

AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND BRANDING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY.

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Abstract: This article investigates the relationship between consumer behaviour and some marketing factors such as brand image, brand loyalty, brand association, advertisement in the fashion industry. This article aims to understand the effect of branding on consumer buying behaviour in the fashion industry. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire and was analysed using multiple regression and Pearson's co-relation using SPSS 17 to investigate the relationship between consumer behaviour and other factors. Primary data was collected from 270 randomly selected respondents using 16 Likert scale statements. The resulting model proved to be a good fit for showing a strong relationship between the consumer buying behaviour and the brand image, brand loyalty, brand association, advertisement.

The study was limited to Maharashtra state with small sample size and hence cannot be generalized.

Keywords – Advertisement, Brand Image, Consumer Behaviour, Brand loyalty, Brand Association.

Introduction

Brands sway consumer behavior by clicking with consumers' self-image. Advertisements depict lifestyles and levels of happiness that consumers want to experience, and those serve as symbols of what marketers want their brands to represent. The ultimate effect of a brand on consumer behavior is largely based on how

consumers subjectively perceive and relate to the brand. Branding is the process of giving meaning to a specific company, product, or service by creating and shaping a brand in consumers' minds. It is a strategy designed by companies to help people to quickly identify their products and organization, and give them a reason to choose their products over the competition by clarifying what this particular brand is and is not.

Brand these days have become a status symbol. Customers all over the world now prefer branded products. But why is the question? Is it the quality that attracts customers towards a brand or some other related factor? This study is aimed at analyzing the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior. Along with finding the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior the purpose of the study is to have an in-depth knowledge of what is branding and consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is an inter-disciplinary social science that blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology, anthropology, ethnography, marketing, and economics, especially behavioral economics (Assael, 2005). It examines how emotions, attitudes, and preferences affect buying behavior. Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use, and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental, and behavioral responses that precede or follow these activities. Consumer behavior emerged in the 1940s and 50s as a distinct sub-discipline in marketing.

Literature Review

Consumer behavior is described by Krugman (1965) as the actions, thought processes, and perceived outcome, in collaboration with environmental factors, during making a decision, which could result in a purchase. Some of the factors that are significant in consumer behavior are the external environment, demographics, and personal characteristics, which are influenced by the consumer's beliefs, values, and attitudes. In the literature perspective, Assael (1994) explained that consumer behavior is the process of perceiving and evaluating different components of a purchase. Furthermore, he explains that two broad influences decide consumer choice.

Brand Associations are everything that is associated in your mind concerning a particular brand (Aaker 1991). Brand associations provide differentiation in the evoked set of products, hence resulting in a competitive advantage. The brand association involves product features and customer benefits to become a consumer relating want and reason to buy and consume the brand. Brand associations were firstly discussed by Anderson. According to Keller, brand association is classified into three major categories benefits, attributes, and attitudes. Brand equity and brand association are strongly related to each other. The brand association can be used for information gathering (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski 2001).

Highly effective brand associations overleveraged equity (James 2005). Yoo, Donthu et al. (2000) and Atilgan, Aksoy et al. (2005) opines that brand loyalty is increased by effective and greater brand association. Brand associations cover all brand-related thoughts, feelings, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, images, and beliefs Keller, Parameswaran et al. (2011) and are in the form of a single thing present in memory against the brand.

Brand association is of two types product association and organization association (Keller and Lehmann 2006). Functional and non-functional attributes are the product attributes.

Consumers consider the attributes of the product before making a decision. Keller (1993) stated that the brand image is the whole reflection and understanding about the product that he has in his mind. The brand is an image that the public remember & which makes a positive brand image and easily recalled by the people (Aaker 1997). As make people think about everything from the business side, brand image was created as well defined brand image benefits the company in the long term (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Brand image is also referred to as the customer perception through more emotions towards the selected brand (Assael 2005, Malhotra 2008). Brand image is also stated as an explanation of a company's offer that includes the symbolic meaning attached to customers through specific benefits and features of the products or services. Brand image is an understanding in customers' minds with fair history (Hawkins, Best et al. 2010). A fair & good impression can only be raised by the brand's unique advantage.

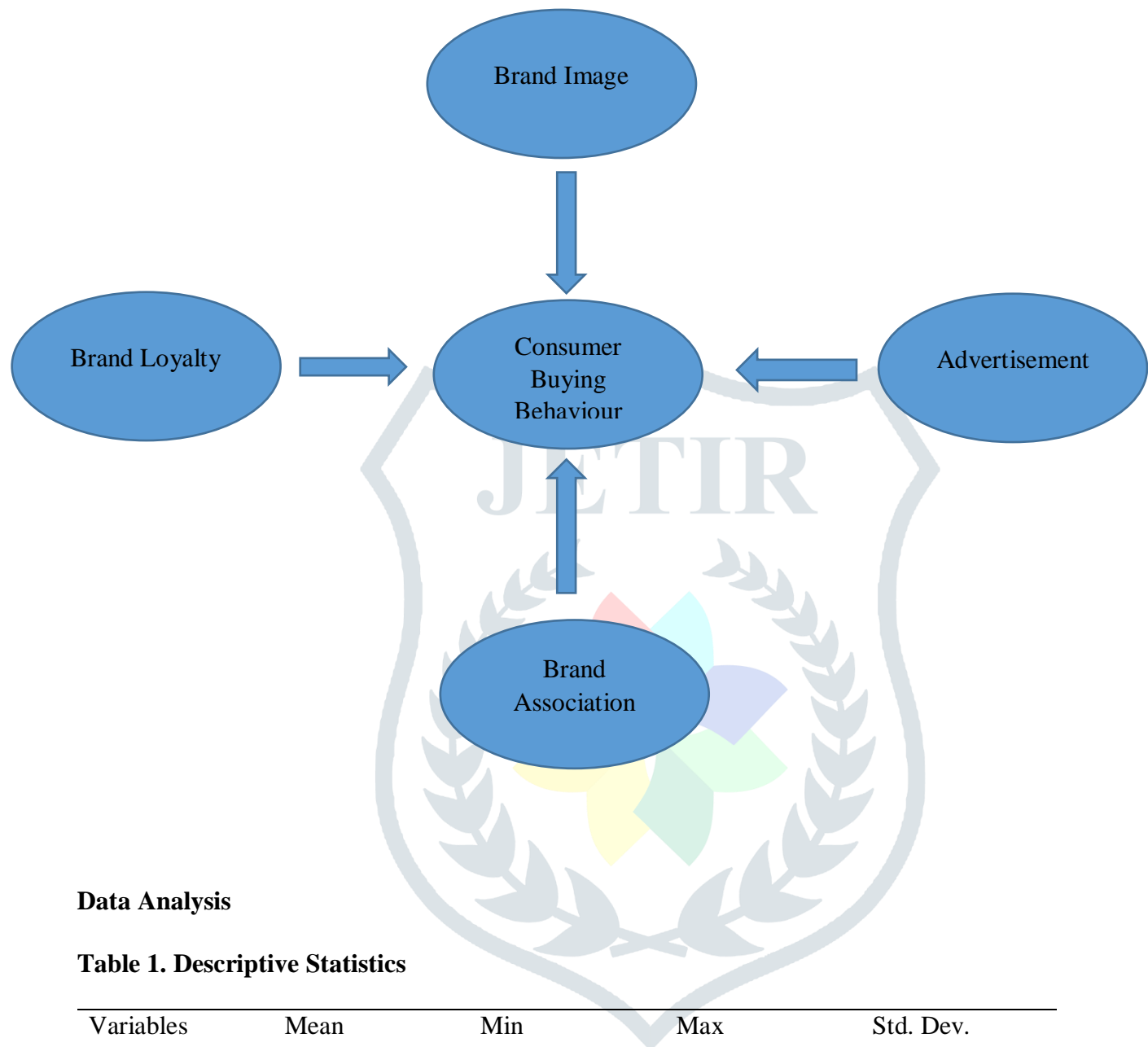
According to Aaker (1991), in brand consumers super only purchase the same brand regardless of the demonstrated benefits (including quality, price, and ease of use). Customer loyalty means a brand has a strong position in the market and the chances of customers to switch to another brand become low and customers are willing to purchase the same brand, they want to invest time and money in that brand. But Keller (2003) highlights the fact customers purchase the same brand continuously, is not brand loyalty, they just do it because of their common habits, that don't change or, they are being attracted by a sales pitch or any other promotional advertisement segment is a powerful tool for attracting people's attention and changing their perception positively towards the product. There is the presence of a moderate relationship between consumer purchase intention and environmental factors. The preference to purchase the product is attached to consumer emotion (Niazi, Siddiqui, et al.). People also change their brands to check other brands. The advertisement also changes the purchase intentions (Rasool, Rafique, et al. 2012).

Research Methodology

A Survey technique has been adopted for this research. The secondary data was done through literature review, to find a theoretical framework, which distinguishes the initial research on the selected topic. For primary data survey questionnaire was developed to see the impact of brand image, advertisement, brand loyalty, and brand association on consumer buying behavior in the fashion industry concerning the state of Maharashtra. The questionnaire had 16 statements based on the Likert scale with options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was pre-tested to check its validity through 25 respondents. In this study, 2 questions were related to brand image, 4 were related to the advertisement, 3 were related to brand loyalty, 2 were related to brand association, and 5 were related to consumer behavior. There is a total of 16 questions (statements) for independent variables to check the impact on the dependent variable i.e. consumer buying behavior. The data was collected concerning some popular brands like Jack & Jones, Gucci, Levi's, Puma, United Colors of Benetton, etc. These brands enjoyed a strong brand image among the youngsters in Maharashtra state. The brand selection was based on primary interviews carried out with 50 respondents in which they were asked to recall some famous brands they admire. A total of 300 respondents were

administered the questionnaire through google forms, out of which 270 were valid and further used for analysis.

Theoretical Model



Data Analysis

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
Con. Beh.	2.2365	1.00	5.00	.80589
Advertisement	1.8652	1.00	5.00	.61035
Brand Image	2.1698	1.00	5.00	.72389
Brand Awareness	2.3153	1.00	5.00	.81785
Brand Loyalty	2.3235	1.00	5.00	.82635

Table 2. Dependent Variable (CB)

	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.268	.156	1.569	.169
Advertisement	.165	.025	1.237	.089**
Brand Image	.278	.016	4.563	.000*
Brand Awareness	.323	.059	4.159	.000*
Brand Loyalty	.164	.079	2.578	.056*

Table 3. Relationship between variables

	Con. Beh.	Advertisement	Brand Image	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty
Con. Beh.	1				
Advertisement	.423**	1			
Brand Image	.546**	.456**	1		
Brand Awareness	.559**	.316**	.446**	1	
Brand Loyalty	.532**	.289**	.458**	.516**	1

Significant level: *5, and **10

Table 3 shows the relationship between various variables and also shows the significance of the relationship. Consumer behavior has a significant relationship with advertisement at 42%, with the brand image at 54.6%, with brand awareness at 55.9%, and with brand loyalty at 53.2%. Similarly, advertisement shows a positive significant relationship with brand image at 45.6%, with brand awareness at 31.6%, and with brand loyalty at 28.9%. Brand image has a significant positive relationship with brand awareness at 44.6%, and with brand loyalty at 45.8%. Brand awareness shows a significant positive relationship with brand loyalty at 51.6%.

Table 4.

	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.268	.156	1.569	.169
Advertisement	.165	.025	1.237	.089**
Brand Image	.278	.016	4.563	.000*
Brand Awareness	.323	.059	4.159	.000*
Brand Loyalty	.164	.079	2.578	.056*

Significant level: *5, and **10

The two-phases least square technique was used for analyzing the relation between Consumer behavior and other variables like an advertisement, brand image, brand association, and brand loyalty. The t value of CBB confirms positive and significant with a 1.569 t-value and 15 percent significance value. Advertisement is significantly positive with a 1.237 t-value and at a 10 percent significance level. Brand Image confirms positive and significant results with a 4.563 t-value and at 5 percent significant value. Brand awareness confirms positive and significant results with a 4.159 t-value at a 5 percent significance level. Brand loyalty confirms positive and significant results with a 2.578 t-value at a 5 percent significance level.

Conclusion and Future implications: This paper investigates the relationship between branding and consumer buying behavior. Using a sample, and a theoretical model, we explain the positive impact of branding on consumer buying behavior. Based on the model, our result suggests that the advertisement creates the brand image and increases the preference and suggestion towards a purchase during the purchase decision. In the same way impact of the brand image, brand loyalty, and brand association has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. A cross-country study of developing countries with rich data is recommended to further investigate the impact of marketing determinants like psychological, socio-cultural, economic, demographic, and personal determinants on consumer buying behavior in various states of India. Data can also be taken for larger sample sizes to increase the generalizability of the findings.

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