

Analyzing the Decision-Making Styles of Customers to Buy Sports Equipment

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[10.22098/rsmm.2024.14920.1345](https://doi.org/10.22098/rsmm.2024.14920.1345)**Abstract**

Purpose: Customers use different decision making styles to buy sports equipment. The purpose of this research is to analyze the decision-making styles of customers for buy sports equipment.

Methods: In this research, cross-sectional survey method was used and data collection was done through library studies and field investigation. The sampling method was carried out by simple random sampling and in this research, the standard questionnaire (CSI) of Sproles and Kendall (1986) with content validity confirmed by 8 professors of physical education and sports science and reliability of 0.78 using alpha coefficient Cronbach's used. Binomial and Friedman tests were used for statistical analysis.

Results: The results of the research showed customers have a favorable level of sensitivity to brand, quality, price and hedonism in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment ($P < 0.05$), in general, it should be said that High-quality products, more well-known brands, reasonable prices and shopping pleasure are among the influencing factors on the decision-making styles of customers to buy sports equipment. Also, they are sensitive to loyalty and fashion in buying sports equipment, and they do not show careless and wandering reactions in their decision-making styles ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: By knowing the facts in sports and positively influencing the decision-making styles of customers, it can be used to increase the purchase of sports equipment by them.

Keywords: Analysis, Buy, Customer, Decision Styles, Sports Equipment.

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Introduction

Sports is one of the issues that is seriously discussed in the world and is important in many ways (Farhadfar, 2013). Sport, in the lives of many people in the society helps to improve their health and well-being (Dowling et al., 2012). Sports, as a universal language, is a powerful tool for economic and social transformation and can be used to bring cultures closer to each other, reduce cultural conflicts and educate people (Pourkiani et al., 2015). Sports as an economic sector plays an essential role in the production and consumption of sports goods and services and the economic development of different societies (Mokhlis et al., 2009). In recent years, many measures have been taken to identify and analyze consumer behavior processes, and most of the companies that conduct research on consumer buying behavior try to find out what consumers buy and they find appropriate answers (Bagheriyekta, 2006). Knowing more about the characteristics of consumers can be an effective help to company managers in the successful supply of sports products (Mowen, 1988). Producers must produce what customers want and expose it in such a way that they are encouraged to consume it (Amirshahi, 2011). The decision target can be a product, service, idea or website that the consumer is related to (Klein and Sharma, 2018). One of the global scales in decision-making methods since 1986, which is used in all industries and commercial markets, is the model of consumer decision-making methods. In order to create a model of decision-making, Sproles and Kendall focused on three different approaches. The first approach of specific consumer characteristics is based on cognitive and emotional orientation. The second approach focuses on drawing the psychological profile and lifestyle of consumers, which shows the personality characteristics, opinions, values, choices, tastes and different opinions of the consumer, and the last approach focuses on consumer typology, which interprets the type of consumption of

customers based on economic, personality, moral and indifference types (Riahi, 2011). Customer reactions are more related to indifference towards a brand than carelessness in decision-making (Canabal, 2002). To identify how Customer make decisions, Sproles and Kendall created a specific spectrum with forty items under eight general consumer decision-making styles (Azizi, 2012).

In this part, we will examine some of the research related to this research: Arroyo and Diaz (2023): in a research titled "The effect of network capabilities, trust and pricing and selling capabilities on the impact of social enterprise" showed that companies should invest in the development of network communication capabilities and network structural capabilities, because access to scarce resources facilitates the company's position to act as a change agent in the network and can establish a close relationship with consumers. Also, the results showed that customer trust has an effect on pricing and sales capacities. Klien and Sharma (2022): in a study entitled "Consumer Decision-making Styles, Involvement, and the Intention to Participate in Online Group Buying" they stated that participation significantly mediates the relationship between entertainment and hedonism in consumer shopping. Price awareness, occasional purchase and brand loyalty influence the choice of customer's decision making styles. Interestingly, the style of decision-making in fashion shows a significant influence. This study makes a significant contribution to the literature of online consumer behavior and website management. We advise webmasters to keep consumer engagement high and consider consumer decision-making styles when targeting potential visitors and converting them into buyers. Fallahi et al. (2022): in a research investigated consumer decision-making styles in online shopping of sports channels and their research results showed that purchase decision-

making styles include: sensitive to quality, sensitive to convenience, sensitive to price, sensitive to opinions, sensitive to product introduction, diversification, brand-loyal, sensitive to advertisements and reliable, and the model of this research can provide a suitable insight for formulating marketing strategies of online businesses. Falahati and Akbariyazdi (2017): conducted a research on the decision-making styles of Sportswear consumers and announced that sports customers can choose the styles of easy access, quality, fashion, nationalism, search and confidence in buying sportswear. Diversity, excitement, luxury, hedonism, price sensitivity and brand-centricity are also influential in shopping. Tiaana (2014): conducted a research on the purchasing decision style of customers based on age and gender, and the results of his research showed that shopping by older people is less emotional and fashion-oriented, and they pay more attention to product quality. Ekhlesi et al. (2014): In a research, they showed that the price-sensitive decision-making style has the highest priority and the fashion-oriented decision-making style has the lowest priority. Gharacheh et al. (2013): In a research, they compared the shopping style of working and non-working female consumers and declared that among working women, the importance of the quality of purchased products has the highest priority, and spending time with the purpose of gaining pleasure is the lowest priority. Also, among non-working people, sensitivity to the quality and health of the product is at the highest rank and careless buying is at the lowest rank. Zhou et al. (2010): In a research in coastal and inland areas, they showed that among domestic consumers, decision-making styles of brand loyalty and sensitivity to trendy things are more, they also stated that consumers in deciding between pleasure and shopping as entertainment are different in these areas.

Today, the purchase of sports equipment by customers has not increased significantly

compared to the past years, and it continues to decline day by day, and customers do not show much desire to buy this equipment. As mentioned, customers use different decision-making styles to buy sports equipment, so knowing these decision-making styles is very important for sports equipment manufacturers and sellers. In today's world, with the growth of technology, we see that with detailed planning and focusing on the factors influencing the development of sports equipment purchases, conditions can be created so that customers are more willing to buy sports equipment. The decision-making styles of customers to buy this equipment from the market are derived from their mental approaches. In the current research, the territory has been examined in relation to three factors: thematic, spatial and temporal. The subject area of this research is in the field of sports marketing, which deals with the decision-making styles of customers to buy sports equipment. The spatial scope of this research was carried out in Rasht city due to the fact that the people of Rasht are very interested in sports and sports-related matters. Also, in relation to the time domain, the data collection of this research was done between May 2023 and July 2023, and the findings of the research are fully explained in the following sections. According to the conducted researches and their different results, the lack of a complete and new study is necessary to analyze the decision-making styles of customers to buy sports equipment; Therefore, in this research the decision-making styles of customers to buy sports equipment have been analyzed.

Materials and methods

The research methodology specifies the general approach of thinking and studying about the social reality or the phenomenon under study (Ghasemi et al., 2021). In the current research, a cross-sectional survey method was used and information was collected through library studies and questionnaires, which were completed in the field. The statistical

population of the research consists of customers (both men and women) of sports equipment in Rasht city, and the sample size was determined based on Morgan's table of 384 people, and the sampling method was also done by simple random sampling. In this research, the standard questionnaire (CSI) designed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) was used with content validity confirmed by 8 physical education and sports science professors and reliability of 0.78 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods and binomial and Friedman non-parametric tests were used for analysis, and this research was conducted using

SPSS 23.

Results

The results section presents a summary of the research findings, which presents the data and statistical analysis of the research. The results show that the participants in this research are 384 customers who buy sports equipment in Rasht. Among the subjects, 263 are men (68%) and 121 are female (32%), and most of the participants in this research are men. *Figure 1.* shows the demographic characteristics of the subjects.

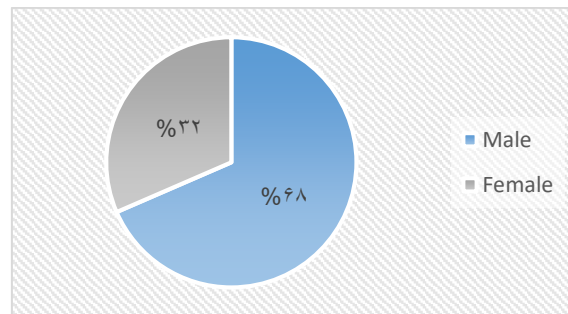


Figure 1. Demographic characteristics of the subjects

In *Table 1.* information on the eight groups of customer decision-making styles (sensitive to quality, sensitive to brand, sensitive to price, sensitive to fashion, hedonistic, loyal,

wandering in choice and reactive) with the degree of sensitivity and percentage of frequency it has been shown.

Table 1. The degree of sensitivity, frequency and frequency percentage of customers' decision-making styles

Decision-making style.	The degree of sensitivity	Percentage of frequency	Decision-making style.	The degree of sensitivity	Percentage of frequency
Sensitive quality to	Very much	31.81	Hedonistic	Very much	22.57
	Much	28.04		Much	34.14
	Medium	23.66		Medium	15.88
	Low	15.15		Low	15.23
	Very low	1.34		Very low	12.18
Sensitive brand to	Very much	32.25	Loyal	Very much	17.55
	Much	31.07		Much	20.34
	Medium	20.00		Medium	26.50
	Low	10.09		Low	20.63
	Very low	6.59		Very low	14.98
Sensitive price to	Very much	29.86	Wandering in choice	Very much	14.36
	Much	23.48		Much	19.85
	Medium	22.10		Medium	19.06

Sensitive fashion	to	Low	17.21	Reactive	Low	29.12
		Very low	7.35		Very low	17.61
		Very much	12.52		Very much	4.13
		Much	14.16		Much	17.03
		Medium	35.19		Medium	30.07
		Low	21.05		Low	25.69
		Very low	16.08		Very low	23.08

Table 2. shows the test of research hypotheses customers in buy sports equipment according to the decision-making styles of

Table 2. Decision-making styles of customers in buy sports equipment

Decision-making style		Test	N	Possibility	Prediction ratio	Approx. Sig.
Sensitive quality	to	Initial hypothesis	3 >	199	0.52	0.50 0.355
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	185	0.48	
		Total		384	1.00	
Sensitive brand	to	Initial hypothesis	3 >	290	0.75	0.50 0.142
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	94	0.25	
		Total		384	1.00	
Sensitive price	to	Initial hypothesis	3 >	177	0.46	0.50 0.000
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	207	0.54	
		Total		384	1.00	
Sensitive fashion	to	Initial hypothesis	3 >	189	0.49	0.50 0.920
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	195	0.51	
		Total		384	1.00	
Hedonistic		Initial hypothesis	3 >	254	0.66	0.50 0.148
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	130	0.34	
		Total		384	1.00	
Loyal		Initial hypothesis	3 >	167	0.44	0.50 0.000
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	217	0.56	
		Total		384	1.00	
Wandering in choice		Initial hypothesis	3 >	188	0.48	0.50 0.032
		Opposite hypothesis	3 <	196	0.52	
		Total		384	1.00	

Reactive	Initial hypothesis	3 >	200	0.53	0.50	0.288
	Opposite hypothesis	3 <	184	0.47		
	Total		384	1.00		

Table 3. shows that customers have a favorable level of sensitivity to brand, quality, price and hedonism in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment ($P < 0.05$), in general, it should be said that High-quality products, reasonable prices, famous brands and shopping pleasure are among the influencing factors on

the decision-making styles of customers to buy sports equipment. Also, they are sensitive to loyalty and fashion in buying sports equipment, and they do not show careless and wandering reactions in their decision-making styles ($P < 0.05$).

Table 3. Rating of customers' decision-making style based on Friedman's test

Decision-making style	M	Friedman's test	Ranking	Chi-square	df	Sig.
Sensitivity to brand	55.12	4.18	1	1.882	7	0.05
Sensitivity to quality	50.68	4.02	2			
Sensitivity to price	48.36	3.77	3			
Hedonistic	45.65	3.38	4			
Loyal	39.94	3.11	5			
Sensitive to fashion	34.32	2.88	6			
Reactive	31.07	2.55	7			
Wandering in choice	28.99	2.14	8			

The ranking results of customers' decision-making styles for buying sports equipment in this research showed that the first rank: Sensitivity to brand, the second rank: Sensitivity to quality, the third rank: Sensitivity to price, the 4th rank: Hedonistic, the 5th rank: Loyal, 6th rank: Sensitive to fashion, 7th rank: Reactive and 8th rank: Wandering in choice, which was obtained at a significant level ($P < 0.05$).

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to analyze the decision-making styles of customers for buy sports equipment. The obtained results showed that sensitivity to brand, sensitivity to quality, sensitivity to price, hedonistic, loyal, sensitive to fashion, reactive and wandering in choice are among the decision styles of customers to buy sports equipment:

1. Sensitivity to brand: The results of the research showed that customers are sensitive to the brand in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. A brand is a set of emotional and functional connections and a promise that the product will deliver on the customer's expectations. A brand provides specific information about an organization and products that differentiates it in the market. The research background specifically shows that it is necessary to pay attention to customers who are sensitive to the brand and to create a suitable image of the brand in the minds of the buyers of sports equipment to influence their decision-making style, because attention to the brand is related to the development and Selling more products helps. The results of this research showed that customers are sensitivity to brand characteristics in their decision-making style for buying sports equipment, and

special attention should be paid to this influential factor in the decision-making style of sports equipment customers. All over the world, customer-oriented organizations pay a lot of attention to their brand and know that the brand has a significant impact on the prosperity of a business, and they strive to meet the needs and change the decision-making style of customers who are sensitive to the brand. The results obtained are consistent with the researches of (Arroyo and Diaz, 2023), (Fallahi et al., 2022), (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Azizi, 2012) and (Zhou et al., 2010), because they believed that customers Brand sensitive, have a positive attitude and trust to buy products with more famous brands.

2. Sensitivity to quality: The results of the research showed that customers are sensitive to quality in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. In order to define quality, we must first provide a definition of the product and then move on to quality. What is the output of an organization and reaches customers and can include goods or services is called a product. Now it can be said that quality is the level and degree of fulfilling the requirements and demands of customers from a product. The background of the research shows that the demands and needs that are usually expressed by customers should be solved with high quality products in order to have an effect on their decision-making style for buying. The results of this research showed that customers are sensitive to the quality of products in their decision-making style for buying sports equipment, and this influential factor in the decision-making style of customers should be paid attention to, because the quality of a product can be different from the customers' point of view, that is, it is possible A product is a quality product for one customer and a completely poor quality product for another customer, so it is necessary to increase the quality of sports equipment to attract customers. In terms of sensitivity to quality, the results

obtained are in line with the researches of (Fallahi et al., 2022), (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Tiaana, 2014) and (Gharacheh et al., 2013), because the quality, the adaptation of sports equipment with its use, and the quality indicates that the users of sports equipment can meet their needs with it, and these researchers also pointed to the superior quality of the products.

3. Sensitivity to price: The results of the research showed that customers are sensitive to price in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. Price can be defined as the cost that a customer is willing to pay to buy a product, and pricing is a very important strategy, because it shows the value of products to customers. The background of the research shows that many customers pay attention to the price of the products in their buying, and most of the time customers prefer products with a lower price to buy. The results of this research showed that customers are sensitive to price in their decision-making style for buying sports equipment, and this influential factor in the decision-making style of customers should be paid attention to, because price can be used as a motivational factor in buying. And with a lower price or a bigger discount, he encouraged more customers to buy sports equipment, so that both the previous customers are retained and new customers are attracted to buy sports equipment. In terms of sensitivity to price, the results of this research are consistent with (Arroyo and Diaz, 2023), (Klein and Sharma, 2022), (Fallahi et al., 2022), (Tiaana, 2014) and (Gharacheh et al., 2013) and they are in the studies They have paid attention to the right price of the products.

4. Hedonistic: The results of the research showed that customers are Hedonistic in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. The pleasure of shopping is the personal feeling of the customer, which gives him a pleasant feeling after buying or consuming sports equipment. Research

background shows that many customers seek to satisfy their sense of pleasure in buying products, and if the process of buying sports equipment is easier and more attractive for customers, they will certainly enjoy shopping more. The results of this research showed that customers seek to satisfy their pleasure-seeking style in their decision-making style for buying, and attention should be paid to the factors that affect the internal motivations and desire of customers to use sports equipment in addition to efficiency and effectiveness. Internal motivators of customers include enjoyment and fun in shopping. If the process of buying sports equipment is enjoyable for customers, it will provide the possibility of buying again. Sports equipment sellers should be diligent in creating a pleasant experience for customers, and they can increase and improve the level of satisfaction and, consequently, customer loyalty and participation by creating a unique experience for customers. In terms of hedonistic, these results are consistent with the researches of (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Gharacheh et al., 2013) and (Riahi, 2011).

5. Loyal: The results of the research showed that customers are Loyal in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. Customer loyalty is positively related to satisfaction, as satisfied customers consistently prefer brands that meet their needs. Research background shows that loyal customers have exclusively purchased the products of one company and are not interested in changing their preferences from one company to another. The results of the research showed that customer loyalty is effective in their decision-making style for buying, and customers seek to satisfy their sense of pleasure. The feeling of loyalty among customers can have reasons such as: sports product, its distribution method and after-sales service, which is important to pay attention to these factors. A loyal customer is someone who repeats his purchase, and in order to increase customer loyalty, sellers should pay special attention to customer service and try to

increase their awareness of their brand, and provide programs to strengthen customer loyalty and offer points and Consider rewards for the most loyal customers. In the characteristic of loyal, the results obtained are in line with researches (Klein and Sharma, 2022), (Fallahi et al., 2022), (Azizi, 2012) and (Zhou et al., 2010).

6. Sensitive to fashion: The results of the research showed that customers are Sensitive to fashion in their decision-making styles for buying sports equipment. Fashion refers to the sudden and frequent change of taste of all or some people of a society and leads to a tendency to a certain behavior or use of products or adopting a certain style in life. The background of the research shows that fashion has always existed in human history and the sensitivity to fashion has provided the appearance of customers' lives, and attention to this importance in the production of products should not be forgotten. The results of the research showed that customers are always avoiding monotony and on the contrary, they welcome change and innovation in life and this tendency is normal and if the acceptance of change and innovation is done gradually and consciously, makes the life of customers pleasant, so sports equipment manufacturers should pay attention to fashion as an important factor in the decision-making style of fashion-sensitive customers for buying and make changes in their products with the passing of each season to increase customer satisfaction. In terms of being sensitive to fashion, the results of this research are consistent with the researches of (Klein and Sharma, 2022), (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Tiaana, 2014) and (Ekhlasi et al., 2014).

7. Reactive: The results of the research showed that customers do not show reactive behavior in their decision-making style for buying sports equipment. Due to the advancement of technology, customers are more aware than in the past and make less careless and reactive

decisions in their purchases. Background research shows that an efficient customer communication department can create a positive image of a brand and lead to increased customer awareness. The results of the research showed that customers are not careless in their decision-making style and do not behave reactively. In order to sell more sports equipment, attention should be paid to the characteristics of customers' reactive and careless purchases, because successful sellers always seek to identify the needs of customers and research them, and pay attention to different classes of customers in order to find the required sports equipment, provide them. The results of this research are consistent with the researches of (Klein and Sharma, 2022), (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Tiaana, 2014) and (Gharacheh et al., 2013) because they also mentioned this in their research.

8. Wandering in choice: The results of the research showed that customers are not Wandering in choice in their decision to buy sports equipment. Wandering in choice is a kind of ambiguous state in which a person has many questions in his mind and is not sure of the answers to these questions and is constantly in anxiety. The background of the research shows that customers may be confused when facing issues such as choosing and buying sports equipment, but considering that every person needs advice at every stage of his life, then sellers should give appropriate advice to buyers. provide and keep them away from confusion in shopping. The results of this research showed that customers are not confused in their decision-making style for buying, and customers should be reassured about buying sports equipment to influence their decision-making process and style, and by giving importance to customers, directly respond to their feelings, their needs and ambitions. These results are consistent with researches of (Klein and Sharma, 2022), (Falahati and Akbariyazdi, 2017), (Tiaana, 2014) and (Bagheriyekta, 2006). Finally, it

should be stated that paying special attention to the decision-making styles of customers, Sensitivity to brand, Sensitivity to quality, Sensitivity to price, Hedonistic, Loyal, Sensitive to fashion, Reactive, and Wandering in choice, has a significant impact on the buying of sports equipment.

Conclusion

Sports is a phenomenon that has been brought up under different titles in today's societies and a large group of people deal with it actively or passively in various forms. Today's competitive and fast-paced environment in all scientific and technological fields has prompted sports organizations to direct their goals and methods in order to know as many customers as possible and carefully examine all their needs. Because in this environment, only organizations can be successful that accurately identify the needs of customers and meet these needs in the best possible way with their products and services. The buying process and decision-making style of customers may seem difficult, but all customers go through simple steps in the decision-making process to buy and to choose the right product. In general, the purchasing decision process of consumers is summarized in the stages of recognizing the problem, searching for information, evaluating options, making a decision, and evaluating after purchase, and it is possible to take advantage of well-known brands by taking into account these issues and improving the quality of products. Reasonable prices, making shopping more enjoyable and being in sync with fashion, were influential in more customer loyalty and accurate choices without confusion in their decision-making styles for purchasing sports equipment. It seems that by knowing the facts in sports and positively affecting the decision-making styles of customers, it can be used to increase the purchase of sports equipment by them.

And at the end of this research, it is suggested that manufacturers make new and diverse

changes in sports equipment and can provide customers with better quality products at a better price. It is suggested that sports equipment sellers should give concessions such as discounts to strengthen customer loyalty in order to appreciate and repurchase old and current customers. It is suggested that the shopping space for sports equipment should be designed in such a way that customers can have more fun while buying this equipment and feel a good experience by making the right choice in the purchase. "No conflicts of interest are declared by the authors".

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