



Customer Satisfaction in Nutritional Supplements: A Literature Review and Analysis

KEYWORDS

customer, nutritional supplements, customer satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the literature on customer satisfaction in nutritional supplements. Definitions and models of satisfaction are considered and attention is given to the conceptualization of satisfaction by researcher concerned about consumers or customers, in general as well as by researchers focusing on costumers of nutritional supplements. Research findings are discussed and used to develop a model of customer satisfaction. The measurement of customer satisfaction and the findings of empirical studies are then reviewed, including summaries of effect sizes. Issues deserving further investigation and recommendations regarding research strategies are presented.

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is an ambiguous and abstract concept and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and product / service to product / service. The state of satisfaction depends on a number of both psychological and physical variables which correlate with satisfaction behaviors such as return and recommend rate. The level of satisfaction can also vary depending on other options the customer may have and other products against which the customer can compare the organization's products.

Herbalife International is an American multinational multi-level marketing corporation that develops markets and sells nutrition supplements, weight management, sports nutrition and personal-care products. Herbalife reported net sales of US\$3.825 billion in 2014 (www.herbalife.com). The company operates internationally and distributes its products in 95 countries (as of July 2015) through a network of approximately 3.2 million independent distributors (in.myherbalife.com). Critics also argue that the company does not make enough effort to curb abuses by individual distributors, though Herbalife has consistently denied such allegations. Herbalife is a member of the Direct Selling Association in most countries in which it operates.

Objectives

The review sought to:

- Identify determinants of satisfaction with nutritional supplements in different settings
- Explore gaps in existing knowledge so that they can be addressed by future research
- Consider the implications of the findings
- Summarise the results of studies that investigated methodological issues

Better information on the factors affecting satisfaction will assist healthcare providers and planners to improve the quality of the service they deliver to users. Guidance on methods of collecting feedback from consumers will ensure that reliable information for the decision-making process may be collected.

3. Research methodology

It is important to use appropriate and scientifically rigorous means to evaluate care so that accurate and meaning-

ful information is produced. Methodological weaknesses may generate misleading results and send out erroneous signals. To the extent that feedback influences designed and executed data collection exercises.

During the research study if the researcher is extracting the desired information from that source for the purpose of study then, such source is referred as the secondary source of data. Researcher has referred several secondary sources during the study.

Secondary source of data used by researcher includes: published articles, research papers, published books, different research work done previously, relevant papers or journals, magazine etc. Discussions on discussion forums, and also used other different types of reports from Internet sites and blog sites. The gathered secondary sources of data mainly grouped into following category:

Research paper published on customer satisfaction towards Herbalife product.

A study on customer satisfaction towards Amway product.

Articles available on customer satisfaction on nutritional supplements.

Research done on customer satisfaction.

Electronic searching involved seven major databases covering. Foreign language articles were excluded. Non-electronic search strategies involved outreach activities to a wide range of organisations, and personal contacts with leading academics in the field. The review was conducted in two phases: an initial search resulted in the analysis of articles, and further articles were added as a result of exploding reference lists and updating the electronic search. Abstracts were screened for relevance. Articles were excluded if the evidence they contained was not generalisable. Data were extracted from empirical articles checked.

4. Literature study

This paper attempts to review different literatures on customer satisfaction with reference to Nutritional supplements and presents studies made regarding the issues related with Nutritional supplements and customer satisfaction. An initial scoping search of electronic databases indi-

cated upwards. In order to confirm the research formulate the electronic search strategy, a sample of abstracts for 2014 were retrieved and examined. The first round of the review process involved scanning number of abstracts and the analysis of many articles. A further few articles were added as a result of exploding reference lists and updating the electronic search.

The scanning of abstracts in the test time showed that many publications of various types related to customer satisfaction. For the purposes of the review, three broad categories were identified, although some articles could be allocated to more than one group:

4.1 Background articles

This group included reviews, commentaries, editorials and opinion pieces about various aspects of the measurement of satisfaction, in different settings and from a range of perspectives. Although often drawing on the findings of existing primary studies, publications in this category did not present the results of new empirical work. Articles in this group included descriptions of institutional arrangements and discussion of conceptual issues surrounding the measurement of satisfaction with nutritional supplements.

Ali & Mohamed (2015) explain in their study about the consumer satisfaction in health drinks. In the study it was found that consumers give more importance to the quality factors than that of other factors. It is also found that not only price plays an important role in any product but service also plays equal importance in success of any product. Indian health drinks market is still in its infancy due to the lack of awareness among the population.

Shamal & Mohan (2015) research on Functional Food Acceptance in India main research criteria was based on Socio-Demographic and Lifestyle Determinants. This research was presented in 1st IIMA International Conference on Advances in Healthcare Management Services (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad). Foods developed to improve health or to reduce the risk of diseases are known as functional foods. This study aims to assess the socio demographic and lifestyle factors on the functional food products acceptance in India. Findings of the research are to understand the consumer behavior and its various determinants is very important in marketing particularly in positioning a novel product in a highly competitive consumer market.

Snehal Chincholkar (2016) studied on Consumer Behaviour towards Health and Dietary Supplements with the special reference of Mumbai City, study was published in INDIAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED RESEARCH. This paper is trying to identify the current status of nutraceutical Industry in India and a small consumer research has been conducted to identify consumer behaviour towards health or dietary supplements in Mumbai Region. As now Indian consumers are becoming health conscious and do not hesitate to consume health or dietary supplements. Study indicates that health or dietary supplements industry is ready to see a big change. India's future looks promising, for both manufacturers and consumers.

The summary of the background articles is given in Table 1

Table 1: Back Ground Article

Author	Context	Issue	Finding
Ali & Mohamed (2015),	Health Drinks	Consumer satisfaction about	The consumer prefers to purchase their Health Drinks which offer good quality and hygiene Health.
Shamal, S., & Mohan (2015)	Functional food	Acceptance in India Mainly with the Socio-Demographic and Lifestyle Determinants	It was found that socio-demographic and lifestyle factors are playing a major role in consumer attitude towards Functional food.
Snehal Chincholkar (2016)	Health and Dietary Supplements	Consumer behaviour with the reference of Mumbai city	Study indicates that health or dietary supplements future looks promising, for both manufacturers and consumers.

4.2 Empirical articles

This group included all reports of primary research in which satisfaction was measured or evaluations were reported. The diversity in the sample was marked along several dimensions:

In some articles, satisfaction was the target of the investigation, or the prime outcome variable, while in others it was one of many outcomes measured by authors.

Although some satisfaction studies were generic, others were highly specific, being measures of satisfaction with specific treatments for particular conditions or in named facilities.

The majority of empirical studies investigated the factors affecting satisfaction with nutritional supplements, using observational designs. A small number tested the effect of different methods of collecting satisfaction data, sometimes through experimental means.

Sanjeev Verma (2009) has analyzed to identify the effect of demographics and pricing on the purchase of health supplements. This paper also highlights some of the important reasons for the purchase of OTC health supplements in India and satisfying factors for consumers. The result shows demographics and pricing plays an important role.

Bedi & Paul (2013) attempts a study to determine the Indian consumer's preference for health drinks and the criteria used by consumers to choose health drinks. "An Analysis of Indian Consumers' Attitude towards Health drinks". In this whole study brand name was found to be the most important extrinsic cue followed by price and packaging. After this availability was found to be the most important intrinsic cue followed by nutrient composition influencing purchase decision for health drinks. Past experiences were also found to be the most important source of personal reference followed by doctor's and co-worker's/ friend's recommendation.

Paul & Bedi (2014), research was done with the aim to understand the association of demographic differences with regard to food label usage. The Moreover, it intends to identify the specific nutritive and non-nutritive information, and food attributes that consumers seek from food labels. The results indicated that Indian consumers, like consum-

ers in other countries, are reading nutrition labels and that these labels influence their purchase decisions. The research also indicated that quality and nutrition are the primary attributes which consumers seek from food products.

Irshad Ali and Yadav, (2015) examine existing state of Vindhya Herbal products in Bhopal, its birthplace. This study talks about other parameters like benefits/attributes consumer acquaintances with herbal products, awareness, preferential, source of knowledge, usage and attitude related to herbal products. "A study of consumer perception of herbal products in Bhopal (with special reference to vindhya herbal products)". Study declares there is not at all shortage in the demand for herbal products in the market. The first and foremost task before Vindhya Herbal is to increase the familiarity. There is high favorability of Vindhya Herbal products among its users.

The literature in this area is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Empirical articles

Author	Context	Issue	Finding
Verma (2009)	OTC health supplements	consumer's attitude	Findings are on the purchase of health supplements the effect of demographics and pricing is present.
Bedi and Paul (2013)	Health drinks	Indian Consumers' Attitude	The results of the study indicate that respondents give more weightage to intrinsic cues and personal references while purchasing health drinks.
Paul and, Bedi (2014)	Nutrition Label Usage	Consumer Response	Income level, education, and gender play a role in the usage of nutritional labels by the consumers.
Ali and Yadav (2015)	Herbal Products	Consumer perception	People use more than one brand of herbal brand products at a time. They switched over to another brand in case of non-availability.

4.3 Instrument-related articles

This group included articles reporting the design, testing and validation of instruments used in the measurement of satisfaction in a range of settings. In many cases, new instruments were the product of empirical studies that had confirmed the important factors affecting customer satisfaction in different settings and contexts.

Renuga devi, and Kalaiselvi (2014), conducted "A Study on Consumers' Preference And Satisfaction Towards Amway Nutrition Products With Special Reference To Coimbatore City", study was focused on almost all parameter of satisfaction and preferences in which conclusion are consumers mainly motivated by quality of the products. The popularity of the brand also, one of the factors urged the consumers for their purchase decision. Consumers want the product price should be reasonable.

In 2006, Achim spiller explained that customer satisfaction is a

relevant key to sales performance. In his study on "Agribusiness, Food, Health, and Nutrition". regression analysis reveals that overall satisfaction of customers' accounts for 32 % of sales per square meter sales area. An additional factor analysis identifies service and product quality as main determinants of customer satisfaction. Customers consider the freshness of fruit and vegetables as representative of the quality of the whole assortment.

In "A study on consumer's perception and buying pattern towards health drinks with special reference to rural areas of Coimbatore district" Dr. Sekar & Thangavel, (2016) shown the research is mainly dealt with the mindset of the consumers buying health drinks. Research findings are seems to be no vast difference between urban and rural consumers in knowledge, awareness, brand, and quality and consumption level of the products. Still many people are not consuming health drinks in these rural areas. This is so because people are not aware that health drinks are useful for increasing their nutritional value like to develop their physical and mental health.

Jamuna & Vanan, studied with a sample survey of 50 respondents which was undertaken to find out the awareness of Boost in Theni city. "A Study on Customer Satisfaction toward Boost with Special Reference to THENI District", the study mainly concentrated on general price level, quality about products, overall satisfaction about Boost in, general awareness, and consumer preferences of Boost. Findings are the respondents feel, it improves physical and mental health but majority of the respondents are influenced by television advertisement.

Deepalakshmi & Priyadharshini.V (2014) studies the pros and cons of Herbalife products and measures the customer's satisfaction and it also helps to identify the factors influencing the customers to choose Herbalife product. "A Study on Consumers Satisfaction towards Herbalife Product with Special Reference to Coimbatore city". Availability of the product would increase the company will also try to satisfy those product demands. In the process, the manufacturer could take into consideration the consumer requirements, so that it would be highly successful by satisfying the customers.

The literature in this area is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Instrument-related articles

Author	Context	Issue	Finding
Renuga devi, and Kalaiselvi (2014)	Amway Nutrition Products	Consumers' Preference And Satisfaction	Consumers' are satisfied with the quality and vitamin contents but they expect more on reasonable price.
Spiller (2006)	"Agribusiness, Food, Health and Nutrition",	customer satisfaction	Sales performance plays key role in customer satisfaction.
Dr. Sekar & Thangavel, (2016)	health drinks	consumer's perception and buying pattern	Many people are not consuming health drinks in these rural areas. This is so because people are not aware that health drinks are useful for increasing their nutritional value like to develop their physical and mental health.

Jamuna & Vanan,	Boost with Special Reference to THENI District	Customer Satisfaction	The majority of the respondents are influenced by television advertisement.
Deepalakshmi & Priyadharshini (2014)	Herbalife Product	Consumers satisfaction	Customers are satisfied with the results of product.

Discussion and Recommendation

In the face of finite resources and rising expectations, it has become increasingly important for providers to show the cost-effectiveness of new. The customer's perspective is considered to be an important element in this process because professional and expert views about the outcomes of importance can vary markedly from those of their customers. Competitive pressures in market-drive mean that user perceptions are of central concern to managers who need to retain existing customers and attract new ones in order to maintain or increase their market share. When consumers have a choice, poor system performance and unsatisfactory quality may result in provider changes and as word spreads through the community, significant lost revenue may result. The fact that nutritional supplement organisations depend on their customers, and that the customers do not depend on a single source of supply, underscores the need for customers -centered service.

A large number of studies highlight the marketing reasons for collecting information about consumer preferences and for targeting areas of service delivery that customers perceive to be in need of quality improvement. Such approaches emphasise that customer satisfaction is the key to financial success, a growing size, and the avoidance of costly nutritional supplements. Some authors have published details of strategies that they have implemented successfully to enhance satisfaction or reduce complaints. It has been suggested, however, that marketing and quality concerns are not always congruent, and that measures may be introduced to increase market share that are not necessarily synonymous with higher quality.

User feedback is also important for customers who are seeking to make a rational choice of nutritional supplements provider. In the results of standardised measures of customers satisfaction are used with other indicators to inform both suppliers and purchasers of nutritional supplements about consumer views of alternative plans.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that the consumers preference and satisfaction towards the products. As a consequence, the research model seems to be an interesting and necessary extension of the nutritional supplements service quality literature. However, the quality elements are not taken for granted. Customers are likely to be satisfied with the quality of the nutritional supplements as they receive. Availability of nutritional supplements in reasonable rates necessarily a big concern. Therefore, nutritional supplements providers must focus on how to create attractive elements that increase customer satisfaction levels and gain customer loyalty.

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