

Investigating The Intervening Role of E-Satisfaction in The Formation of E-Loyalty Among Online Apparel Shoppers

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Abstract

The current study investigates the effect of e-satisfaction in the formation of e-loyalty among online clothing customers. We evaluated four main hypotheses using empirical analysis, including the impact of recognisable brands, celebrity endorsements, and favourable pricing on e-satisfaction, as well as the overarching relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. The research population is limited to people between the ages of 20 and 55 residing in Hyderabad, Telangana, India. The participants are chosen using a convenience sampling procedure with a sample size of 150. The findings strongly confirm the assumptions, demonstrating that both well-known companies and celebrity endorsements have a considerable impact on e-satisfaction. Furthermore, while favourable pricing contributes to e-satisfaction, its impact is less than that of brand reputation and endorsements. Notably, e-satisfaction appeared as a critical intervening variable, with a strong and significant link to e-loyalty. The findings emphasise the importance of e-satisfaction in moulding e-loyalty, implying that businesses can deliberately spend in improving brand reputation, obtaining quality endorsements, and optimising price to maximise both e-satisfaction and eventual e-loyalty. These findings provide important insights for online clothing companies trying to increase consumer happiness and develop long-term loyalty.

Keywords: Brand, Product Endorser, Price, E-Satisfaction, E-Loyalty, Online Apparel Shoppers

Introduction

E-Satisfaction

Consumer experience in the e-commerce industry is heavily dependent on e-satisfaction. It is the degree of satisfaction that clients have from using a website, online platform, or e-commerce enterprise. Numerous factors, including website design, ease of use, product information, trust, security, and customer service, have all been linked to e-satisfaction, according to several studies. Investigations were conducted into the variables affecting e-satisfaction in the setting of online banking. The study found that e-satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty and repurchase propensity. This study looked at the variables affecting Taiwanese internet shoppers' e-satisfaction. The study found that e-satisfaction is significantly influenced by the perceived usefulness, ease of use, and quality of website design. The study also discovered that customer loyalty and inclination to repurchase are significantly impacted by e-satisfaction (Chou, Tzeng, and Chen, 2014).

Although cognitive computing research has the potential to deliver critical insights into best practises in e-commerce, the field is still in its infancy. As a result, many important scientific topics remain unexplored. E-satisfaction is one such example. In general, satisfaction is defined as pleasurable fulfilment. (Oliver & Richard 1997; Oliver & Richard 1999). In internet commerce, this concept demonstrates a trust-based model for consumer decision-making. The influence of trust and perceived risk on customer behaviour and decision-making in online purchase is the subject of this research review. The authors analyse the factors that determine trust and perceived risk, as well as their impact on e-satisfaction. The research provides useful insights into the aspects that influence consumer decision-making and e-satisfaction in internet commerce (Kim et al. 2008).

Examine the implications of web-based consumer impressions of brand experience. The emphasis of the literature review is the relationship between brand familiarity, brand satisfaction, and brand trust in the context of online brand experiences. This study analyses how these elements influence consumers' perceptions and attitudes regarding online brands, with an emphasis on the digital environment. The findings put light on the role of brand experience in influencing online consumer behavior and e-satisfaction (Ha and Perks, 2005).

The study focuses into the connection between customer loyalty and perceived e-service quality. The role of e-satisfaction as a mediating variable and technology adoption as a moderating variable in the link between e-service quality and customer loyalty is the focus of this review of the literature. The purpose of this study is to look into how consumers' perceptions of the quality of online services affect their satisfaction and, as a result, their loyalty to the e-service provider. The findings give light on the factors that influence consumer loyalty in the context of e-commerce, emphasising the significance of e-satisfaction and acceptance of technology (Riquelme and Roman, 2014).

E-Loyalty

Customer loyalty is of utmost importance, and many businesses implement customer loyalty programs to create or increase customer loyalty. This program is popular because it can significantly increase profits. The programs aim to increase sales revenues resulting from increased purchase/usage level or a broader range of products introduced, as well as to strengthen the brand's relationship with existing customers. Once a consumer develops brand or product loyalty, he or she will continue to purchase the same brand or product (Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Accordingly, the definition of customer loyalty is a strong will to consistently buy or use a particular product going forward, despite external factors and promotional campaigns that can encourage behaviour changes (Oliver, 2010).

In the context of online travel services, comprehension of the elements that drive consumer loyalty. The study looks into how different factors, such as perceived value, customer happiness, trust, perceived risk, and website quality, affect e-loyalty. The results enhance our understanding of the primary factors that influence customer loyalty in the online travel agency sector. (Huang, 2008).

E-loyalty is a metric that quantifies a consumer's commitment to an online brand or e-commerce website based on their propensity to return and refer others to the website. (Srinivasan, Anderson, & Ponnnavolu, 2002). The degree to which consumers are dedicated to maintaining their relationship with an online business is known as e-loyalty. (Yang & Peterson, 2004). The study reviews and synthesises consumer loyalty studies on commercial websites. The study presents an integrative approach to understand consumer loyalty determinants. The findings illuminate online consumer loyalty factors and present a comprehensive model for commercial website loyalty analysis (Toufaily et al., 2013)

Intervening Role of E-Satisfaction in the Formation of E-Loyalty

The authors investigate the factors that influence e-customer loyalty by proposing a model that incorporates online store image, perceived value, trust, and e-satisfaction. This study examines the influence of these variables on e-customer loyalty in the context of online shopping. The study suggests that e-satisfaction mediates the relationships between online store image, perceived value, trust, and consumer loyalty in the formation of e-loyalty (Chen and Hu, 2010). investigates the causes and determining elements of consumers' adoption of internet shopping. The study highlights the importance of e-satisfaction in the development of e-loyalty by showing that it mediates the relationship between perceived utility and e-loyalty. (Ha and Stoel, 2009). Emphasis on developing and validating a tool to gauge how well information-presenting web portals are considered by their users as a service. The aim of this research is to understand how consumers evaluate online portals' service quality and how this evaluation affects user behaviour. The study highlights the importance of e-satisfaction in affecting user loyalty towards web portals by showing that it functions as a mediator between perceived service quality and e-loyalty (Yang, et al., 2005)

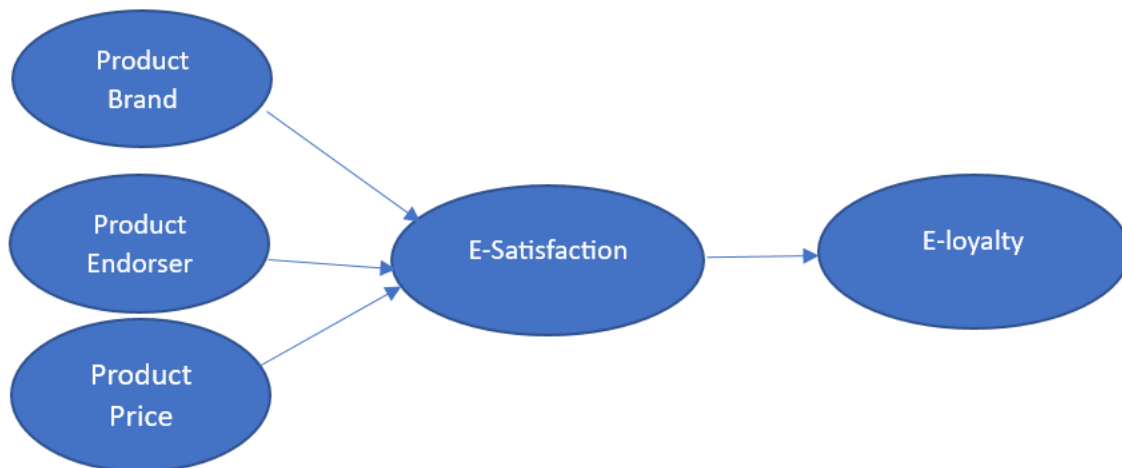
Research Question

What is the role of e-satisfaction in moderating the association between online shopping experiences and the formation of e-loyalty in the context of online apparel consumers, and what are the primary factors that drives e-satisfaction as a moderating process?

Objective of the study

- The study investigates the influence of a product's brand on e-satisfaction among online apparel shoppers.
- The study investigates the influence of a product endorser on e-satisfaction among online apparel shoppers.
- The influence of a price on e-satisfaction among online apparel shoppers.
- The study investigates the relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty among online shoppers of Apparels

Conceptual Framework



(Figure-1 Conceptual Model)

Literature Review

Product brand and E-Satisfaction

Product brand is an important factor that influences e-satisfaction among online shoppers. A strong brand can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by creating positive brand image and reputation (Liao & Lu, 2008; Wang & Emurian, 2005). For instance, Wang and Emurian (2005) found that brand reputation was positively related to e-satisfaction and customer loyalty among online shoppers of travel services. Similarly, Liao and Lu (2008) found that product brand was positively associated with e-satisfaction and trust among online shoppers of mobile phones in Taiwan. Moreover, a strong brand can help to reduce perceived risk and uncertainty among online shoppers, thereby increasing their confidence and satisfaction in the online purchase process (Koo & Ju, 2010).

However, the influence of product brand on e-satisfaction may vary depending on the type of product and the level of consumer involvement. For example, product brand may have a stronger impact on e-satisfaction and loyalty for high-involvement products such as electronic devices or luxury goods, compared to low-involvement products such as household items or groceries (Chiou & Ting, 2011; Yoo, Park, & MacInnis, 1998). Additionally, the influence of product brand on e-satisfaction may be influenced by other factors such as product quality, price, and perceived value (Huang & Kuo, 2013; Lee & Kim, 2008).

H₁: Online apparel shoppers experience higher levels of e-satisfaction when purchasing products that have a recognizable brand.

Product Endorser and E-Satisfaction

There is evidence in the literature that product endorsers can have an impact on the e-satisfaction of online shoppers. The use of celebrity endorsers in online advertisements can increase the perceived credibility and attractiveness of the advertised products, which in turn enhances customers' e-satisfaction with their online shopping experience (Luo and Wang, 2011). The use of online product reviews, as a form of social endorsement, positively influences the e-satisfaction of online shoppers. Overall, these studies suggest that product endorsers, whether they are celebrities or other customers, can contribute to the formation of e-satisfaction among online shoppers (Liu and Li, 2017).

The effect of product endorsers on consumer e-satisfaction when purchasing online. According to the findings, product endorsers have a favourable impact on consumers' e-satisfaction. The study also discovered that the endorser's perceived knowledge, trustworthiness, and beauty are crucial elements in the influence of product endorsers on e-satisfaction. The authors recommend that companies carefully select product endorsers in order to improve consumers' e-satisfaction and online buying experience (Kim and Park, 2013).

H2: Online apparel shoppers experience higher levels of e-satisfaction when purchasing products that are endorsed by recognizable endorsers.

Product Price and E-Satisfaction

A study examined the impact of product price on e-satisfaction in the context of online shopping. The results showed that consumers' perception of product price has a significant impact on their e-satisfaction. The authors suggest that firms should carefully consider their pricing strategy to enhance consumers' e-satisfaction and increase online sales (Zhang and von Dran, 2002). Furthermore, a study investigated the effect of perceived fairness of product price on e-satisfaction in the context of online fashion shopping. The results showed that perceived fairness of product price has a positive influence on consumers' e-satisfaction. The authors suggest that firms should focus on the perceived fairness of their product price to enhance consumers' e-satisfaction and loyalty (Ahmad, Musa, and Harun, 2019).

H3: When the price of a product is favorable, online apparel shoppers tend to experience higher levels of e-satisfaction.

E-Satisfaction and E-Loyalty

The study looks at how brand attitudes can affect the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially when there are different levels of product involvement. The study shows how important it is to look at how people are involved with a product when looking at the link between brand attitudes, customer happiness, and loyalty (Suh and Yi, 2006). This study investigates the impact of e-satisfaction as a mediator and technological acceptance as a moderator on the association between perceived e-service quality and customer loyalty and elucidates the role of e-satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between perceived e-service quality and customer loyalty. Additionally, it examines the potential moderating effect of technology acceptance on this relationship (Riquelme and Román, 2014).

H4: Satisfied online apparel shopper tend have higher level of e-loyalty

Methodology

A questionnaire was used to gather and analyse data in order to evaluate the proposed conceptual model. The research population is limited to people between the ages of 20 and 55 residing in Hyderabad, Telangana, India. The participants are chosen using a convenience sampling procedure with a sample size of 150. The questionnaire includes questions on factors of online shopping experience like product brand, product endorser, product price. The question also addresses the e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. All responses are scored on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. The structure equation Model is utilised to put the hypothesis to the test.

Data Analysis

Reliability and Validity

Measured Indicator		Constructs	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
BI	<---	Brand Influence	0.942	0.955	0.878
BI	<---	Brand Influence	0.862		
BI	<---	Brand Influence	1.003		
PE	<---	Product Endorser	0.975	0.885	0.722
PE	<---	Product Endorser	0.828		
PE	<---	Product Endorser	0.729		
PI	<---	Price Influence	0.963	0.802	0.846
PI	<---	Price Influence	0.875		
ES	<---	E-Satisfaction	0.76	0.893	0.786
ES	<---	E-Satisfaction	0.887		
ES	<---	E-Satisfaction	0.997		
EL	<---	E-Loyalty	0.826	0.797	0.826
EL	<---	E-Loyalty	0.985		

(Table -1: Reliability and Average Variance Extracted of Variables)

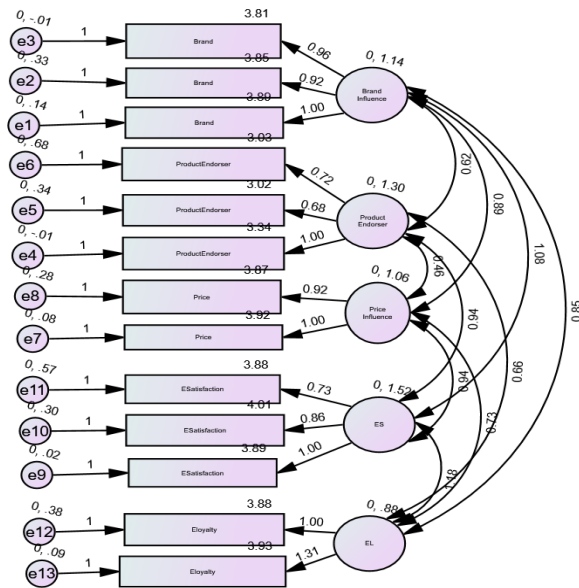
The Brand Influence metric consists of three indicators. These indicators have high standard factor loadings, ranging from 0.862 to 1.003. These high factor loadings indicate that all three indicators are strongly associated with the "Brand Influence" concept. The composite reliability of 0.95 indicates that the "Brand Influence" construct is extremely reliable. The variance explained by these indicators is substantial, supporting the convergent validity of the construct, as indicated by the AVE of 0.877. The concept of "Product Endorser" is assessed through the utilisation of three indicators. The factor loadings for these indicators range from 0.729 to 0.975, as determined through standardisation. The aforementioned figures suggest a moderate to strong correlation between these variables and the notion of "Product Endorser". The internal consistency of the "Product Endorser" construct is indicated by the composite reliability value of 0.885. The average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.722, albeit slightly below than the required threshold of 0.7, suggests that these indicators collectively provide a reasonable level of explanation for the variability observed in the "Product Endorser" construct. Two indicators are used to quantify "Price Influence" Both indicators have high standardised factor loadings (0.87 and 0.963, respectively), indicating a significant relationship with the "Price Influence" construct. The acceptable composite reliability of 0.802 indicates adequate internal consistency within the construct. The AVE of 0.846 indicates that these indicators collectively account for a substantial proportion of the variance in the "Price Influence" construct. Three indicators measure "E-Satisfaction". These indicators have substantial relationships with the "E-Satisfaction" construct, with standardised factor loadings of 0.76 to 0.997. Within the "E-Satisfaction" construct, composite reliability of 0.893 indicates high internal consistency. The AVE of 0.786 suggests that these measures explain a lot of "E-Satisfaction" variance. Two indicators measure e-loyalty. Both indicators had 0.826 and 0.985 standardised factor loadings, demonstrating a high association with "E-Loyalty". The composite dependability of 0.797 implies "E-Loyalty" has good internal consistency. These indicators explain a lot of the variance in "E-Loyalty" with an AVE of 0.826

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Fit Indices	Recommended	Observed
CMIN	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	4.02
CFI	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	0.94
TLI	> 0.9	0.97
PNFI	> 0.5	0.504
RMSEA	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent	0.064

(Table- 2: Fit Indices Model of Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

A CMIN (Chi-Square Statistic) value of 4.019 indicates an acceptable, albeit subpar, level of model fit. As sample size influences the Chi-Square statistic, a greater number of observations may lead to an increased Chi-Square value. The established thresholds delineate that a value exceeding 5 is deemed abhorrent, exceeds 3 as acceptable, and surpasses 1 as excellent. The observed value is within the permissible range. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.947 marginally falls short of meeting the criterion for an exceptional fit, which is set above 0.95. This indicates that the model fits the data reasonably well, albeit marginally below the optimal level. When evaluating the fit of a model against a null model, CFI assigns values closer to 1 to represent a more optimal fit. A TLI value of 0.97 is deemed satisfactory because it exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.9. This index signifies that, considering the model's complexity, the model demonstrates a satisfactory correspondence with the data. The obtained PNFI (Parsimonious Normed Fit Index) value of 0.504 marginally exceeds the suggested threshold of 0.5. This indicates that the model striking a balance between quality of fit and model complexity is adequately parsimonious. With a value of 0.064, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) falls within the permissible range of values between 0.06 and 0.08. RMSEA values below 0.05 are regarded as exceptional, suggesting that the model may benefit from refinements to better approximate the data.



(Figure-2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

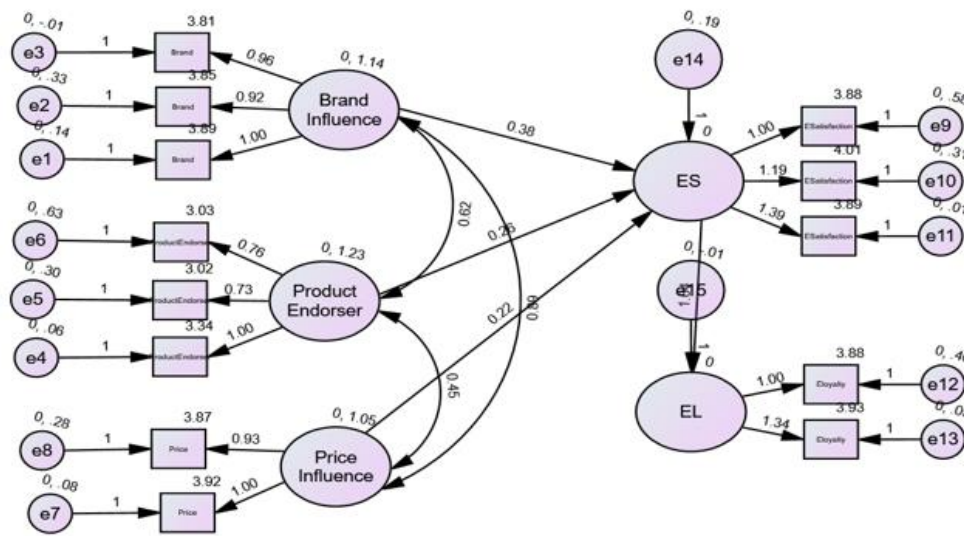
In overall, the model demonstrates a satisfactory to commendable alignment with the data. Although it does not fall inside the 'excellent' category for all indices, it often surpasses the thresholds required for a satisfactory model. Potential enhancements might be implemented by reassessing the parameters of the model or exploring other models, in order to attain a more accurate alignment.

Structure Equation Model

Fit Indices	Recommended	Observed
CMIN	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	4.258
CFI	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	0.948
TLI	> 0.9	0.964
PNFI	> 0.5	0.522
RMSEA	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent	.053

(Figure-3: Structural Equation Modelling)

Based on the given thresholds (>1 Excellent, >3 Acceptable, >5 Terrible), the CMIN (Chi-Square Statistic) value of 4.258 is placed within the 'acceptable' range. This implies that the model provides a satisfactory, albeit subpar, fit to the data. It is imperative to acknowledge that sample size can exert an influence on the Chi-Square statistic. The CFI (Comparative Fit Index) indicates a value of 0.948, which falls slightly short of the minimum requirement for an outstanding fit (above 0.95). The index signifies the degree of model fit in comparison to a null model; a value approaching 1 indicates a more optimal fit. Based on the observed CFI, it can be concluded that the model adequately fits the data. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) value of 0.964 surpasses the advised threshold of >0.9, which signifies a satisfactory level of fit. This index penalises complexity and rewards simplicity in models, indicating that your model effectively balances these two aspects. The PNFI (Parsimonious Normed Fit Index) is slightly above the recommended threshold of >0.5, with a value of 0.522. This implies that the model is sufficiently parsimonious, achieving a successful equilibrium between simplicity and fit. With a value of 0.053, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is classified as 'excellent' according to the provided criteria: >0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, and >0.05 Excellent. This signifies a strong correspondence between the model and the data, whereby lesser values indicate an improved fit.



(Figure-3: Structural Equation Modelling)

As indicated by the CMIN value, the fit is satisfactory, implying that there is room for improvement. Together with the TLI, the CFI, which falls shy of being 'excellent,' indicates that the model matches the data quite well. The model is not excessively complicated in relation to the explanatory power it offers, as indicated by the PNFI. The fact that the RMSEA falls within the "excellent" range is especially encouraging, as it indicates that the model closely matches the data. In general, the model appears to be effectively constructed, striking a balance between data fitting and parsimony; however, there are minor refinements that could be contemplated in order to further enhance the fit.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Beta Coefficient	T- Value	P-Value	Result
H ₁ : Online apparel shoppers experience higher levels of e-satisfaction when purchasing products that have a recognizable brand.	0.450	5.061	0.00	Significant
H ₂ : Online apparel shoppers experience higher levels of e-satisfaction when purchasing products that are endorsed by recognizable endorsers.	0.321	5.639	0.00	Significant
H ₃ : When the price of a product is favorable, online apparel shoppers tend to experience higher levels of e-satisfaction.	0.247	3.041	0.02	Significant
H ₄ : Satisfied online apparel shopper tend have higher level of e-loyalty	1.006	11.165	0.00	Significant

(Table-4: Calculation of Beta Co-efficient to test the result of the hypothesis)

Interpretation

- **Brand Influence and E-Satisfaction(H₁):** The beta coefficient value of 0.450 indicates a statistically significant positive association between recognisable brands and e-satisfaction, with a modest effect size. A T-value of 5.061 suggests that the observed link is statistically significant. A p-value of 0.00, which is commonly interpreted as a value lower than 0.05, indicates that the observed result holds statistical significance.
- **Product Endorser and E-Satisfaction (H₂):** A beta coefficient of 0.321 indicates that e-satisfaction is positively correlated with endorser recognition. The statistical significance of the T-value of 5.639 provides considerable confidence

in the relationship. A P-value of 0.00, which is strongly statistically significant (typically less than 0.05), signifies this. This supports the hypothesis that e-satisfaction among online apparel consumers is increased by recognisable endorsers.

- **Price and E-Satisfaction (H₃):** The hypothesis posited that the presence of favourable pricing has a positive correlation with increased levels of e-satisfaction among individuals who engage in online clothes shopping. The obtained Beta coefficient of 0.247, T-value of 3.041, and P-value of 0.02 together suggest a statistically significant positive association. This suggests that although price favourability is a noteworthy aspect, its influence on e-satisfaction is considerable.
- **E-Satisfaction and E-Loyalty (H₄):** The hypothesis posits that there exists a positive correlation between e-loyalty and the satisfaction of online apparel consumers. With a T-value of 11.165 and a P-value of 0.00, the Beta coefficient is notably high at 1.006, indicating a highly significant and robust positive correlation. This suggests that among online consumers, e-satisfaction is a critical factor in fostering e-loyalty.

Discussion

- **Brand Influence and E-Satisfaction(H₁):** The first hypothesis was strongly supported by the data, which showed that higher levels of e-satisfaction are greatly influenced by a recognisable brand. This supports the branding literature, which frequently asserts that a strong brand serves as a sign of quality and reliability for customers, particularly in online contexts where tangibility and first-hand product experience are scarce
- **Product Endorser and E-Satisfaction (H₂):** The second hypothesis contributed a further dimension to our knowledge of e-satisfaction and was likewise highly supported. Celebrity or well-known endorsements' effects on e-satisfaction are in accordance with other research, which indicates that social proof or outside validation improves online customer experiences.
- **Price and E-Satisfaction (H₃):** The Beta coefficient for price, albeit statistically significant, indicates a very moderate impact. This implies that while favourable pricing has a positive effect on e-satisfaction, its influence is not as strong as that of brand or endorser factors. This study suggests that although competitive price holds significance, it does not exclusively determine customer happiness in the context of online clothes shopping. This observation has the potential to inform pricing strategies, indicating that while it is essential to uphold competitive pricing, it should be complemented by other value propositions such as brand potency and endorsement.
- **E-Satisfaction and E-Loyalty (H₄):** The fourth hypothesis, implying a strong relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty, was also strongly supported. This demonstrates that consumer satisfaction is central to retention strategies. With the highest Beta coefficient of all variables examined, e-satisfaction emerged as the most potent predictor of e-loyalty, highlighting the necessity for businesses to focus on increasing customer satisfaction as a pathway to enhance loyalty.

Limitation

The research is limited in its applicability to other online retail sectors due to its exclusive concentration on online apparel shopping. Given that this is presumably a cross-sectional study, the correlations between variables do not necessarily indicate causation. The study only analyses "favourable pricing" as a subjective term and does not delve into specifics, such as discount percentages, that may influence e-satisfaction in a variety of ways. The study does not differentiate between types of recognisable endorsers (such as celebrities, influencers, and experts), which may have distinct effects on consumer behaviour. The study does not account for cultural or geographical differences that may impact online purchasing behaviours and attitudes.

Scope for Future Research

Future research could look into these relationships in various online buying categories to see if they are universal. A longitudinal approach could shed light on the aetiology and long-term durability of these associations. More in-depth research could be conducted to determine the various price points at which the influence on e-satisfaction changes considerably. Examining the influence of various sorts of endorsers can aid in determining which type of social evidence is most effective in increasing e-satisfaction. The impact of cultural and geographical differences on e-satisfaction and e-loyalty could provide more practical information for global brands.

Conclusion

The research provides solid evidence for comprehending the dynamics of e-satisfaction and e-loyalty in the context of online clothing purchase. All assumptions were supported, emphasising the significance of well-known brands,

endorsements, and competitive pricing in determining consumer pleasure and loyalty online. Among these, e-satisfaction was the most powerful predictor of e-loyalty, highlighting the importance of consumer happiness in online retail strategy. While the study has limits, the findings are useful for firms wanting to improve their online presence and consumer interaction tactics. Future research has a rich terrain to explore into more complex aspects of this customer behaviour, assisting both academic knowledge and practical application in the rapidly growing industry of online shopping.

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