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Enhancing Customer Engagement in Hardware Enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City: An Approach based on SOR Framework

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Abstract

Aim: This study determined how every hardware enterprise located in Poblacion, Toledo City, enhanced customer engagement using the SOR framework.

Methodology: This study used a quantitative-descriptive and correlational design using surveys to determine the relationship between the variables. This study was conducted on every hardware store in Poblacion, Toledo City with 376 respondents. Purposive sampling was employed with the criteria of 18 and above of age, voluntary or willing to answer the questionnaires, and already experienced or bought in Hardware Stores at Poblacion, Toledo City.

Results: The findings revealed that majority of customers are into loyalty in terms of observable outcomes with an overall highest mean of 4.18. purchasing behaviour with an overall mean of 3.95 and customer feedback with an overall mean of 4.02. Furthermore, the findings indicated that customer perceptions has the biggest overall weighted mean of 4.23 towards hardware enterprises, followed by motivations with an overall weighted mean of 4.21 and attitudes towards the brand with an overall weighted mean of 4.16. Moreover, there is a moderate positive correlation ($p = 0.506, 0.511, 0.532$ and 0.533) on the relationship between product quality, price, in-store experience, brand reputation on customer engagement in hardware enterprises.

Conclusion: The study reveals that customer loyalty is crucial in hardware businesses in Poblacion, Toledo City, leading to satisfaction and retention. Customers value product quality, usability, and in-store experience, resulting in positive feedback and recommendations. The study also emphasizes the importance of customer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations towards hardware businesses. Factors like product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, and brand reputation impact customer engagement. Effective pricing strategies, a favorable in-store experience, and a reputable brand contribute to increased customer engagement.

Keywords: customer engagement, SOR Framework, hardware enterprises

INTRODUCTION

The retail industry is important to the economy because it provides direct services and goods for individual and household use which includes a wide range of businesses, from local grocery stores and shops to large supermarket chains and malls for everyone (Hameli, 2018). Additionally, while hardware stores provide a variety of goods and services necessary for building, maintaining, and repairing things, making them important parts of local economies (Wu, 2014a). Also it is a convenient one-stop shop for customers who plan small to medium-sized projects, like building a single home or renovating its interior or buying supplies directly from suppliers. It is more like a type of retail business which they both involve the direct sale of products to customers for home or personal use. They serve the requirements of contractors, homeowners, and do-it-yourselfers by providing a wide range of tools, building supplies and equipment for the customers within the hardware shop (Hayes et al., 2006). There are major hardware companies such as Gilbros Hardware, Rhats Enterprise, Marmil Enterprises, New Colors Station Enterprises, Ninas Glass Enterprises, Marmil SJ and Rhoda and Tata, these are the hardware businesses located at a prime spot in Toledo City, that are known to people as Poblacion, Toledo City.



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The City of Kenya, which is the Nakuru Town, discover that most of their hardware established the resources allocation affects strategic planning to a great extent (Waihenya, 2014), that the customer can easily locate the establishment on buying supplies for their homes in a convenient way as possible. There are two examples of hardware store businesses these are Home Depot and Wilcon Depot, recognized as the world's largest home improvement retailer has 83 stores in key cities and municipalities of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Concisely, "Hardware is prioritizing customer satisfaction through knowledgeable staff, attractive loyalty programs and DIY project kits" (Shukla, n.d.). The continued efforts to provide excellent home shopping to every Filipino in the country is part of the company's expansion campaign.

According to Bhowmick and Seetharaman (2023a), there is a strong relationship between product quality and customer engagement, especially in industries where customer expectations are high. The customer electronics industry was the focus of their study, which showed that increased customer engagement and brand advocacy result from products that meet or above customer expectations in terms of quality. Senachai and Julagasigorn (2024) investigated the relationship between in-store experiences and customer engagement in physical retail spaces. They found that immersive and satisfying in-store experiences significantly increase customer engagement, which in turn leads to longer store visits and higher purchase intentions. The study also made clear how important it is to maintain high levels of engagement in physical stores by emphasizing the importance of creating a welcoming and interactive environment. According to a research by Kumar & Pansari (2015), customer perceptions of service quality play a crucial role in determining customer engagement in the service industry. Positive customer impressions of a brand's service quality are positively correlated with customer participation, contentment, and advocacy activities, according to study. The study emphasized how crucial it is for service-based firms to comprehend consumer views in order to foster engagement and loyalty.

These studies show how customer engagement is changing in a variety of settings and businesses. Results highlight the significance of factors including product quality, in-store experiences and customer perceptions in influencing engagement. It serves to explore the ways in which comparable factors, such as customer perceptions and product quality, impact engagement in the context of Toledo City hardware businesses. Consistent with the conclusions of prior research, examining Toledo City's customer engagement can provide insightful information about how these variables manifest locally, especially in the hardware business, where product quality, price, and the in-store environment all play a role.

This research study emphasizes the key role of aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a multifaceted approach to not only enhancing customer engagement but also fostering sustainable development at the local and global levels. By carefully combining the marketing goals with the SDGs, particularly on Goal 9 "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure", the study aim to not only maximize the effectiveness of the enterprise's outreach but also contribute to broader societal progress. The commitment extends beyond mere profit-driven initiatives to encompass a holistic vision of business that actively promotes environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic resilience. Through this endeavor, this study strives to empower the enterprise and the community of Poblacion, Toledo City, to play an active role in advancing sustainable development, thus embodying the dedication to both local prosperity and the global pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable future.

Objectives

This study determined how every hardware enterprises located in Poblacion, Toledo City enhanced customer engagement by utilizing the SOR Framework. The researchers aimed to identify the challenges faced by hardware shops and examine their existing goal of enhancing customer engagement.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the observable outcomes of product quality, price, in-store experience, brand reputation, customer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations of customers in hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City?
2. What are the perceptions, attitudes and motivations of customers towards hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City?
3. What is the influence of product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, brand reputation on customer engagement?

Theoretical Framework

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model provides a psychological framework for understanding how environmental factors influence human behavior through internal processes. The model suggests that external stimuli, such as product quality, pricing, in-store experiences, and brand reputation, affect an individual's internal



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state, including their emotions, thoughts, and physiological responses. These internal states then mediate the impact of the stimuli on subsequent behaviors, like purchasing products, joining loyalty programs, giving feedback, and recommending brands. The S-O-R model emphasizes the importance of internal perceptions and emotions in determining behavior, showing how external influences can lead to specific consumer actions by affecting the individual's internal state. This approach is particularly valuable in consumer behavior analysis, as it highlights the need to consider both external stimuli and internal responses to understand how they drive behavior. Additionally, the connection between product quality, price strategies, in-store experience, and brand reputation (stimuli) have a major effect on customer perceptions (organism), which then drive their engagement behaviors (response), which overall affects the relationship of the customers and the store that can make a long-term relationship through their products, brands, price and experiences.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

"ENHANCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN HARDWARE ENTERPRISES IN POBLACION, POBLACION TOLEDO CITY: AN APPROACH BASED ON SOR FRAMEWORK"

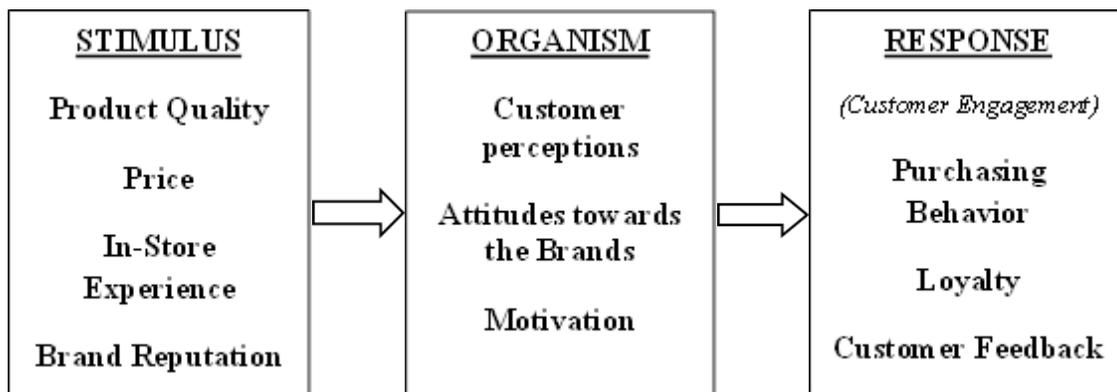


Figure 1. SOR Model from the source of Mehrabian and Russell in 1974.

In this model the SOR Model by Mehrabian and Russell in (1974) will be applied to understand on enhancing customer engagement that can affect the influence on consumer buying in hardware enterprise of the Poblacion, Toledo City.

Stimulus

This context the stimulus will use the marketing mix which talks about the products (Product Quality), Pricing (Pricing Strategies), Places (In- Store Experience) and Promotion (Brand Reputation) by hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City in enhancing customers engagement.

Product Quality

It refers the reliability, durability and usefulness of the products in hardware shop that can meet and satisfy the expectations of its customers. Studies by Anderson & Mittal (2000) demonstrated how perceived product quality impacts customer satisfaction and purchasing intentions. They highlight a strong correlation between product quality and customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intentions. High-quality products lead to positive perceptions, repeat purchases, and increased brand loyalty.

Price

It refers the strategy of the profit while maintaining the competitiveness in retail hardware business that the selection of prices is depend on the consumer demand and production expenses on the product or services. Research



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by Fassnaht & Husseini (2013) emphasized the importance of effective pricing strategies in retail management. They explored how pricing strategies influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. Pricing strategies play a crucial role in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase behavior. Customers are sensitive to price, but they also consider value and quality when making decisions.

In-Store Experience

It refers to the experiences of the customers in store with includes the factors such as the general environment (cleanliness and employee/ staff knowledge). Studies by Triantafillidou et al. (2017) highlighted the impact of in-store elements like ambiance, layout, and product quality on customer satisfaction. In-store experience is a critical factor in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Positive in-store experiences lead to increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Brand Reputation

It shaped by its ethical business practices, great customer experiences and steady of high- quality products that can affect consumer trust, loyalty and desire to interact with brand. Keller (2003a) emphasized the importance of brand reputation in building consumer trust and loyalty and how a positive brand reputation boosts customer loyalty and advocacy. Brand reputation plays a vital role in building consumer trust and loyalty. A positive brand reputation leads to increased perceived value and reduced perceived risk.

Organism

This context the organism will be represents the customers in every Hardware Enterprise in Poblacion, Toledo City that already exposed or experienced the factors of the stimulus which led the customer perception.

Consumer Perception

It refers on how the customers observe the products or services based on their own experiences in hardware shop that may influence their current buying behavior and satisfaction. Ailawadi et al. (1999) highlighted the impact of a positive store image on customer trust and loyalty. Simon & Usunier (2007) emphasized the role of situational variables in shaping consumer perceptions. Consumer perceptions of a store or brand are crucial in determining purchase decisions. Positive perceptions lead to increased trust and loyalty, while negative perceptions can discourage customers.

Attitudes towards the Brands

It refers the attitudes of the customers in Poblacion, Toledo City to the product they buy with their perception and evaluations on it. Gallart-Camahort et al. (2021) highlighted the role of brand personality in shaping consumer sentiments. Keller (2003b) emphasized the importance of brand equity in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes. Oh et al. (2019) explored the impact of brand authenticity on consumer attitudes. Consumer attitudes towards brands are influenced by various factors, including brand personality, brand equity, and brand authenticity.

Motivation

It refers the internal and external drivers which they are motivated on engaging and buy from hardware enterprises. Deci & Ryan (2000a) emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation. Vallerand et al. (2003) highlights the role of passion and intrinsic drive in goal achievement. Motivation plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior and decision-making. Intrinsic motivation and passion drive people to achieve their goals and engage with brands.

Response

In this context, the response which refers the customer's behavioral or responses from stimulus in SOR model in every hardware at Poblacion, Toledo City for the preferences for stores.

Purchasing Behavior

It is the behavioral response of every customer of the hardware enterprise by the stimuli provided that indicating the effectiveness on attracting and satisfying of the product and services. Solomon (2019) and Kotler & Armstrong (2018) highlighted the factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Wu (2014b) emphasized the



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role of emotional responses in driving purchase decisions. Consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including product attributes, pricing, brand image, and emotional responses.

Loyalty

It is from the organism response that show a level of engagement and commitment of the brand or services that can led to the long- term relationships and repeat business in the targeted locality. Mauri (2002) explored the key elements of loyalty programs and their impact on customer behavior. Bell & Lal (2002) provided evidence of the positive effects of loyalty programs on purchase behavior. Loyalty programs can be effective in retaining existing customers and attracting new ones, but their success depends on factors like program design and customer engagement strategies. Loyalty programs can be effective in retaining existing customers and attracting new ones, but their success depends on factors like program design and customer engagement strategies.

Customer Feedback

It refers on the hardware enterprise how they will ask feedback and reviews from the customers that led to know the customers' active involvement for continual improvement of the services and the products. Duan et al. (2008) highlighted the impact of customer reviews on brand perceptions and purchase decisions. Dellarocas (2003) investigated the motives driving consumers' desire to submit feedback or reviews. Customer feedback plays a crucial role in shaping brand perceptions and influencing purchase decisions. Positive reviews enhance brand credibility and attract new customers.

Hypothesis

Given the stated research problem, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between perceived product quality and customer engagement in hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City.

Hypothesis 2: Effective pricing strategies positively influence customer engagement in hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City.

Hypothesis 3: A positive association exists between the in-store experience and customer engagement in hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City.

Hypothesis 4: Brand reputation has a significant effect on customer engagement in hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a quantitative-descriptive and correlational design using surveys to determine the relationship between the variables in the SOR framework in which researchers measure two or more variables to investigate the effectiveness on enhancing customer engagement in every hardware enterprises in Poblacion, Toledo City.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted on every hardware store in Poblacion, Toledo City with 376 respondents. Purposive sampling was employed with the criteria of 18 and above of age, voluntary or willing to answer the questionnaires, and already experienced or bought in Hardware Stores at Poblacion, Toledo City.

Instrument

The data for this study was gathered using an adaptive survey questionnaire. The tool was verified by field specialists and underwent validity testing. Furthermore, the instrument was subjected to a reliability test with these results, internal consistency is excellent.

Data Collection

The data were collected, examined, and processed in accordance with the study's objectives and all guidelines for conducting research.



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Treatment of Data

Prior to data treatment, a normality test was performed, which revealed a non-normal distribution based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. As a result, nonparametric tests were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the observable outcomes of product quality, price, in-store experience, brand reputation, customer perceptions, attitudes toward the brand, and motivations. The analysis included the perceptions, attitudes and motivations towards hardware enterprises. Additionally, relationships between product quality and customer engagement, price and customer engagement, in-store experience and customer engagement, and brand reputation and customer engagement were examined.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed about the study's goal, ethical considerations, and consent will be obtained before data collection. Data will be securely stored and anonymized, and used only for educational purposes. Researchers will adhere to ethical guidelines, including independence, beneficiaries, privacy, and confidentiality.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data for this study were gathered from 376 respondents. The majority, 42.6%, are between the ages of 18 and 27, with only 2.1% being between the ages of 69 and above. Bhagat and Hofstede (2002a) found that consumer behavior varies significantly among age groups. Young adults aged 18-27 are more interested in technology, new trends, and DIY projects, which are closely tied to hardware stores. They often move into new homes, renovate, or pursue hobbies that require frequent trips to hardware stores. Older individuals, aged 69 and above, may show decreased participation due to differing life goals and physical limits. They may rely more on services and are less engaged in physically demanding activities like home renovation. Additionally, elderly individuals may have more stable living arrangements that require fewer hardware purchases.

When it comes to store preference, respondents often visit Rhats Enterprises by 44.4% falls on the highest (rank 1). Marmil Enterprises rank 2 visited by 14.1% of respondents, followed by Gilbros Hardware rank 3 (11.7%) and New Colors Station Enterprises rank 4 (10.1%). Rhoda and Tata had 9.6% visits to the hardware store and rank 5, followed by Nina Glass Enterprises with 5.3% rank 6, and lastly, Marmil SJ with 4.8% which falls on rank 7.

Observable outcomes of product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, brand reputation, consumer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations in hardware enterprises

Table 1 shows the observable outcomes of product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, brand reputation, consumer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations in hardware enterprises based on respondents' feedback.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators of Customer Purchasing Behavior

Item	PURCHASING BEHAVIOR		
	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Encounter goods made with good working conditions on the market today.	3.86	0.93	Often
Price has important influence in purchasing decisions.	4.25	0.83	All the time
Product features match the expectations of customers.	4.16	0.83	Often
Usability of the product has been assessing upon purchase decision.	4.20	0.84	Often
Working condition has satisfied customer expectations.	4.20	0.80	Often



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OVERALL MEAN

4.13

Agree

<i>Score Range</i>	<i>Interpretations</i>
4.21–5.00	All the time
3.41–4.20	Often
2.61–3.40	Sometimes
1.81–2.60	Rarely
1.00–1.80	Never

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators of Buying Frequency

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Buying frequency leads to more engagement in hardware store.	3.00	0.94	Once or Twice per Month

<i>Score Range</i>	<i>Interpretations</i>
4.21–5.00	Always
3.41–4.20	More than Twice Per Month
2.61–3.40	Once Per Month
1.81–2.60	Rarely
1.00–1.80	Never

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators of Customer Loyalty

LOYALTY			
Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Recommended company.	3.93	0.97	Often
Loyalty reason of attachment and obligation is customer retention.	4.03	0.81	Agree
Product quality meets the expectation of the customers.	4.32	0.69	Strongly Agree
Good service quality cater the concerns of customers.	4.28	0.70	Strongly Agree
Price was reasonable and negotiable.	4.27	0.69	Strongly Agree
Satisfaction was acquired by the overall outcomes.	4.27	0.69	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.18		Agree



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Score Range	Interpretations	
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Certainly
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Often
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Sometimes
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators Customer Feedback

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK			
Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
In-store feedback was frequently offered.	4.06	0.90	Often
Online Review was acknowledged.	3.93	0.89	Often
Direct communication with staff was provided.	4.07	0.86	Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.02		Often

Score Range	Interpretations
4.21 – 5.00	All the time
3.41 – 4.20	Often
2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes
1.81 – 2.60	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Never

In *Purchasing Behaviour*, customer's rated the highest weighted mean of 4.25 (Standard Deviation=0.83) indicating a strongly agreed on price has an important influence in purchasing decisions. Customers also agreed in terms of usability of the product has been assessing upon purchase decisions with a weighted mean of 4.20 (Standard Deviation=0.84). Working condition has satisfied customer expectations with a mean score of 4.20 (Standard Deviation=0.80) interpreted as agree. Product features match the expectations of customers with weighted mean of 4.16 (Standard Deviation=0.83) interpreted as agree and encounter goods made with good working conditions on the market today with a mean score of 3.86 (Standard Deviation=0.93) interpreted as often.

On the other hand, the results of *Loyalty* in customers rated highest weighted mean of 4.32 (Standard Deviation=0.69) noted as strongly agreed on product quality meets the expectation of the customers. Good service quality cater the concerns of customers as strongly agreed by the customers with a weighted mean of 4.28 (Standard Deviation=0.70). Price was reasonable and negotiable with a weighted mean of 4.27 (Standard Deviation=0.69) interpreted as strongly agree. Satisfaction was acquired by the overall outcomes with a weighted mean of 4.27 (Standard Deviation=0.69) interpreted as strongly agree. Loyalty reason of attachment and obligation is customer retention which has a weighted mean of 4.03 (Standard Deviation=0.81) interpreted as agree and recommended company which rated by the customer often has a weighted mean of 3.93 (Standard Deviation=0.97).

While the survey results of *Customer Feedback* shows that direct communication with staff was provided which has the highest weighted mean of 4.07 (Standard Deviation=0.86) interpreted as often. Furthermore, In-store feedback was frequently offered with a weighted mean of 4.06 (Standard Deviation=0.90) interpreted as often.



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Lastly, online review was acknowledged which a weighted mean of 3.93 (Standard Deviation=0.90) interpreted as often.

Based on the findings, loyalty can increase customer engagement by delivering high-quality goods and services on a regular basis, customizing interactions, and developing loyalty plans that offer discounts to loyal clients. Seamless interactions are ensured by excellent customer service and continuous. According to a study by Reichheld & Schefer (2003), e-commerce businesses that have loyal customers experience higher profitability, underscoring the significance of customer relationship management and trust. Research by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) conducted more recently has indicated that brand loyalty is still a strong indicator of consumers' intentions to buy, especially when brands successfully connect with consumers on an emotional level and through consistent quality. Chen et al. (2002) discovered that companies with a greater level of customer satisfaction and loyalty are those who actively seek out and address customer feedback. According to more recent study of Wirtz and Lovelock (2021), feedback methods are essential for improving customer experience and restoring service. The cognitive processes behind consumer decisions, such as the stages of need identification, information search, alternative appraisal, purchase, and post-purchase behavior, were the focus of studies conducted in the early 2000s by researchers such as (Blackwell et al., n.d.). The emergence of digital platforms has brought about a transformation in consumer behavior. Research conducted by Pavlou (2003) suggested that two important factors influencing online purchase decisions are perceived risk and trust.

Perceptions, attitudes and motivations of customers towards hardware enterprises

Table 5 present's the *customer's perceptions, attitudes toward the brand, and motivations* towards hardware enterprises based on respondents' feedback.

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Customer Perceptions

CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS			
Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Quality of merchandise consistently meets expectations.	4.33	0.65	Strongly Agree
Doing all over again to buy products from the company.	4.22	0.68	Strongly Agree
Having positive emotional relation to the company and feel attached.	4.15	0.75	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.23		Strongly Agree

Score Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators of Customer Attitudes Towards The Brand

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Use products from the company because it's the best choice.	4.20	0.68	Agree



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Intend to keep buying products because it's the best choice among others	4.19	0.70	Agree
Will not try seeing new product that somewhat different from the company.	4.11	0.74	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.16		Agree

Score Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation of Indicators of Customer Motivations

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Comparison to other brands, company is growing in popularity.	4.23	0.71	Strongly Agree
Employees are always kind and welcoming.	4.21	0.71	Strongly Agree
Products offered have a strong brand image.	4.18	0.69	Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.21		Strongly Agree

Score Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

Customer perceptions noted the highest mean score of 4.33 (Standard Deviation=0.65) interpreted as Strongly Agree when it comes to the quality of merchandise consistently meets expectations. Customers also rated Strongly Agree (Mean=4.22, Standard Deviation=0.68) in terms of doing all over again to buy products from the company and Agree on having positive emotional relation to the company and feel attached (Mean=4.15, Standard Deviation=0.75).

On the other hand, *Attitudes towards the brand* rated the highest mean score of 4.20 (Standard Deviation=0.68) in terms of use products from the company because it's the best choice, verbally interpreted as Agree. It also shows that customers agree on intend to keep buying products because it's the best choice among others (Mean=4.19, Standard Deviation=0.70) and Agree in terms of will not try seeing new product that somewhat different from the company (Mean=4.11, Standard Deviation=0.74).

However in *Motivations*, the highest mean score of 4.23 (Standard Deviation=0.71) are noted in comparison to other brands, company is growing in popularity interpreted as Strongly Agree. Additionally, in the case of



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employees are always kind and welcoming (Mean=4.21, Standard Deviation=0.71) customers rated it as Strongly Agree lastly (Mean=4.18, Standard Deviation=0.69) is rated as Agree.

Overall, *Customer Perceptions* has a weighted mean of 4.23 interpreted as Strongly Agree followed by *Motivations* with a weighted mean of 4.21 interpreted as Strongly Agree and lastly *Attitudes towards the brand* with a weighted mean of 4.16 interpreted as agree. Consumer behavior and engagement with a brand are significantly influenced by their opinions about the brand. Customers' perceptions of a brand are shaped by their total interactions with it, which include the caliber of the products, the level of customer service, and the brand's overall image (Keller, 2003c). An increased level of customer engagement have been found to be associated with better customer perceptions, especially since these perceptions go along with favorable customer experiences. Findings of Kotler and Armstrong (2018) demonstrated that, for instance, whenever customers assume that an enterprise offers high-quality products, they are more likely to spend time with it effectively and express behaviours like positive recommendation and frequent purchases. According to Ali et al. (2016) they found out in a recent study that customer perceptions—especially those about the overall quality of the product and its accuracy of the brand—have a major effect on engagement strategies like advocating and attachment. Strong customer perceptions are associated with a higher chance of customers turning into passionate brand advocates over time, which emphasizes the need of preserving a positive brand image. Engagement is additionally greatly influenced by the motivations of the client. The phrase "motivation" refers to the internal factors that encourage people to commit particular activities, such as endorsing or advocating a product. Motivation is the term used to describe the inner forces that push people to do specific actions, like buying a product or promoting one. According to Deci and Ryan (2000b) Self-Determination Theory, motivations can be intrinsic—driven by incentives from within—or extrinsic—driven by advantages from outside sources. Both types of incentives have been linked to customer participation; however, it has been discovered that intrinsic motives are particularly useful in fostering long-term engagement and brand loyalty. According to a research on customer journey analysis by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), understanding the driving forces of customers is valuable for enhancing customer engagement. As to the survey, buyers are more likely to connect deeply with a brand when they are influenced by their own satisfaction or the need for exceptional experiences, in contrast to when they are only motivated by discounts or deals. Batra et al. (2011) implemented research that demonstrate the importance of favorable brand sentiments for long-term customer engagement. Their research showed that when customers felt positively about a brand, they were more inclined to engage in supporting the brand and invest in repeat purchases.

Correlation between product quality, pricing, in-store experience, brand reputation on customer engagement

The study outlines the correlation between consumer involvement and product quality, pricing, in-store experience, and brand Table 3 illustrates the influence between product quality, pricing, in-store experience, brand reputation on customer engagement.

Table 8

Spearsman Rho Correlation Coefficient Table for Customer Engagement and Brand Reputation

	Customer Engagement				
	Overall Mean	Spearsman Rho Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision	Interpretation
H1a: Product Quality → Customer Engagement	4.09	.506**	<.001	Significant	Moderate Positive Correlation
H1b: Price → Customer Engagement	4.08	.511**	<.001	Significant	Moderate Positive Correlation
H1c: In-Store Experience → Customer Engagement	4.07	.532**	<.001	Significant	Moderate Positive Correlation



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H1d: Brand Reputation → Customer Engagement	4.07	.553**	<.001	Significant	Moderate Positive Correlation
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Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Size of Correlation	Interpretation
±.90 to ±.1.00	Very high positive/negative correlation
±.70 to ±.90	High positive/negative correlation
±.50 to ±.70	Moderate positive/negative correlation
±.30 to ±.50	Low positive/negative correlation
.00 to ±.30	Negligible correlation

The findings from the survey of H1a: Product Quality show that there is a significant relationship (p-value of less than 0.001) between consumer engagement and perceived product quality, with an overall mean of 4.09. The moderate positive correlation coefficient is 0.506. This indicates that when perceived product quality improves, so does customer engagement with hardware retail stores in Poblacion, Toledo City. This reveals an obvious hint of a positive correlation between customer engagement and perceived product quality and the rejection of the null hypothesis. Bhowmick and Seetharaman (2023b) study suggested that perceived product quality has an important affect on customer satisfaction and commitment.

H1b: Price demonstrates a moderately positive correlation—with an overall mean of 4.08, a correlation coefficient of 0.511, and a significance level of less than 0.001—between customer engagement and effective pricing strategies. This implies that the widespread use of effective pricing strategies by hardware companies will likely result in a boost in customer engagement. Hence, it can be argued that the null hypothesis is rejected and that there is a positive association between customer engagement along with successful pricing strategies. Effective pricing approaches have played an important factor in increasing customer contentment and attachment in the hardware enterprise, as found by (Bhagat & Hofstede, 2002b).

H1c: In-store Experience, which has an overall mean of 4.07, a significant p-value of less than 0.001, and a moderate positive correlation coefficient of 0.532, indicating a significant positive relationship between in-store experience and customer engagement. Customers' engagement at hardware stores in Poblacion, Toledo City, typically increases in connection with the level of craftsmanship of the in-store experience. The null hypothesis is rejected since there is a positive correlation between in-store experience and customer engagement. A properly handled in-store experience can greatly boost customer engagement, according to Grewal et al. (2009a), who emphasized the significance of a store layout, ambiance, and service quality in influencing customer satisfaction and retention.

A strong relationship between brand reputation and customer engagement is evident in the data shown in H1d: Brand Reputation, which has a moderate positive correlation coefficient of 0.553, a significant p-value of less than 0.001, and an overall mean of 4.07. Customers are more likely to interact with hardware businesses in Poblacion, Toledo City, as the brand's reputation improves. As a result, there is strong evidence supporting a positive relationship between brand reputation and consumer engagement, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Fombrun and Van Riel (2004a) claim that a positive brand reputation significantly impacts customer engagement, hence fostering more trust and loyalty.

The relationship between customer involvement, brand reputation, pricing, in-store experience, and perceived product quality tends to be essentially favorable in hardware store operations situated in Poblacion, Toledo City. The research findings reject the null hypothesis and confirm that enhancing these various areas contributes to improved consumer engagement. In order to drive higher customer engagement and promote the growing popularity of neighborhood hardware businesses, this indicates how essential it is to pay attention to product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, and reputation. These outcomes underscore the pivotal role these factors play in establishing enduring customer relationships, promoting business growth, and ensuring long-term viability. As stated by Homburg et al. (2005), showing the beneficial effect of product quality on customer engagement, higher perceived product quality raises customer satisfaction resulting in customer willingness to pay more. Hoseason (2003) supported the positive relationship revealed in the study by discussing how successful pricing strategies can increase customer satisfaction and engagement by matching pricing with customer expectations and perceived value.



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Grewal et al. (2009b) examined how customer involvement is impacted by the in-store experience. They emphasise how a well-managed in-store experience can greatly increase consumer engagement. This includes elements like store layout, mood, and service quality. Customers that have a positive experience in the store are more satisfied and loyal. Fombrun and Van Riel (2004b), investigated how customer behaviour is affected by brand reputation. They argue that a positive brand reputation plays a major role in boosting consumer trust and participation. Established enterprises have a greater possibility of gaining in and sustaining customers.

Conclusions

The findings clearly indicate that hardware stores in Poblacion, Toledo City, relied greatly on the loyalty of their clients in order to ensure customer fulfillment and engagement. Customers that place significant importance on product quality, effectiveness, and the in-store experience make positive feedback as well as suggestions.

The significance of customer attitudes, beliefs, and indications associated with hardware businesses are also highlighted in the study; these aspects are generally agreed upon. In addition, it is important to take into consideration the ways in which factors like product quality, pricing strategies, in-store experience, and brand reputation influence customer engagement.

The study's findings suggest that encouraging in-store experiences, cost-effective pricing, and a well-established brand, all enhance customer engagement levels. When everything is taken consideration, these findings points out how important it is for hardware businesses in Poblacion, Toledo City, to exceed the expectations of their customers and produce an enjoyable buying experience in order to foster trust among clients.

Recommendations

In response to the research's findings and conclusions, hardware stores in Poblacion, Toledo City can take the action of the following strategies into practice: To increase customer satisfaction, business enterprises should regularly assess the superior quality of the products they sell, adjust pricing, enhance in-store experiences, generate loyalty programs, nurture a positive brand image, use feedback provided by customers, cultivate positive attitudes, and keep an eye on performance indicators. Fostering positive reputations and repeat customers, providing high-quality products at affordable rates, and upholding an efficient retail ambiance all contribute to a competitive marketplace and high satisfaction among customers. Customer loyalty and happiness may be increased by swiftly responding to input from customers, providing tailored promotions, and keeping an eye on engagement metrics. These actions will ultimately result in long-term business success and satisfied customers. It is suggested that future researchers carry out a similar investigation in a new setting, taking into account other Toledo City firms. Researchers are advised to incorporate a sense of risk and confidence as additional factors in their analyses for a more comprehensive understanding. Researchers should investigate the relationship between employee engagement and its potential to improve customer engagement. Additionally, they are encouraged to examine the long-term effects of these strategies on customer loyalty, brand perception, and profitability.

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