

Perspectives on retailer satisfaction with non-premium dust tea – An opinion study

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ABSTRACT

India is one of the largest tea beverage consumers in the world and is the second largest producer of tea in the world. A large part of tea available in India for end user consumption is Non Premium Dust Tea (NPDT). Dust tea is available in many brands with almost all types of retail outlets, from small kiranas to huge shopping malls. This study seeks to identify the various elements that influence retailers' satisfaction and their views on NPDT. To address the research questions, data was collected from 213 NPDT retailers in Virudhunagar and Madurai districts, by using a structured questionnaire. A direct survey was used for data collection. Data thus collected was subjected to multiple linear regression to understand the impact of various factors considered on the retailers' satisfaction in retailing NPDT. The factors considered to have an impact on retailers' satisfaction were product quality of NPDT, demand of NPDT with consumers, brand image of various brands of NPDT, price offered by various brands of NPDT to customers, promotional support offered by the manufacturers of tea, service quality offered by the sales team of NPDT brands, distribution support offered and satisfaction on the payment system to have an impact on the satisfaction of tea retailers when dealing with NPDT. From the analysis it was found that all the factors considered had a significant contingent effect or impact on the retailers' satisfaction in patronizing NPDT.

Keywords: Product quality; End consumer demand; Brand image; Promotional support, Service quality, Distribution support.

1. Introduction

Tea has a nearly 5,000-year history that begins in ancient China. Legend has it that tea was first discovered by Emperor Shen Nung in 2732 B.C (Abu, 2015). When a wild tree's leaves blew into a pot of boiling water, Emperor Shen Nung drank some of the mixture after becoming immediately intrigued by its nice aroma (EL Samen, Akroush, Abu, & Abu, 2013). According to legend, as he sipped the interesting combination, the emperor felt heated, as if the liquid were coursing through every part of his body (Benjamin, 2006). Shen Nung gave the beverage the Chinese character "ch'a," which means to check or look into (Berthon, Money, & Caruana, 2000). A Han Dynasty Emperor decreed around 200 B.C., that a particular written character depicting a man between two wooden branches and some grass must be used to refer to tea. For the Chinese culture, this written character, which is also pronounced "ch'a," represented the way tea brought humanity and nature into harmony (Chang & Thai, 2016).

The tea market in India is dominated by the branded tea manufacturing companies and they usually fix the price of tea (Ghosal, 2024). Individual growers do not have much influence on the price of tea. The major influence on the price of tea comes from the forces of demand on the market. In the case where the supply is much far more than the demand for the tea, the price is brought down (Churchill, Surprenant, & Churchill, 1982). In some cases, the individual growers make attempts to influence the price, but then they do not succeed (Cronin, Brady, Hult, & Hult, 2000). The dictation of the tea prices is carried out by auction and this implies that the cost of production is not considered in determining the price of tea on the market. It is not the producers to determine the price but rather, it is the buyers who determine the price at which the tea has to be sold (Akroush, Abu-Lail, & Dahiyat, 2011).

The tea market in India is expected to grow with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.19 % from 2024–2033. Indian tea market is expected to reach a value of USD 17.9 billion by 2033. After China, India is the world's second largest tea producer. Also, India is the world's fourth-largest tea exporter. In 2021–2022, India exported 201 million kg of tea. Indian tea market is also huge and its market size reached USD 11.1 Billion in 2023. The Indian tea market is being driven by several key factors, including the growing consumer preference for premium and packaged tea brands, the expansion of online retail channels, and the increasing awareness of the health benefits associated with tea (IMARC Group, 2024).

Taking the case of India as a tea-producing country, it is also as a major tea consumer and the country has two major transnational corporations that do business in its market. These corporations are Unilever and Tata Tea (Dhandabani, 2010). The corporations are dominant in the tea market and had a market share of 60 percent in 2023 of the branded tea sales. The corporations have played a major role in being significant employers in the tea sector. They have been

employing thousands of people to work in the plantation for the corporations have been engaging in tea growing (Vazquez, Iglesias, & Garcia, 2010).

However, there has been a shift in regard to the operations these corporations have been engaging in. Beginning from the year 2007, these corporations have opted to shift the operations from tea production to concentrate on purchasing the tea (Gronholdt, Kristensen, & Martensen, 2000). The companies have realized that by engaging in buying and selling branded and processed tea products; they would bring up the level of their profits as compared to concentration on the tea production on the plantations. Between the years 2006 and 2005 Unilever was able to divest itself of the accountability of over ten thousand permanent employees (Hirsch, 2011).

India being the largest producer of tea is encountering stiff competition in the tea market. This problem is also faced with the other producer and powerful competitors of India in the industry. The tea prices have been going down the world over for the reason of having excess supply on the market (Homburg & Rudolph, 2001). In addition, the major tea buyers such as Iraq, Russia and Iran have turned out not to be active following political reasons. The variations in the consumption trends have as well led to the falling in the prices. Despite the concerns Sri Lanka has regarding the tea market, it has acquired momentum over India in this market (Illias & Panagiotis, 2010).

Not to mention the nations where tea is grown, tea is consumed all over the world, but particularly in British nations like the United Kingdom and Ireland. In nations like America, tea is less preferred than coffee (Abu, 2015). The majority of tea eaten outside of East Asia is made in either India or Sri Lanka. A cup of green tea and hot water will do the trick for the Japanese as it is a favourite beverage among the residents in Japan. In Japan, however, only green tea is drunk (Akroush, Lail, & Samen, 2006). In terms of consumption, studies suggest that tea is the most widely consumed beverage worldwide.

India has two manufacturing bases, in contrast to the majority of other nations that export and produce tea. Along with green tea, India also makes CTC and Orthodox teas (Berthon, Money, & Caruana, 2000). Due to domestic consumers' preferences, the former is given more weight. The output of orthodox tea roughly balances the demand for exports. India produces very little green tea. Sri Lanka, Kenya, China, Indonesia, and Vietnam are India's rivals in the export of tea (Chang & Thai, 2016). Tea is an agricultural product that is prone to natural whims. Notwithstanding the unfavourable agroclimatic conditions encountered in tea growing regions in the recent many years, the Indian tea plantation industry has been able to sustain significant growth in relation to the country's total tea production over the past ten years.

An important source of foreign exchange for India has been the export of tea. With time, the revenue from tea exports naturally increased. Up until the 1970s, UK was the main market for Indian tea. Due to the former USSR and India's trade deal, the USSR has been the biggest consumer of Indian tea since the 1980s. Up until 1991, the USSR accounted for more than 50% of all Indian exports, making it the largest consumer of Indian tea (Ferguson & Johnston, 2011). Indian tea exports, however, experienced a decline in 1992–1993 as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the elimination of the Central Purchasing Mechanism. However, Indian tea exports to Russia and the CIS nations have rebounded from the decline that began in 1993 because to Rupee Debt Repayment Channel facilities and a long-term deal on tea signed by Russia and India (Homburg & Rudolph, 2001). Once again, a depressed situation has existed since 2001 as a result of a shift in consumer choice from CTC to Orthodox, costing India the Russian market. Another factor contributing to the reduction in Indian tea exports to Russia is the lower tea prices offered by China and South Asian nations like Indonesia and Vietnam (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009).

2. Review of Literature

India has long been associated with tea (Churchill, Surprenant, & Churchill, 1982), yet a variety of variables have recently had an impact on India's tea production. With a network of producers, wholesalers, retailers, auctioneers, packers, and exporters, the tea production industry is also one of the most established and well-organized sectors in India. Unfortunately, the Indian tea sector has encountered a number of difficulties that have had an impact on the nation's tea output and sales. (Trihatmoko, Lukviarman, & Roch, 2018).

Importing of tea increases competition on the domestic market (The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), 2024). The price paid by the customers of Indian tea is impacted by this. Further, the productivity and quality of India's tea are being impacted by the slow rate of replanting. Even though the Tea Board of India has launched a number of measures, including financial and technical support for tea producers, these are insufficient to increase tea production (Tea Board India, 2024).

The factor that affect customer satisfaction are product quality (Ashok, Narula, & Martinez, 2016), service quality (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993), Value (Anderson & MCAdam, 2004), Price (E, Kotlik, & C.C, 2001), consumer emotion (Cho & Song, 2012). The first factor like products and service quality can be explained by when customers perceive the

quality level of a product or a service as satisfactory or exceptional, then their level of satisfaction will be high. In contrast, if the same customers perceive the quality of product or service as poor, they will be discontent and dissatisfied (Creswell, 2013). When discontent is experienced maybe due to poor customer experiences, most of the customers switch to a competitor's product. When clients perceive a benefit from a product or service, they will buy it and feel satisfied (Dantone & Santos, 2016). This value primarily comes from the customer service a client receives while buying the product. Most buyers make decisions to support companies with great customer service (Racca, Moscatelli, A, & Snehot, 2016).

Customers put substantial consideration into a price of a product before purchasing it (Lapre, 2011). They relate the price to the value and quality of the product they are purchasing (Yi, 1990). If a product has poor quality, they expect the price to be low and if the product has premium quality, customers expect to pay a higher price. Customer satisfaction will be met if the customer feels the price meets the expected value of the product (Van, Wynstra, & Axelsson, 2008). If the value falls short of expectation, then the client is dissatisfied. Customers who have strong, positive emotions when they receive their expected product or service will feel more satisfied (Van & Wynstra, 2014). Their positive perception might encourage them to spend more and increase their loyalty to a company (Tikkanen, Alajoutsijarvi, & Tahtinen, 2000).

Compared to the preceding three waves of industrialization, the fourth wave signified by the growth of retail chain stores is anticipated to be rather gradual (Gronholdt, Kristensen, & Martensen, 2000). The main socioeconomic adjustments necessitated by the modification in the business environment are progressing much more slowly. Increased urbanisation, an increase in the percentage of women working outside the home (which gives them less time to shop), and increased per capita incomes are some of the changes that are favourable to the spread of retail chains. According to estimates (Foss, Laursen, & Pedersen, 2011), chain retailing won't be felt in a nation like Bangladesh for another ten to twelve years, which indicates that 20 to 25 percent of retail sales are made through this channel.

Customer retention has emerged as a critical focus for food retail organizations seeking to maintain their business, optimize profitability, and establish or sustain a competitive edge within the food industry, according to recent research. Retaining customers can have significant financial benefits for food retailers. Evidence suggests that a modest 5% increase in customer retention rates can lead to a substantial increase in profitability, ranging from 25% to 95% (Reich, McCleary, Tepanon, & Weaver, 2005). The post-purchase customer experience is particularly vital for food retailers seeking to retain their business. Strategies aimed at enhancing the overall customer experience and differentiating a retailer's offerings from competitors are key to driving repeat business (Kumar & Anjaly, 2017).

Achieving and maintaining high customer satisfaction is crucial for a business, as content customers are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing products or utilizing the company's diverse range of services (E, Kotlik, & C.C, 2001). Customer satisfaction should be regarded as a valuable asset, monitored and managed with the same diligence as any physical asset. Similarly, efforts have been made to evaluate the correlations between trait perceptions and consumer satisfaction, as well as between consumer satisfaction and sales performance in the Indian food retail sector (Frow, Mcoll Kennedy, & Payne, 2016). Customer service, brand choice, store environment, handy location, and shopping convenience all factor into how satisfied customers are with retailers (Prasad & Aryasri, 2011). Location, product quality, reliability of the process, and personalised services all play a role in retail customer happiness.

The current research examines the key determinants of consumers' buying intentions towards non-premium dust tea brands. The proposed model suggests that product quality, promotion, demand/sales, brand image, payment system satisfaction, service quality, distribution support, and price are significant predictors of consumers' buying intentions. Product quality has been found to be a crucial factor in shaping consumers' buying intentions for non-premium dust tea brands. Consumers tend to prioritize the quality of the tea when making purchasing decisions, as it directly impacts their overall satisfaction and perception of the product. Promotional activities undertaken by non-premium dust tea brands can also significantly influence consumers' buying intentions. Effective marketing campaigns and promotional offers have the potential to attract new customers and encourage repeat purchases (Montaner, de Chernatony, & Buil, 2011).

The demand and sales performance of a non-premium dust tea brand can be another important driver of buying intentions. Consumers may perceive a high-demand brand as more reliable and trustworthy, leading to increased purchase likelihood (Lin, Yang, & Chen, 2023). The brand image of non-premium dust tea products also plays a significant role in consumers' buying decisions. Consumers are more inclined to favour brands with a strong, positive reputation, as they are seen as offering superior quality and reliability. (Yan, 2023).

Retailers' satisfaction with the payment system offered by non-premium dust tea brands can also influence their buying intentions. The likelihood of patronising a brand can be influenced by convenient and secure payment options offered by the manufacturers to retailers (Hossain, Islam, Rahman, & Arif, 2024). The quality of service provided by non-premium dust tea brands, including aspects such as customer support and delivery, can also impact retailers' buying intentions.

Positive service experiences can build retailer loyalty and encourage repeat purchases (Musasa & Tlapana, 2023). The distribution support offered by non-premium dust tea brands, such as the availability and accessibility of their products, can also affect retailers' buying intentions. Widespread distribution and easy access to the products can increase the convenience and appeal for retailers (Sharma & Dutta, 2023). Finally, the price offered by non-premium dust tea brands can also influence consumers' buying intentions thus retailers' preference. While price is not the sole determinant, it remains an important factor in consumers' decision-making process (Cuong, 2023).

3. Research Framework

Based on the review of literature it is proposed to consider the factors such as product quality of NPDT, demand of NPDT with consumers, brand image of various brands of NPDT, price offered by various brands of NPDT to customers, promotional support offered by the manufacturers of tea, service quality offered by the sales team of NPDT brands, distribution support offered and satisfaction on the payment system to have an impact on the satisfaction of tea retailers when dealing with NPDT. This is pictorially represented in Figure 1.

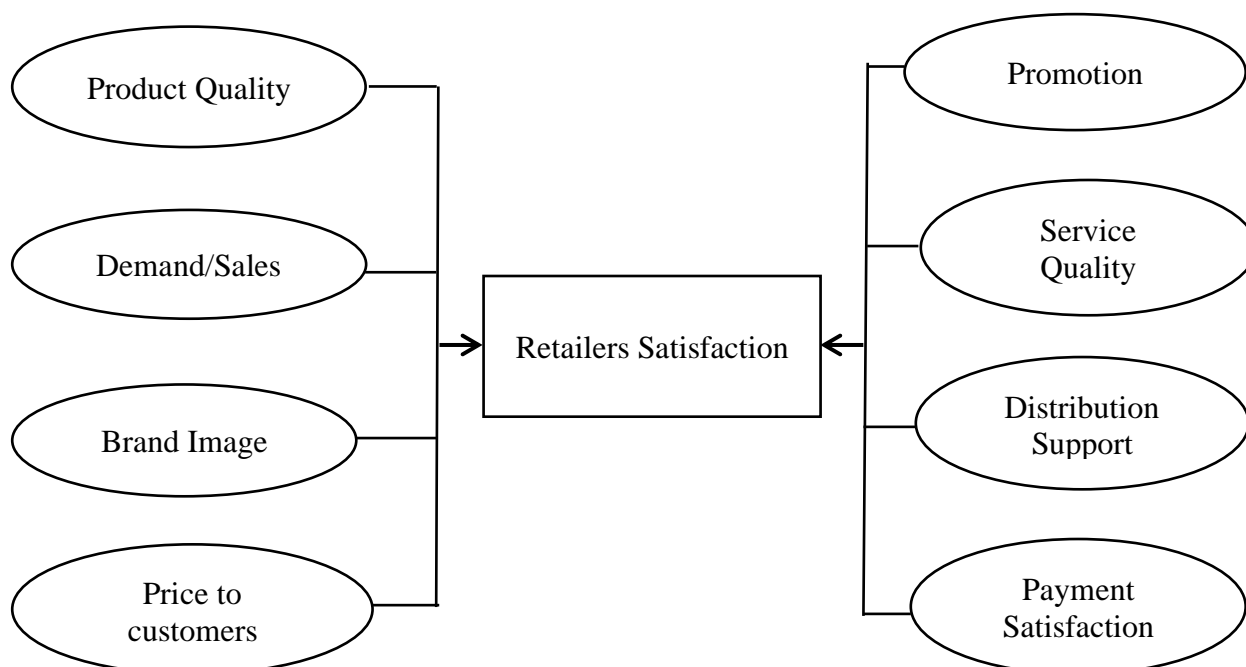


Figure 1. Research Framework

4. Methodology

In this study, descriptive research design with cross-sectional study is employed to find out how retailers feel satisfied while retailing various NPDT brands. The questionnaire administered to the retailers was prepared based on the review of literature. Once the items to be included in the questionnaire were decided upon, it was administered to a set of retailers as a pilot study. The results of the pilot were subjected to factor analysis and the questionnaire's factor structure was finalised, and its structural validity was proven. Primary data was collected from 213 NPDT retailers in Madurai and Virudhunagar Districts of Tamilnadu state in India. Direct surveying was used to gather the data from retailers.

For the purpose of identifying the respondents, the researcher travelled to various towns throughout the two districts. Data was collected from respondents in the towns' convenience stores, super markets, and department stores. The respondents were informed of the questions before the researcher collected their information. Demographic information about the retailers was gathered in the first part of the questionnaire. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to gather data on the social and marketing variables that retailers consider when selecting a NPDT brand. The impact of all the independent variables on the satisfaction of retailers in dealing with NPDT was measured using regression.

5. Results and Discussion

In the first part of this section, the demographic details of the NPDT retailers are observed and in the second part of the section, impact of factors such as product quality of NPDT, demand of NPDT with consumers, brand image of various brands of NPDT, price offered by various brands of NPDT to customers, promotional support offered by the

manufacturers of tea, service quality offered by the sales team of NPDT brands, distribution support offered and satisfaction on the payment system on the satisfaction of tea retailers is analysed.

5.1 Demographic details of NPDT retailers

In this section, the demographic details of NPDT retailers such as the distribution of retailers in rural, semi-urban or urban areas of the districts of Madurai and Virudhunagar, number of years the retailers were dealing with NPDT, type of retailer such as supermarket or departmental store or convenient stores or mom and pop stores (Kirana) were considered. Also, the popular SKUs of NPDT tea brands with various retailers were also observed. The demographic details of NPDT retailers are presented in Table 1.

Variables	Categories	Frequency
Distribution of NPDT retailers	Rural	71
	Semi Urban	98
	Urban	44
Number of years in NPDT retailing	Less than a year	08
	Between 1 to 5 years	39
	Between 5 to 10 years	92
	Above 10 years	74
Type of retailer	Supermarket	06
	Departmental store	54
	Convenient stores	82
	Mom and pop stores (Kirana)	71
Popular SKU of Tea Brand	50 grams	188
	100 grams	213
	250 grams	179
	500 grams	119
	1 kilo gram	67

Madurai and Virudhunagar districts are mostly comprised of semi urban and rural communities. However some of the cities such as Madurai city of Madurai district, Rajapalayam city of Virudhunagar district etc., could be considered as urban areas. In the sample of 213 NPDT retailers, most of them are situated in semi-urban and rural areas of the survey area. Further, around 80 percentage of the retailers are dealing with NPDT for more than five years and around 35 percentage of retailers are in the business for more than 10 years. This shows that most of the retailers are retailing NPDT for a long time. Majority of the shops in rural areas were convenience shops. In the urban side the shops were diversified depending on the location i.e., the residential areas had a greater number of kirana shops and convenience stores while the commercial areas had a greater number of departmental stores and supermarkets retailing NPDT.

While observing the popular SKUs of NPDT, it can be seen that almost all customers prefer 100 gram packets while 50 to 250 gram packets are also popular. One kilogram packets are not popular in the market. This may be because customers may what their tea to remain fresh and one kilogram packets one opened could take a long time for households to consume the entire lot and tea could lose its flavour in the meantime. Since tea is available quite freely, customers don't have to stock them in bulk quantities and can purchase in smaller SKUs.

5.2 Impact of factors considered on overall NPDT retailer satisfaction

To determine the factor that causes a retailer to favour a specific brand of NPDT, multiple linear regression was then used to analyse the relationship between the factors that cause retailers to favour a specific brand of NPDT. As presented already the factors considered were product quality of NPDT, demand of NPDT with consumers, brand image of various brands of NPDT, price offered by various brands of NPDT to customers, promotional support offered by the manufacturers of tea, service quality offered by the sales team of NPDT brands, distribution support offered and satisfaction on the payment system offered by NPDT manufacturers to retailers. The Null hypothesis considered is that there is no significant impact from the different factors that influence the brand preference of the Retailers towards NPDT on their satisfaction. The outcome of the multiple linear regression is presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
.417	.174	.142	11.716	.000

Table 3. Impact of factors considered on overall NPDT retailer satisfaction

Factors	Coefficients	t	Sig.
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Constant	2.693	4.271	.000
Product quality	0.283	2.512	.003
Promotion	0.333	2.410	.004
Demand/Sales	0.231	2.383	.000
Brand Image	0.212	2.041	.003
Payment satisfaction	0.124	1.376	.000
Service Quality	0.132	0.660	.000
Distribution support	0.148	0.526	.000
Price to customers	0.049	0.436	.000

In this analysis, the regression results are

$$Y = 2.693 + 0.283x_1 + 0.333x_2 + 0.231x_3 + 0.212x_4 + 0.124x_5 + 0.132x_6 + 0.148x_7 + 0.049x_8$$

Where Y – Buying intention

x_1 – Product quality of NPDT brands

x_2 – Promotion offered by NPDT brands

x_3 – Demand/Sales for a brand of NPDT

x_4 – Brand Image of NPDT

x_5 – Payment system satisfaction

x_6 – Service Quality offered by NPDT brands

x_7 – Distribution support offered by NPDT brands

x_8 – Price to customers offered by NPDT brands

The above regression equation provides valuable insights into the factors that influence the buying intention of consumers for Non-Premium Dust Tea brands. The positive coefficients associated with each variable indicate that as these factors increase, the buying intention of consumers also increases. Specifically, the model suggests that a one-unit increase in product quality (x_1) leads to a 0.283-unit increase in buying intention, holding all other variables constant. Similarly, a one-unit increase in promotion, demand, brand image, payment satisfaction, service quality, distribution support, and price leads to a 0.333-unit, 0.231-unit, 0.212-unit, 0.124-unit, 0.132-unit, 0.148-unit, and 0.049-unit increase in buying intention, respectively, holding all other factors constant.

These findings are consistent with existing research on the factors influencing purchase intention. For instance, a study on antecedents to purchase intention found that quality, value, and satisfaction can directly influence behavioural intention (Mathur, Khandelwal, & Mittal, 2019). Similarly, a study on beauty influencers found that attractiveness and persuasive capabilities significantly impact purchase intention (Widyanto & Agusti, 2020). Additionally, a review on factors governing consumer buying behaviour for nutraceutical products highlighted the importance of product quality, promotion, and price in shaping consumer purchase decisions (Jadhav, et al., 2023).

In the highly competitive retail landscape, the quality of products sold by manufacturers has a significant impact on the satisfaction levels of retailers who are responsible for stocking and selling these goods to end consumers. Superior product quality allows manufacturers to charge higher prices, and the associated advertising and branding efforts further lower the price elasticity of demand, creating stronger customer loyalty and presenting barriers to competition. Beyond just influencing the pricing power of manufacturers, product quality also has a direct impact on the sales process and the ability of retailers to build customer loyalty and drive repeat patronage. Retailers who are able to offer high-quality products that consistently meet or exceed customer expectations are more likely to see their customers return for future purchases.

The strategic utilization of trade promotions has become a crucial element in maintaining a strong relationship between manufacturers and retailers. Manufacturers often employ various promotional tools, such as case allowances and billbacks, to incentivize retailers to stock and feature their products (Srinivasan & Anderson, 1998). On the other hand, retailers initiate their own promotional activities, including price cuts, store displays, and featuring, to attract shoppers and increase in-store purchasing (Srinivasan & Anderson, 1998). The effectiveness and efficiency of these diverse promotional activities have become a significant concern for marketing managers, as sales promotion expenditures often constitute the largest discretionary expenses in the promotional budget. Retailers' cooperation is critical in the promotional process, as both manufacturers and retailers seek to mutually benefit from these promotional efforts (Kincade, Woodard, & Park, 2002).

The relationship between brand demand and retailer satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. The level of consumer involvement can have a significant impact on the relationship between brand demand and retailer satisfaction.

Highly involved consumers are more likely to be attuned to the nuances of a brand's offerings and to have a stronger emotional attachment to the brand, which can lead to a stronger correlation between brand demand and retailer satisfaction. On the other hand, less involved consumers may be more influenced by other factors, such as price or convenience, in their purchasing decisions, which can weaken the relationship between brand demand and retailer satisfaction (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995).

Brand image, defined as the perceptual representation of a brand in the minds of consumers, can significantly influence the likelihood of consumers choosing a particular retail store to visit and make purchases (Kim, Baek, Byon, & Ju, 2021). Strong and favorable brand image can lead to increased customer loyalty and repeated purchases (Kim, Baek, Byon, & Ju, 2021). When consumers develop a positive image of a brand, they are more likely to prefer that brand, which can translate into a higher likelihood of patronizing the retail stores that carry that brand (Kim, Baek, Byon, & Ju, 2021). This is particularly relevant in the highly competitive retail environment, where branding can be a key factor in influencing consumer behaviour and patronage intentions (Swoboda, Haelsig, Schramm-Klein, & Morschett, 2009).

The distribution support and brand management strategies employed by manufacturers can have a significant impact on retailer satisfaction and, ultimately, the success of the retail operation. Retailers who experience strong distribution support and effective brand management from their suppliers are more likely to be satisfied with the partnership, leading to improved performance and profitability. Research indicates that retailers are increasingly looking beyond their organizational boundaries to evaluate and integrate the resources and capabilities of their suppliers and customers. This collaborative approach enables the creation of superior value and a competitive advantage that can be sustained over time.

Pricing strategy is influenced by a multitude of factors, including company, customer, competitor, and environmental considerations (Shankar & Bolton, 2004). The pricing strategies employed by manufacturers have a profound impact on the operations and success of retailers. Pricing strategies also play a crucial role in determining the level of satisfaction experienced by retailers. Researchers have begun to explore the intricate vertical interactions between these two key players, recognizing the significance of understanding how manufacturers' pricing decisions influence retailers' pricing and overall business performance (Ailawadi, et al., 2010).

The results of the research highlight the fact that a collaborative relationship between the suppliers and retailers is beneficial to both the players. A strong relationship with a retailer can lead to increased sales for the supplier. Retailers who have a positive relationship with their suppliers are more likely to give them prominent shelf space, display their products prominently and promote them through various marketing efforts. Close Collaboration with retailers can provide suppliers with valuable market insights. Retailers have the finger on the pulse of consumer trends. Preferences and demands and they can share this information with their suppliers.

6. Conclusion:

Retailers are facing significant challenges, including the rapid growth of alternative retail formats and the evolving shopping behaviour of consumers (Obeng, 2013). To thrive in this environment, retailers must carefully evaluate the factors that contribute to their success, including the support and distribution strategies offered by the brands they carry. One key determinant of retail success is the nature of the relationships between retailers and their brand partners. As retailers extend their brands, channels, and markets, the dynamics of these relationships become increasingly complex. Understanding the strategic role of retail brands and the implications for channel power and image is crucial for both retailers and brands (Burt, 2000). Retailers must balance a variety of factors, including returns on assets, growth, and inventory turns, while also developing strong, collaborative relationships with their brand partners. The level of complexity and co-production of competitive advantages between retailers and suppliers has reached new heights, requiring a fresh perspective on the dynamics of today's retailing environment (Kaufman-Scarborough & Forsythe, 2009). A good relationship with a reputable retailer can enhance the brand image of the supplier. Being associated with a well-respected retailer can lend credibility and trust to the supplier's brand, which can result in increased consumer confidence and higher sales. Similarly Close collaboration with retailers can provide suppliers with valuable market insights. Retailers have their finger on the pulse of consumer trends, preferences, and demands, and they can share this information with their suppliers. This can help suppliers stay ahead of the competition, tailor their product offerings to meet market demands, and make informed business decisions.

In this research on retailer preferences for stocking NPDT product, a variety of factors, including product quality, motivation, brand perception, price, promotion, service, distribution, and payment satisfaction of the product, are taken into account as they help manufacturers of NPDT to maintain a good relationship with retailers. This can in turn provide various benefits to suppliers, including increased sales, enhanced brand image, better market insights, improved supply chain efficiencies and long term business stability. Building and maintaining positive relationships with retailers can be mutually beneficial for manufacturers and retailers. Additional factors, including the NPDT's product quality, the effect of market trends, and brand promotion, are all thought to have an impact on whether or not shops decide to stock the item.

Suppliers who have a good relationship with retailers are more likely to have smoother and more efficient supply chain operations. Retailers may be willing to collaborate with suppliers on inventory management, demand forecasting, and order fulfillment, which can lead to cost savings, reduced lead times, and improved operational efficiencies for the supplier. Building a strong relationship with retailers can lead to long-term business stability for suppliers. Retailers who trust and value their suppliers are more likely to maintain long-term contracts and repeat business, providing a stable and predictable revenue stream for the supplier over time.

Build strong and long term relationships with suppliers by developing good relationships with suppliers can help retailers negotiate better deals and gain access to exclusive products or promotions. Collaborating with suppliers on marketing and promotions by working with suppliers on joint marketing campaigns and promotions can help increase sales for both suppliers and retailers and improve relationships. Existing research has highlighted the growing importance of promotional activities, with manufacturers dedicating an ever-increasing portion of their marketing budgets to such initiatives (Sun, Zheng, Jin, Jiang, & Wang, 2019). This trend underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the profitability and effectiveness of these promotions from the retailer's perspective. As retailers increasingly allocate a significant portion of their budgets to promotional activities, it is essential for them to develop strategies that maximize the profitability of these initiatives (Grewal, et al., 2011). Understanding the nuances of how manufacturer-led promotions influence retailer satisfaction can help inform these strategic decisions, ensuring a mutually beneficial partnership between the two key players in the retail value chain.

Retailers are primarily interested in increasing store traffic, total sales turnover, and volume sales per customer, while manufacturers aim to stimulate sales of their own brands and depress sales of their competitors (Buttle, 1984). This tension can lead to conflicts between the objectives of manufacturers and retailers, necessitating a careful balance in pricing strategies. As retail markets become increasingly competitive, it is important to characterize retailer pricing decisions and investigate how they are related to different factors, particularly the price and promotion decisions of competing stores (Shankar & Bolton, 2004). Prior research suggests that pricing strategy depends on company, customer, competitor, and other factors, but very little is known about how these factors influence retailer pricing strategies (Shankar & Bolton, 2004).

A good relationship maintained by manufacturers with retailers can provide various benefits to suppliers, including increased sales, enhanced brand image, better market insights, improved supply chain efficiencies, and long-term business stability. Building and maintaining positive relationships with retailers can be mutually beneficial for both parties and contribute to their overall business success. Retailers also can gain several benefits from their suppliers by building strong relationship, negotiating favourable terms and collaborating effectively. Some key strategies for achieving these goals include identifying common goals and priorities communicating openly and transparently, leveraging data and investing in technology and infrastructure to streamline processes and reduce costs.

Retailers can obtain significant benefits from their suppliers by adopting various strategies such as building long-term relationships, consolidating their purchasing power, being transparent and open in their communication and actively seeking out new suppliers. By working closely with their suppliers and leveraging their expertise, retailers can achieve greater efficiency, lower costs and improved product quality, all of which can ultimately lead to increased profitability and customer satisfaction. It is essential for retailers to prioritize suppliers' relationships and invest the necessary resources in developing and maintaining strong partnerships to reap the benefits in the long run. Retailers can obtain supplier benefits by establishing strong relationships with their suppliers based on trust, communication and collaboration. This can be achieved by negotiating favourable terms such as discounts, extended payment terms and exclusivity agreements. Retailers can also leverage technology to improve supply chain visibility, reduce lead times and optimize inventory management. By working closely with their suppliers, retailers can gain a competitive advantage, improve their profitability and enhance the overall customer experience.

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