
Brand Loyal Behaviour of Subjects with Internal and External Locus of Control: A Comparative Analysis

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Brand loyalty has always been a matter of interest to marketers as well as researchers in consumer behavior. Every consumer possesses certain unique attributes and characteristics which affect consumer's attitude and behavior in a typical manner. Every individual differs in terms of personality traits and characteristics, resultantly react differently in the same environment. People with different locus of control (internal/external) tend to behave differently in the same situation.

In the present study an attempt has been made to investigate the difference in levels of brand loyalty of consumers (with internal and external locus of control) for different products. The obtained findings reveal that subjects with internal locus of control tend to be more loyal as compared to externals. The findings further reveal that the level of brand loyalty of compared groups differs product wise.

Key Words: Brand Loyalty, Internal and External Locus of Control, Consumable Products

Introduction

Brand loyalty is a topic of much concern to all marketers in current market scenario. Every company seeks to have loyal consumers for its products and services. In this era of global competition and brand proliferation, marketers interested to improve their market positions have to be successful both in getting more brand users and increasing their loyalty. Brand loyalty certainly comes as a blessing for marketers to introduce new products/brands and reposition their existing products in the market. Most of the consumer products succeed in market after creating a base of satisfied consumers who stay loyal to a specific brand. The presence of brand loyalty ensures that a lot of additional profits flow to the brand. Brand loyal consumers provide the basis for a stable and growing market share, and can be a major intangible asset of a company (Raj, 1985). In the highly competitive and fast changing market consumer loyalty to the brand permits marketers to maintain a comfortable and lasting position in the market.

Analysis of loyalty patterns of consumers help the business firm in learning about their product positioning in the competitive market, which is helpful in positioning strategy. Brand loyalty also gained importance in current marketing scenario due to growing realization among marketers that it is more cost-effective to retain existing consumers than to attract new consumers. It is estimated that to attract new consumer is five to six time costly than to retain an existing consumer (Kepferer; 1997, Roserberg and Czpiel; 1983).

Brand loyalty has always been a matter of interest to marketers as well as researchers in consumer behavior. Significant attempts have been made in the past to understand the concept of brand loyalty. The basic issue among the researchers was whether to define the concept in terms of consumer behavior or consumer attitudes. Consequently, two approaches have emerged to measure the brand loyalty i.e. behavioural approach and cognitive/attitudinal approach. Behavioral approach measures the brand loyalty in terms of sequence of purchases of same brand during the last purchases occasions or large proportion of purchases devoted to most preferred brand. Whereas, attitudinal approach views that brand loyalty is consistent purchase of the same brand overtime with a favorable attitude or commitment to the brand.

Consumers have certain differentiable attributes and on the basis of these attributes, the marketers for their specific objectives can divide them into different segments. Every individual has a very personal and unique way of responding to his environment. Behavior of every individual is different from another and can be identified in terms of certain unique characteristics called 'personality traits'. Rotter (1966) identified personality trait known as locus of control (internal/external) to explain behavioral differences among individuals. He proposed that people tend to attribute the causes of their behavior primarily to either themselves (internal) or environmental variables (external). People who believe that they can control the events and consequences that affect their lives are said to possess an internal locus of control. On the other side of this personality dimension are those who believe that outcome is the product of circumstances beyond their immediate control. These individuals are said to possess external locus of control and tend to attribute outcomes to environmental causes, such as luck or task difficulty etc. Research findings on locus of control demonstrate important behavioral differences between internal and external e.g. internal display greater work motivation, they have stronger expectations and efforts that

leads to performance, they exhibit higher performance on tasks involving learning or problem solving and seems to be more confident about their decisions, whereas, external tend to be more anxious and less confident than internal (Spector, 1982). Thoughts and beliefs about one's ability to control and manage events, tendency of seeing the reasons of success or failure as individual's own capabilities, behavior and struggles is expressed as internal locus of control (Durukan and Bozaci, 2011).

Marketers have long been intrigued by the possibility of appealing to consumers in term of their personality traits. They have felt that consumer's product choice (and even brand choice) and the ways the consumers respond to firm's promotion efforts are likely to be influenced by personality factors. For this reason, advertising and market people have frequently depicted specific personality traits or characteristics in their advertising message. Thus, in the present study one of the personality traits (i.e. locus of control) has been considered to investigate the differences in the behavioral pattern of internals and externals on extent of brand loyalty.

Review of Literature

The possibility that a brand loyal segment could be identified in terms of certain purchasing characteristics, which would set it apart from all other consumer segments, has intrigued the academicians and researchers in the field of consumer behavior. A number of studies have reported that personality characteristics of consumers affect their buying behavior. Carman, (1970) and Day, (1969) in separate studies of consumer-packaged goods observed that brand loyal consumers tend to have more self-confidence in their brand choice. Baldinger and Rubinson, (1996) also concluded that positive attitude toward the brand has a dramatic effect on brand loyalty and convert low buyers to high or to retain high loyal buyer overtime. Reichheld, (1993) reported that people who buy because of personal preferences tend to be brand loyal than those who buy a brand because of an advertisement. He further observed that those who buy at the standard price are more loyal than those who buy on price promotion. However, Richens, (1983) reported that personality characteristics including dogmatism, locus of control and self-confidence are only weakly related to complaint behavior. Mishra and Bharagva, (2000) explored the relationship between compulsive buying behavior and brand switching- tendencies among consumer. Their findings reveal that brand

switcher have shown more compulsivity than brand loyalists. Durukan and Bozaci (2011) conducted a study to explore the role of individual characteristics on customer loyalty. The findings of study reveal a meaningful and significant relation among emotional stability, openness to experience, agreeableness, internal locus of control, masculinity level, self-esteem and customer loyalty. Torkestani, Dehqanan and borujerdi (2015) examined the impact of locus of control orientation and emotional intelligence on the customer's intention to loyalty after experiencing service failure. The results obtained from the study demonstrated that customers with external locus of control orientation and high emotional intelligence are more willing to be loyal to the insurance companies, in comparison with those customers who have internal locus of control orientation.

Review of literature clearly indicates that majority of these studies have been conducted in the western countries. Indian consumer's behavior may differ in comparison to the western consumers because of difference in consumption patterns and purchasing characteristics. So, the researches conducted abroad in an environment different from Indian markets found less applicability in Indian consumer markets. Therefore, in the present investigation an attempt has been made to investigate the brand loyalty patterns among Indian consumers those are differ too with different locus of control for different products of domestic use.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to compare the behavior of subjects with internal and external locus of control on extent of brand loyalty. To justify the main objective of study, the following objectives are determined.

- (1) To study the pattern of brand loyal behaviour of externals and internals.
- (2) To compare the extent of brand loyalty among internals and externals towards food products (i.e. tea, vanaspati, and refined-oil).
- (3) To compare the extent of brand loyalty among internals and externals towards toiletries (i.e. bathing soap, detergents and toothpaste.)

Research Methodology

The present study aims to compare the extent of brand loyalty among internals and externals toward food product (i.e. Tea, Vanaspati, Refined oil) and toiletries products (i.e. Bathing soap, Detergents, Toothpaste). These products have been taken keeping in mind the facts that (a) these products are frequently purchases with high frequency of usage, (b) ready availability of multiple brands, (c) extensively advertised by marketers, and (d) these have relatively low price and low cross elasticity of demand.

Sample

The sample of 600 respondents was drawn from Haryana. To make it more representative sample, three districts from each zone were drawn randomly. Efforts were made to include the equal size of respondents from both urban as well as rural areas of 12 districts of Haryana.

Tool

The present study is of descriptive nature and based upon the primary data. The brand loyalty questionnaire used in the present study designed on the basis of likert type four-point scale (i.e. always, mostly, seldom, and never). The questionnaire comprising brand loyalty measures (i.e. proportion of purchase, history of purchase and overall brand loyalty) used to collect data from the respondents. Additional questions related to respondent's brand use and frequencies of change in usage of brands were also asked to assess their brand loyalty. To assess locus of control, a scale developed by Collins (1974) has been administered to identify subjects having internal and external locus of control. The scale consists of 46 items (i.e.23 for internal and 23 for external locus of control). The responses for each item has been obtained on five point likert type scales with labels from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The odd even method was used to compute spilt half reliability, which was found to be .89, which indicates high level of reliability of the scale.

Administration of Tests

The tests used in the present study were administered individually to all the subjects. The subjects were contacted at their respective working place as well as residence

and their willingness to impart related information was sought. The tests were administered after developing rapport with the respondents to get relevant information.

Scoring of the Tests

The brand loyalty questionnaire used in the present study was designed on the basis of likert type four-point scale (i. e. always, mostly, seldom, and never). A score of 1 for the response 'never', '2' for 'seldom' 3 for 'mostly' and 4 for 'always' was assigned. For every item score can range from 1 to 4. The scoring of the locus of control scale was done according to the procedure laid down by the author. The locus of control scale was scored on five-point scale. A score of 1 was assigned to the response 'strongly disagree', 2 to 'disagree' 3 to 'neither agree nor disagree' 4 to 'agree' and 5 to 'strongly agree' for positive phrased statements and the score of negatively phrased statements were reverse to it. Initially each item was scored separately and then a single total score was obtained by adding up individual item score. For segregating the respondents in two comparable groups i.e. internals and externals the quartile deviation Q1 and Q3 were computed. The subjects obtaining score above Q3 were taken in external group (n=166), and subjects obtaining score below Q1 were taken in internal group (n=155) for the present study. However, balanced locus of control group (n=279) has been excluded from analysis while comparing two extremes groups i.e. internals and externals on the measures of brand loyalty.

Result and Discussion

Mean score of each group (internals and externals) were calculated to measure the extent of brand loyalty for different products included in the study and t-test was applied to find out significant differences between comparable groups of internals and externals on the measures of brand loyalty.

A close inspection of the table-1 reveals that the extent of brand loyalty differs product-wise for both the groups. So, it can be concluded that brand loyalty is product-specific i.e. consumers loyal to brand in one product category may have little loyalty to brand in other categories.

The means, SDs and t-values of the scores of internals vs externals on measures of brand loyalty (i.e. POP, HOP, OBL) for all branded products included in the

study (i.e. tea, vanaspati, refined oil, bathing soap, detergents and toothpaste) have been presented in table 2. An inspection of the table reveals that internals had scored higher as compared to externals for all the products. Internals scored significantly higher on the measure of proportion of purchase ($t=2.72$, $P<.01$) as compared to externals their means being 3.42 and 3.20 respectively for purchase of tea. This suggests that internals tend to purchase greater proportion of tea of their preferred brand as compared to externals. The mean score of internals and externals on history of purchase are 3.37 and 3.11 respectively. The t-value equals to 2.49, which is significant at .05 level. It indicates that internals tend to purchase their preferred brand of tea for a fairly longer period of time as compared to externals.

Moreover, the comparison of mean scores of internals and externals on the measure of overall brand loyalty has yielded significant t-value ($t=3.01$, $P<.01$), suggesting thereby that internals are more brand loyal towards a specific brand of tea as compared to externals, as their means being 6.79 and 6.31 respectively.

It is evident from the results that internals and externals do not differ on extent of brand loyalty for vanaspati. The obtained t-values for different measures of brand loyalty do not qualify the minimum significance level of i.e. .05, suggesting thereby that internals and externals have almost the similar brand loyal behavior in case of vanaspati.

However, in case of refined-oil, the mean scores of internals and externals on proportion of purchase are 3.11 and 2.91 respectively. The t-value is 1.97, which is significant at .05 level. It indicates that internals devote a large proportion of purchase to specific brand of their choice of refined-oil as compared to externals. Similarly, the obtained t-value on the measures of brand loyalty i.e. history of purchase measure ($t=2.62$, $P<.01$) and overall brand loyalty ($t=2.70$, $P<.01$) are significant. The results suggest that internals tend to be more brand loyal to specific brand of refined-oil of their choice as compared to externals.

However, internals and externals do not differ significantly on brand loyalty and have almost similar purchase behavior for bathing-soap that is clear from yielded non-significant t-values on proportion of purchase ($t=1.21$, $P>.05$), on history of purchase ($t=1.55$, $P>.05$) and on overall brand loyalty ($t=1.71$, $P>.05$).

It is clear from the results that two compared groups significantly differ on the measures of brand loyalty for detergents. The obtained t-values on proportion of purchase ($t=3.37$, $P<. 01$), on history of purchase ($t=2.05$, $P<. 05$) and overall brand loyalty ($t=2.44$, $P<. 05$) reveal this fact. These findings suggest that internals tend to be more brand loyal and stick to their decisions for purchase of specific brand of their choice for a longer period of time as compared to externals.

It is clear from the results of the present investigation that internals differ significantly on all three measures of brand loyalty for the purchase of toothpaste. The obtained t-values ($t=2.11$, $P<.05$) for proportion of purchase, ($t=2.54$, $P<.05$) for history of purchase and ($t=2.63$, $P<.01$) for overall brand loyalty suggests that internals tend to devote a large percentage of their purchases to the single most preferred brand of their choice, they stick to their preferred brand for a fairly longer period of time and tend to exhibit more brand loyal behaviour as compared to externals.

Main Findings:

The findings, which have emerged out from the present study are as under:

- 1) Consumers exhibit product-specific brand loyal behaviour.
- 2) Consumers having internal locus of control tend to be more brand loyal as compared to externals for tea and refined-oil.
- 3) Internals are higher in brand loyalty for detergents and toothpaste as compare to externals.
- 4) However, both internals and externals have almost similar levels of brand loyalty for vanaspati and bathing soap.

Discussion:

The obtained findings of the present study are discussed in the light of earlier researches. In the present environment of globalize and highly competitive market, there is proliferation of brands for non-durable products. The availability of maximum number of brands leads to difficulty in decision making for consumers. The consumers have to take decision keeping in mind many things i.e. quality of the product, price, availability, and value for money etc. for purchasing the product to satisfy their needs. Moreover, the consumer

wants that single product should satisfy them from all related aspects. This result in a specific type of consumer behavior labeled as brand loyal behavior.

The findings of the present study reveal that consumers tend to be brand loyal for their specific brands and exhibit a specific type of brand loyal behavior in forms of proportion of purchase and history of purchase. Douglas and Leonard,(1983) reported that consumers remain loyal to a specific brand with which they have been satisfied instead of purchasing a new or untried brand to avoid risk and the fear of post-purchase dissatisfaction. Consumers may remain loyal to a brand because they perceive some unique value in the brand that no alternative can provide. This uniqueness may derive from greater trust in the reliability of a brand or from more favorable affect when consumer uses the brand. The finding of the present study is in conformity with the findings of Brown, (1952), Cunningham, (1956), Singh, (1981), and Sharma, (1984), who reported that majority of consumers (though percentage of loyal buyers differ study-wise) were found loyal to a specific brand of their choice.

The finding of the present study also reveals that the level and type of brand loyal behaviour of externals and internals differ product-wise. The obtained results get support from previous researches conducted by Brown, (1952), Cunningham, (1956), Frank et al, (1967), Telson, (1962), Sharma, (1984) and Singh, (1981). Brown and Cunningham on the basis of their respective studies concluded that buyers were differential loyal to different product classes and attributed these differences to the differences in the nature of products. The phenomenon of inter-product variation in brand loyalty has been noticed by Singh (1981), he observed variation in brand loyalty for different products. Brand loyalty for tea was high at 52.9%, for detergents it was 50%, for toothpaste it was 41.2% and for bathing soap it was low i.e.17.6%. Sharma (1984) also reported differences in degree of brand loyalty for various products and attributed these differences to different nature of products and decision-making role assignment in a family varies over product groups.

The most general findings of the present investigation also conclude that subjects having internal locus of control tend to be more brand loyal as compared to subjects having external locus of control. These findings are in conformity with the previous researches. Spector (1982) reported that internals tend to be more confident in their decision-making as compared to externals. Further, the purchase of any brand depends upon

consumer's decision-making. Thus, it can be attributed that internals may be found to be more loyal. Richens (1983) observed that subjects having internal locus of control exhibit minimum complaint behavior and remain satisfied with their purchase which leads them to repurchase the same brand that results into brand loyalty. Reichheld (1993) reported that people who buy because of a personal referral tend to be more brand loyal than those who buy because of an advertisement. Carman (1970) and Day (1969) have also reported that loyal buyers were found to have higher degree of self-confidence in their decision-making. The present finding can be interpreted in the light of above studies. Thus, it can be attributed that internals are more rational and confident in their decision-making, stick to their decision and tend to be more brand loyal as compared to externals.

Implications of Study for Marketing Managers:

- 1) Marketers must ensure that product represented by that brand lives upto (better yet, exceeds) its consumer's expectation to generate brand loyalty.
- 2) Marketers should adopt mechanisms to reinforce brand loyal behaviour of consumers.
- 3) Marketers should focus their attention on building their brand image first and only after that fight for a high sale volume.
- 4) Number and variety of different benefits may be involved in one brand to restrict multiple brand purchase behaviour.
- 5) Marketers must build innovation into existing product to upgrade product for longer retention of brand loyal consumers.

Table:1 Mean Scores of Internals and Externals groups for different products on the measures of Brand Loyalty i.e. Proportion of Purchase(POP), History of Purchase(HOP) and Overall Brand Loyalty(OBL).

Measures	Group	Tea	Vanaspati	Refined-oil	Bathing Soap	Detergents	Tooth paste
POP	Internals	3.42	2.82	3.11	3.34	3.53	3.52
	Externals	3.20	2.74	2.91	3.25	3.30	3.35
HOP	Internals	3.37	2.94	3.06	3.26	3.39	3.33
	Externals	3.11	2.70	2.74	3.08	3.17	3.04
OBL	Internals	6.79	5.76	6.17	6.60	6.92	6.83
	External	6.31	5.45	5.65	6.33	6.57	6.39

Table:2 Means, SDs and t-values of internal and external groups on Proportion of Purchase, History of Purchase and Overall Brand Loyalty measures for different products.

Products	Group	N	Proportion of Purchase			History of Purchase			Overall Brand Loyalty		
			Means	S.D.	t-value	Means	SD.	t-value	Means	SD	t-value
Tea	Internals	155	3.42	.61	2.72**	3.37	.89	2.49**	6.79	1.29	3.01**
	Externals	166	3.20	.83		3.11	.98		6.31	1.56	
Vanaspati	Internals	155	2.82	.86	0.78	2.94	1.07	1.92	5.76	1.72	1.54
	Externals	166	2.74	.98		2.70	1.17		5.45	1.89	
Refined oil	Internals	155	3.11	.85	1.97*	3.06	1.06	2.62**	6.17	1.60	2.70**
	Externals	166	2.91	.97		2.74	1.13		5.65	1.85	
Bathing soap	Internals	155	3.34	.66	1.21	3.26	1.00	1.55	6.60	1.38	1.71
	Externals	166	3.25	.67		3.08	1.08		6.33	1.45	
Detergents	Internals	155	3.53	.54	3.37**	3.39	.93	2.05*	6.92	1.14	2.44*
	Externals	166	3.30	.68		3.17	.99		6.57	1.42	
Toothpaste	Internals	155	3.52	.66	2.11*	3.33	.96	2.54*	6.83	1.40	2.63**
	Externals	166	3.35	.78		3.04	1.08		6.39	1.60	

* t-value is significant at .05 level of significance

** t-value is significant at .01 level of significance

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