



A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER DELIGHT IN REPURCHASE INTENTION OF THE CUSTOMERS.

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“A role of Customer Delight in Repurchase Intention of the Customers.”

1. Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research paper is to understand the extent to which customer delight can be used as a tool to retain customers and provide the customers with an unexpected experience. According to various studies, ideas regarding customer delight need to be revisited from time to time as the expectations of the customers change depending on various factors. These unexpected experiences are the source to which the customers distinguish between different brands. This study helps marketers to realise that new ideas work well with customers and customer delight can also lead to customer loyalty and attract new customers.

Research implications: This paper provides an understanding of why customer delight is important to draw the customer's attention. Customer delight can also be used to retain them and increase the repurchase intention of customers. Although customer delight can be challenging as the customers' expectations change from time to time and marketers need to redefine their strategies depending upon the target audience.

Originality/Value: The research paper highlights the significance of customer delight and also focuses on how customer delight plays an important role in the competitive market and suggests measures that the marketers can use to delight their customers.

Keywords: Customer Delight, Customer Satisfaction, Customer retention, repurchase intention, word-of-mouth.

2. Introduction:

Customer delight refers to any one of the following Keiningham and Vavra (2001):

- i. Positive surprise from extremely good service or product performance.
- ii. The highest level of satisfaction.
- iii. Exceeding customers' expectations.

Authors have suggested that customer delight can be achieved when all the expectations of the customers are exceeded while delivering a product or service. It is the reaction of customers when they receive something "unexpected" which creates a positive and emotional impact in the minds of the customer regarding the product. Delighting customers has turned out to be an important strategy for companies as it differentiates the company from its competitors and helps in survival of the company. In the global market, companies base most of their decisions keeping in mind the customers as the customers are the end target. In order to attract the customers, there have to be extra steps that need to be taken to draw them towards a particular brand. This is when customer delight comes into place which helps marketers to use techniques in delighting their customers.

3. Objectives:

1. To study the dimensions of customer delight.
2. To study the impact of customer delight in repurchase intention of the customer.
3. To highlight causes of customer delight.
4. To suggest measures to use customer delight as a tool for customer retention.

4. Review of Literature:

Kageyama and Barreda (2018) is a research paper which examines customer delight and compares how customer delight can be proven constructive as compared to customer satisfaction, it also focuses on positive word of mouth and how customer delight causes a positive effect on the customers mind. The study implies that once positive word of mouth is introduced it leads to new customers drawing towards the brand and repurchase intention of the customers.

Barnes and Krallman (2019) states the meaning of customer delight and how it plays an important role in the competitive market. The study talks about the antecedents of customer delight and how customer delight can be measured. It also briefly explains customer satisfaction and the outcomes of customer delight. Although, the study can be used as a great source, there are certain weaknesses and aspects that haven't been examined. The study utilizes few theories in order to reach a conclusion and suggests that more outcomes could have been evaluated. The study suggests that the domain of customer delight can be expanded from joy and surprise and other emotions can be taken into consideration while measuring the level of customer delight.

Bernazzani (2020) is an article which highlights the difference between customer satisfaction and customer delight. The article also gives examples of customer delight and suggests ways in which marketers can use customer delight as a tool to delight and satisfy their customers.

Anabela Elias-Almeida et al. (February 2015) is a study which deals with Customer Delight with specific emphasis on hotel spa consumers. The study suggests that customer delight is related to the quality of service provided to the consumers. Customer delight and customer satisfaction both contribute to customer loyalty.

5. Significance and Importance:

The research paper aims to provide information regarding customer delight and how customer delight can help in retaining the potential customers. The research paper is useful to marketing professionals, students, research scholars and customers as it focuses on why customer delight plays a silent and important part in the market. In the competitive world, it is important to satisfy the customers and retain them and hence customer delight helps marketers in satisfying its customers and providing them with more than what is desired.

6. Limitations of study:

The study is based only on secondary data from books, newspaper articles, websites, etc. which may work as a limitation of the study.

7. Findings and Suggestions:

1) Customer Delight and Customer Satisfaction:

Customer delight is when the marketer surpasses the expectations of the customer to build a long-term relationship and make the customer loyal towards the brand. Customer satisfaction is when the customers' needs and expectations are met. With the increase in competition, marketers have realised that simply satisfying the customers would not lead to any benefit as the customer can simply shift the focus to another brand. In order to retain customers, it is important for the marketers to add a surprise variant and give the customer more than what they expect out of the product or service. Customer satisfaction is giving the customer what they want whereas customer delight goes beyond what the customer expects and hence differentiates itself from the other brands in the market.

2) Impact of customer delight in repurchase intention of the customer:

Customer delight leads to positive word of mouth, not only does it invite new customers but it also retains the existing ones. When customers are given more than what is "expected" they tend to come back to the brand or product building a relation with the brand the product or services provided. Customer delight proves that the marketer is providing the customer with something more than the ordinary and this works as a magnet to get the customer back to the brand. Starbucks provided customers with complementary cookies with every order they placed which worked as a surprise

quotient for the customer as they did not expect it. This made the customers go back to Starbucks instead of any other café leads to repurchase of the product.

3) **Causes of Customer Delight:**

Customer delight is when the customers' needs are surpassed and they are surprised by the product or services provided to them leaving an emotional attachment to the brand. Customer delight causes positive word of mouth communication to other customers, it creates a name for the brand in the market, customer delight leads to positive approach of customers towards the brand which in return leads to repurchase of product or services. It also helps to retain customers and at the same time get new customers as the customers provide the brand with positive comments and experience. Customer delight also leads to arise in the bar of customer expectations which means that the brand has to constantly prove its worth in the market by provide extra ordinary service to its customers. In order to stand out from its competitors, the marketer has to be unexpected. The customers expect their needs to be fulfilled but are delighted when the marketers go above and beyond what the customers was expecting for.

4) **Measures to use Customer Delight as a tool for Customer Retention:**

Customers cannot be retained by just a one-time service. Marketers need to constantly prove their loyalty to the customers and let them know how important they are to the marketer. In order to do this, omni channel services should be provided to the customers as customers are very informed and like to know about their product and the brand before making any purchase. Studies have proved that customers tend to visit different sites and various media platforms about the product before making a decision. Providing customers with various social media platforms, answering their queries, reducing average response time of the customers, providing them with an attractive websites and potential stores will help in retaining the customers. Along with providing customers with what they need when customers are provided with more than what they need it leads to a positive impact of the brand in the minds of the customers. They start trusting the brand and tend to repurchase based on their prior experiences. Sephora, the global cosmetics, beauty and Fragrance Company provides the customers with various offers and schemes. It allows the customers to try the product before they purchase it, beauty classes and access to Inside Community. These offers and services keep the customers coming back to the brand because of the service provided by the brand. Personalising services gives the customer an emotional connection with the brand.

5) **Customer Delight Measure:**

Along with understanding the conceptual realm of customer delight, it is important to understand how the construction of the measure of customer delight came into reality. The seminal article of measuring customer delight comes from the works by Finn (2016). His research focused on how to measure customer delight. Finn suggested that three emotions loaded on the delight factor were separate from the related factors of surprising consumption, positive affect, and arousal. These three scale items and their loadings on the delight factor include: gleeful, elated, and delighted. Barnes and Krallman (2019).

8. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that customer delight plays a silent but important role for the company in the market. Customer delight leads to a positive impact regarding the image of the brand and the products and services provided by them. Customer delight can be very challenging as the bar of expectation increases time to time and marketers need to come up with creative ideas to draw their customer's attention.

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