

# Investigating the impact of brand loyalty based on satisfaction, trust and commitment in Iranian clothing brands

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## Abstract

This study examines the effect of loyalty to Iranian apparel brands through the paths of satisfaction, trust, and commitment to the brand. In today's competitive environment, brands are considered one of the most valuable assets of organizations, and their ability to attract and retain customers depends heavily on creating satisfaction, trust, and commitment in customers. Therefore, accurate identification of the factors affecting brand loyalty in the apparel industry is of particular importance. This study was conducted using a convenience sampling method on consumers familiar with Iranian apparel brands. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire that assesses the dimensions of satisfaction, trust, commitment, and loyalty to the brand. After confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement tool, the collected data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS software. The results of this study showed that brand satisfaction plays an effective role in creating brand loyalty and this relationship is strengthened by increasing consumers' trust and commitment to the brand. More precisely, consumers who are satisfied with the brand show a greater tendency to trust and commit, and these factors in turn increase their brand loyalty. Also, trust and commitment, as mediating variables, strengthen the path of satisfaction's effect on loyalty. These findings emphasize the importance of customer-centric strategies in Iranian clothing brands and suggest that brands focus on increasing customer satisfaction and strengthening their trust and commitment in order to create long-term loyalty.

## Keywords:

Brand satisfaction,  
Brand loyalty,  
Brand trust,  
Brand commitment

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## Introduction

The Iranian clothing industry is facing numerous problems, including a decrease in domestic production, an increase in dependence on imports, a decrease in product diversity, and a decrease in the quality of some products. In addition, the export market of this industry has not grown much due to weakness in competition with global brands and trade restrictions (Khani et al., 2022; Jafari et al., 2023). These challenges require the development of comprehensive strategies in the fields of production, marketing, and export in order to increase the competitiveness of domestic brands. Research in the field of branding and customer loyalty plays an important role in understanding consumer behavior and developing marketing strategies. It is necessary, especially in the Iranian apparel industry, to focus on factors such as brand satisfaction and brand image, and their relationship with customer loyalty. Previous research has shown that trust and brand commitment as mediating variables have a significant impact on this relationship (Saragi et al., 2019; Chinomona, 2013). The results of this study can help manufacturers and marketers improve customer experience, promote brand communication, and increase customer loyalty. In addition, identifying the real needs of consumers will improve the quality and diversity of products and increase the competitiveness of domestic brands in domestic and international markets (Aditer et al., 2020; Medina et al., 2022). Overall, this research can contribute to the sustainable growth of the Iranian apparel industry by providing scientific and practical solutions.

## Theoretical foundations

**Definition and importance of brand satisfaction:** Brand satisfaction is one of the most important concepts in marketing and customer management strategies that directly affects consumer behavior. Satisfaction is formed when the customer's expectations of the brand are aligned with his or her actual experiences with the brand.

**Definition and dimensions of brand loyalty:** Brand loyalty is a multifaceted characteristic that goes beyond simply repeat purchases and includes the customer's desire to maintain their relationship with the brand through repeated purchases, support for that brand, and even recommend it to others. In addition to purchasing behaviors, this concept also psychologically refers to the customer's positive attitude and emotional commitment to the brand (Chinomona & Dubihlela, 2021).

**Definition and Importance of Brand Commitment:** Brand commitment is defined as a long-term and emotional relationship between the customer and the brand. This concept goes beyond brand loyalty and specifically emphasizes the emotional and psychological interactions of customers with the brand (Meyer et al., 2022).

**Definition and Impact of Brand Trust:** Brand trust is defined as the customer's feeling of confidence in the reliability, quality, and honesty of the brand. This concept is one of the important pillars in the brand-customer relationship, because brand trust reduces the risks perceived by customers and makes customers buy with more confidence (Kim et al., 2021).

The interaction and synergy of these factors of satisfaction, commitment, and trust mutually influence each other, and the interaction between these factors creates a comprehensive and positive experience for customers, which ultimately leads to increased brand loyalty. Recent research has shown that when customers feel that the brand best meets their needs, this feeling leads to increased trust and commitment to the brand, which in turn strengthens satisfaction and loyalty. In competitive markets, brands that can strengthen these three factors simultaneously will have a higher competitive advantage (Foroudi et al., 2023).

### Research Methodology

This research is designed as an applicable study, aims to investigate the relationships between different variables in the field of loyalty to Iranian clothing brands. In terms of methodology, this research belongs to the category of descriptive-survey and correlational studies. For sampling, the convenience method was used, which allows researchers to collect data using existing resources. This method is especially common in market and consumer behavior research and provides the required data quickly and effectively. To collect data, a standard questionnaire was used, which is a combination of the questionnaires of Fernandez and Moreira (2019), Bashokooch et al., (2020), and Sang et al., (2019). The target population is all people who use different clothing brands. Also, the applied convenience sampling method is a non-random sampling method in which available people are selected. After distributing the questionnaire link in cyberspace, 157 questionnaires were collected, of which 150 were selected for statistical analysis. Selecting valid and relevant questionnaires increases the quality of data and contributes to the validity of the results.

### Research findings

In this study, the relationships between the variables of brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand loyalty were analyzed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) method in SMART PLS3 software. T-values were examined to evaluate the significance of the relationships between the variables, so that if the t-value is outside the range of  $\pm 1.96$ , the relationship in question is considered statistically significant.

The model includes three latent variables, each measured through different indicators:

- Brand satisfaction: four indicators with factor loadings between 14.653 and 34.621.
- Brand trust: four indicators with factor loadings between 16.848 and 105.745.
- Brand loyalty: four indicators with factor loadings between 17.235 and 124.975.

- 1- The effect of satisfaction on brand trust: path coefficient of 0.791, indicating a strong and positive effect.
- 2- The effect of trust on brand loyalty: path coefficient of 0.477, indicating a medium and positive effect.
- 3- The effect of satisfaction on brand commitment: path coefficient of 0.728, indicating a strong and positive effect.
- 4- The effect of commitment on brand loyalty: path coefficient of 0.262, indicating a positive but relatively weak effect.
- 5- The direct effect of satisfaction on loyalty: path coefficient of 0.211, which is weaker than the indirect effect.

**R<sup>2</sup> Index and Model Predictive Power:** The R<sup>2</sup> index indicates the model's ability to predict dependent variables. The results show that the research model has a high ability to explain the relationships between variables:

- R<sup>2</sup> for brand loyalty: 0.764 (very strong)
- R<sup>2</sup> for brand trust: 0.625 (desirable)
- R<sup>2</sup> for brand commitment: 0.531 (adequate)

Brand satisfaction directly and indirectly affects brand loyalty through trust and commitment. The indirect effect of satisfaction through trust ( $0.791 \times 0.477$ ) and commitment ( $0.728 \times 0.262$ ) is stronger than its direct effect (0.211). Therefore, organizations should focus on increasing customer satisfaction, strengthening trust, and creating brand commitment to ensure long-term customer loyalty.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

In today's competitive world, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty play a key role in the success of businesses. Satisfied customers are less likely to be attracted to competitors and maintain a long-term relationship with the brand. This study, by examining brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment, shows that customer satisfaction has a direct impact on loyalty, and brand trust and commitment play a mediating role. The results of the study are consistent with previous studies and confirm that customer trust and commitment to the brand transform their satisfaction into loyalty. To improve customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment, and consequently increase brand loyalty, the following solutions are suggested:

#### **Increase customer satisfaction:**

- Use surveys and digital tools to continuously monitor customer satisfaction.
- Make changes and improvements based on customer feedback.
- Optimize the customer experience by simplifying the purchasing process and brand interaction.
- Provide strong after-sales service and effective support.

#### **Strengthening trust and commitment to the brand:**

- Transparency in communications and providing accurate information about products and services.
- Ensuring security in online purchases and maintaining customer privacy.
- Providing quality services and responding quickly to customer problems and needs.

#### **Increasing brand loyalty:**

- Designing loyalty programs with points and rewards tailored to customer behavior.
- Establishing continuous communication with customers and informing them about brand changes and improvements.
- Providing fast and effective support to create a positive and lasting experience.

This research focused on customers in the Iranian apparel industry and its results may not be generalized to other industries such as automobiles or home appliances. Also, demographic factors such as age, income, and location affect brand loyalty. These findings indicate that increasing customer satisfaction, creating trust and commitment to the brand, and improving interactions play key roles in strengthening customer loyalty.