pilot study and was calculated using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{z_{\alpha/2}^2 \, s^2}{d^2}$$

Z is the normal value corresponding to α probable error and standard deviation s and d is the acceptable error. By putting α =0/05 and thus z=1/96 and d = 0.1 value n is equal to 80 that eventually the number of 100 questionnaires were distributed. In this study, sampling method is non-probability direct and accessible. To measure variables, questionnaire was used and content approach was used to show common measurement. In making questionnaire, the views of guide and consulting masters as well as experts were regarded. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to examine reliability of questionnaire. For this purpose was tested a primary sample included 30 questionnaire. The results are listed in table1. Results show that question has appropriate and high reliability coefficient.

Table (1) - Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of research variables

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Result
Navigation	.82	Reliable
Layout and combination of images	.71	Reliable
Color	.84	Reliable
Security	.76	Reliable
Logo / Mark	.76	Reliable
Graphics	.71	Reliable
Text and copy	.72	Reliable
Loyalty	.77	Reliable
Total variables	.81	Reliable

5. Data analysis
Table (2): Summary results of Pearson correlation coefficient test for hypotheses

hypotheses	Independent variable	Pearson correlation coefficient	Sig	Result
first hypothesis	Navigation	0.349	0.000	Confirmed
Second hypothesis	Layout and combination of images	0.196	0.041	Confirmed
Third hypothesis	Color	0.263	0.008	Confirmed
Fourth hypothesis	Security	0.197	0.049	Confirmed
Fifth hypothesis	Logo / Mark	0.189	0.039	Confirmed
Sixth hypothesis	Graphics	0.184	0.036	Confirmed
Seventh hypothesis	Text and copy	0.222	0.026	Confirmed

1- Test result of the first hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between Navigation and loyalty of Internet customers is equal to 34.9 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between Navigation and loyalty of Internet customers.

2- Test result of the second hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between Layout and combination of images and loyalty of internet customers is equal to 0.196 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between Layout and combination of images and loyalty of Internet customers.

3- Test result of the third hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between website color and loyalty of Internet customers is equal to 0.263 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between website color and loyalty of Internet customers.

4- Test result of the fourth hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between website security and loyalty of internet customers is equal to 0.197 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between website security and loyalty of Internet customers.

5- Test result of the fifth hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between website Logo / Mark and loyalty of Internet customers is equal to 0.189 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between website Logo / Mark and loyalty of Internet customers.

6- Test result of the sixth hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between website Graphics and loyalty of Internet customers is equal to 0.184 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between website Graphics and loyalty of Internet customers.

7- Test result of the sixth hypothesis: according to computation can be seen that the amount of correlation coefficient between website Text and copy with logo and loyalty of Internet customers is equal to 0.222 percent and given that a significant level is less than 5 percent. It can be said that there is relationship between website Text and copy with logo and loyalty of Internet customers.

Multiple regression testing was performed to determine the effectiveness of variables that results show; In examining simultaneously independent variables on the loyalty of Internet customers, all variables on loyalty of Internet customers at 0.05 level is acceptable and significant and also R^2 is equal to 0.559 that means almost 56 percent of the independent variables can be predicted to change the dependent variable.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

Results indicate that brand image has a particular impact on customer perceptions of quality products and services, and company validity is effective on customer perceptions and loyalty. In all studies has been accepted the importance of customer loyalty in creating corporate profitability and about the correlation between loyalty and profitability have been conducted a useful studies as theoretical and practical. Results from this study also show that there is relationship between brand internet features (websites) and customer loyalty and also affect. Thus the results of hypothesis testing are presented in the following suggestions:

1 - With regard to the first hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that website is designed such that for their customers and even those who first use of this website is simple and easily use. Since formation of positive experience is very important in first purchasing of companies products, so customers who buy their first products should be of particular interest. Therefore, companies should make efforts that in communicating with their customers create a positive experience in their mind. Customer familiarity with the web site can be his first encounter that in this area web site with a desirable characteristic is very important.

2- With regard to the second hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that for provide better service through the website and the impact on customer loyalty and attracting customers should be desirable website design. Therefore organizations should design their website with survey from their special customers about each indicator from indicators proposed in the analytical model. Website page should design the basic structure as apparent attractions and good design. As well as the addition the use of customers opinion can use from experienced designers and experts in the field of designing for website.

3- With regard to the third hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that because applying effect of appropriate color on the website not only in present study but rather in many studies been proved because this case also has a special effect of on all other indicators, it is necessary each organization and its customers, according to the type of product to have considered especially.

4- With regard to the fourth hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that with regard to Demands and culture of customers has considered more than anything the security and maintain information of customer and unerring in their website design.

5- With regard to the fifth hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that for design and formed of their website logo are used experienced designers in the field of web site and experts in the field of brand image and its features.

6- With regard to the sixth hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that website environment is an important communication tool and every day will be added to its value and in the future will be as one of the most important channels of communication with customers, thus, despite a favorable environment in website with order and beauty appearance and a proper graphics created good mentality on the customer.

7- With regard to the seventh hypothesis test results suggested to organizations and companies that Text and copy along with logo should be always reasonable and understandable message for customers that is caused creation of Customer loyalty and attract new customers and Identity and brand value is transferred to customers.

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