

**IMPACT OF CULTURAL FACTORS ON BRAND
LOYALTY OF RURAL BUYERS TOWARDS BATH SOAP
(A CASE STUDY OF BHIWANI DISTRICT IN HARYANA)**

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Abstract

The Indian rural market offers a big attraction to marketers. Brand loyalty is an important component of enterprise marketing strategy and it is a major requisite to foster brands' assets. The development of a brand name entails a complex structure which must be understood in order to build a strong brand. This study aims to analyze the impact of cultural factors on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap. Brand loyalty is an important component of enterprises marketing strategy. This study aims to analyze the five major factors of culture on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap. The results of the study highlight the impact of the value for money and recognition, regular use and exciting, brand personality, reliability, and variety on the brand loyalty. The result of the study highlights the family relations, family prestige and quality of the brands, self-attention, cultural practices, and other cues. It can be concluded that the brands are successful because people prefer them to ordinary products.

KEYWORDS: Brand loyalty, cultural factors, 4Ps of marketing, factor analysis.

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Introduction

Rural India is vast in size but amorphous in detail. Yet, the rural market represents the largest potential market in the country. According to a survey, rural consumers spend about USD 9 billion per annum on FMCG items and product categories such as instant noodles, deodorant and fabric, with the pace of consumption growing much faster than urban areas. The rural Indian market will be larger than the total consumer markets in countries such as South Korea or Canada today, and almost four times the size of today's urban Indian market and estimated the size of the rural market at \$577 Billion. It is no wonder that even MNCs have cottoned on to the idea of a resurgent rural India waiting to happen for their FMCG products.

Culture is a powerful force in regulating human behavior. Although many researchers have sought to understand the impact of culture on consumer behavior, most of their attempts were made in a piecemeal basis (i.e. examining effects of certain aspect of culture on a specific aspect of consumer behavior). Relatively little attempt has been made to develop a general framework of cultural influence on consumer behavior that examines effects of various aspects of culture on various aspects of consumer behaviors at the same time.

Statement of the problem

The market structure in India is having rural and urban markets. There are certain unique features which call for a number of marketing strategies to be distinctively developed to suit the rural and urban market behaviour. The Indian rural market is worth studying closely, not only because of its unique size and spread, but also due to the variety of language, polity, religion, customs and values existing within. While a sound distribution network and an intricate study of the villages are essential for making inroads into rural markets, any generalization, whatsoever, about rural India could be wrong. The focus of corporates, therefore, needs to be

on the introduction of brands specific to rural customer and developing specific marketing mix and strategies. The main challenge for marketers to exploit the rural market potential has been the wideness in area to be covered and the location of the population. Hence, there is a great need to solve the problems by consistent changes in the 4Ps of marketing mix for the bath soap.

Importance of the study

The study focuses mainly on the brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap. But with the existing trend, it is necessary to focus on the essence and emergence of energetic rural marketing efforts by the bath soap companies. Thus with more number of companies, entering into the rural market with variety of products, it is an imperative for the companies to study the rural consumer behavior, rural consumption pattern and brand loyalty so as to withstand the competition, and survive and grow either to retain or expand market share in the bath soap market in India. This study will highlight the opportunities and challenges in rural market for the Indian corporate as well as MNCs for bath soap.

Sample selection

A total 50 sample consisting 15 consumers each from revenue divisions of Bhiwani distt. In Haryana covering 15 villages were selected by using stratified sampling method.

Objective of the study

- To study the impact of personality factors of rural buyers on their brand loyalty towards bath soap.

Results and discussion

Factor analysis: Factors determining the impact of cultural factors on the brand loyalty of rural buyers.

Tests of sample adequacy:

Through SPSS principal components analysis and Vari-max method were used for extracting factors and five factors (factor loadings for each of 23 sub-factors, i.e., with Eigen value of more than 1.0 which is considered significant) that account for an explained total variance of a significant 63.768%.

Table 2: Impact of cultural factors on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap

Attribute no	Factors retained (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) and variables (23 – as are numbered from 1 to 23 in the questionnaire administered)	Loadings of variables/ attributes	Communalities	Percentage of variance explained and its Eigen value
Factor 1: Family relations				
9.	With time habits and behavior also change.	0.830	0.812	Variance explained=31.421% (Eigen value=8.169) No. of variables=8
17.	I believe my parents know better than me.	0.825	0.799	
21.	I do not like to stand out in a crowd.	0.822	0.763	
5.	I have a close relationship with my family.	0.811	0.752	
1.	Promotion policies often attract me.	0.811	0.752	
11.	I search for a lot of information before I buy something.	0.709	0.893	

19.	Being successful is the most important thing to me.	0.660	0.532	
8.	It is not the cost of the gift that matters to me, it is the honest.	0.660	0.532	
Factor 2: Family prestige and quality of the brands				
4.	I feel an Indian brand is more suitable than foreign to my needs.	0.890	0.822	Variance explained=11.4 10% (Eigen value=5.567) No. of variables=5
22.	I feel I have a number of good qualities in my goods.	0.890	0.822	
13.	My family prestige is of utmost importance to me.	0.832	0.773	
7.	I feel competing in things may sometimes lead to less work getting done.	0.742	0.759	
15.	I generally buy or consume things which reflect my uniqueness.	0.710	0.709	
Factor 3: Cultural practices				
16.	I never buy items just because its good advertisements.	0.832	0.727	Variance explained=4.14 2% (Eigen value=1.857) No. of variables=4
10.	I often try new brands before my friends and neighbors.	0.789	0.687	
20.	I believe that some people in my locality are more influential than others.	0.688	0.752	
6.	I am indifferent to most of the cultural practices that treat in.	0.688	0.752	
Factor 4: Cues and security				
12.	In case of uncertainty, I look at others to get cues from them.	0.826	0.700	Variance explained=3.48 9% (Eigen value=1.427) No. of variables=2
14.	I believe in saving money for a rainy day.	0.794	0.705	

Factor 5:Self-attention				
2.	I pay a lot of attention to how I look when I go out.	0.881	0.918	Variance explained=8.306% (Eigen value=2.940) No. of variables=4
18.	The women of the house offer suggestions but the men take the decision.	0.865	0.907	
3.	My opinions about people can be quite subjective.	0.498	0.308	
23.	My regular brand is the same as what my parents had used for many years.	0.465	0.383	
Total variance explained				63.768
Total no. of variables				23

Names of factors: The five extracted factors have been given appropriate names on the basis of variables represented in each case as shown in table 2. These factors representing values of opinion impact of cultural factors on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap.

Factor 1–Family relations: This is the most influencing factor with highest eigen value and total variance. This factor is named as ‘family relations’ as it includes ‘I change habits and behaviour with time’, ‘I believe my parents know better than me’, ‘I do not like to stand out in a crowd’, ‘I often think about the good old days’, ‘I have a close relationship with my family’, ‘price promotions in shops often attract me’, ‘I search for a lot of information before I buy something’, ‘being successful is the most important thing to me’ and ‘It is not the cost of the gift that matters to me, it is the honest’ with higher factor loadings of 0.830, 0.825, 0.822, 0.817, 0.811, 0.811, 0.709, 0.660 and 0.660 respectively with an explained variance of 31.421% and with high communalities ranging between 0.812 and

0.532 indicating that the attributes within this factor have very high association among themselves. It could be concluded that the attributes are powerful and strong in influencing the brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap.

Factor 2–Family prestige and quality of brands: It has been revealed to be the second most important factor with explained variance of 11.410% of variance. This factor is named as ‘family prestige and quality of brands’, as it includes ‘I feel an Indian brand is more suited to my needs’ (0.890), ‘I feel I have a number of good qualities’ (0.890), ‘my family prestige is of utmost importance to me’ (0.832), ‘I feel competing in things may sometimes lead to less work getting done’ (0.742), and ‘I generally buy or consume things which reflect my uniqueness’ (0.710) with high factor loadings and with high communalities indicating that the variables are closely associated.

Factor 3–Cultural practices: The factor has positively loaded on the significant variables. The researcher has named this factor as ‘cultural practices’. The factor is highly loaded at 0.832 on ‘I never buy items just because I liked its advertisements’, at 0.789 on ‘I often try new brands before my friends and neighbours do’, at 0.688 each on ‘I believe that some people in my locality are more influential than others’, and ‘I am indifferent to most of the cultural practices that indulge in’.

Factor 4–Cues and security: Factor 5 explains 3.489% of total variance. The factor is positively and highly loaded at 0.826 on ‘In case of uncertainty, I look at others to get cues from them’, and at 0.794 on ‘I believe in saving money for a rainy day’. Hence this factor is named it as ‘cues and security’. The higher values of communality for the two attributes indicate that higher amount of variance is

explained by the extracted factors. It could be concluded that the above attributes are powerful and strong in their impact on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap.

Factor 5–Self-attention: With a total of variance of 8.306% four variables, namely ‘I pay a lot of attention to how I look when I go out’, ‘the women of the house offer suggestions but the men take the decision’, ‘my opinions about people can be quite subjective’, and ‘my regular brand is the same as what my parents had used for many years’ with factor loadings 0.881, 0.865, 0.498 and 0.465 respectively were loaded on to this factor. The researcher has named this factor as ‘self-attention’. Their communalities indicate that their ‘paying lot of attention on personal get-up’ play a leading role and ‘using the brand what parents also used’ has shown the least role. Hence this factor should be given top priority to be monitored.

Table 3: Acceptance/rejection of the formulated hypotheses

Null hypothesis	Statement	Test used and acceptance/rejection of hypothesis
H01	There is no significant difference between the personality factors and their influence on brand loyalty of rural buyers towards bath soap.	Tools used for testing : Factor analysis H01 rejected

Source: Primary data.

Conclusion

To move rural buyers from trial to preference, brands need to deliver on their value proposition, as well as to dislodge someone else from the consumer's existing preference for bath soap. Brand loyalty is a scale, and brands move up, down and even off that scale with and without a vigilant brand management strategy. Pricing, promotional deals and product availability, all have tremendous impact on the position of the brand in the buyer's preference for bath soap. The brands' potential can only be fulfilled by continually reinforcing its perceived quality, up market identity and relevance to the buyer.

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