

Brand Feeling among Rural and Urban Consumers

Abstract

Today the world is flooded with brands; they are consumed by each and every section of the society in all product categories. Once consumers are exposed to the brand, they develop associations and feelings towards it. With increasing disposal income and changing lifestyle, rural consumers are also consuming branded products. Though both rural and urban consumers are consuming same branded products, a significant difference in rural and urban consumer's behavior is observed due to change in socio-economic and cultural environment. This study tries to understand brand feelings among rural and urban consumers for selected FMCG brands. Brand feelings were not same among rural and urban consumers for all sixteen FMCG brands.

Keywords: Brand Feeling, FMCG Brands, Rural and Urban Consumers

Introduction

'A brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational and cultural image that you associate with a company or product.' - *Charles R. Pettis Iii, Brand Solutions.*

Today, brands have become integral part of life. All sections of the society are consuming branded products. Consumers have become more particular while selecting brands. Along with physical features now they are attaching emotional values to the brand. Branded products are consumed in all product categories including FMCG sector.

The fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is the key contributor of the Indian economy. This fourth largest sector of Indian economy provides employment to around 3 million people which accounts for approximately 5% of the total factory employment in the country. These products are daily consumed by each and every strata of the society irrespective of social class, income group, age group etc. FMCG sector is more lucrative because of low penetration levels, well established distribution network, low operating cost, lower per capita consumption, large consumer base and simple manufacturing processes for most of products resulting in fairly low capital investments¹. The size of rural market is bigger than the urban market for both FMCG and durables as it accounts 53 % and 59 % market share respectively². There has been improvement in living standards of rural population since last few decades³. The changing environment is reducing gap between Indian rural and urban consumers, still a noticeable difference exists between socio-economic and cultural environment of both regions resulting in change in rural and urban consumers' behaviour⁴.

Review of Literature

The consumers' proximity to the brand moves from a feeling of presence (awareness, recognition) to a feeling of relevance (it's for me) to the perception of performance and a clear advantage, and ultimately to a genuine affective attachment⁵.

According to Kotler (2008), brand feelings are customer's emotional responses and reactions to the brand. Brand feelings also relate to social currency evoked by the brand⁶. These feelings can be mild or intense and be positive or negative in nature. Unlike emotions, or attentions, or news, it is a large and stable source that is not easily changed⁷.

People in many ways relate to brands similarly to how they relate to people. Consumers become emotionally attached to brands. They display brand loyalties that resemble marriages in their passionate commitments. The norms governing communal and exchange relationships between people also shape their behavior with the brand⁸.

According to Keller there are six important types brand building feelings, the first three are more experimental and immediate, increasing in



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Level of intensity⁹. The latter three are more private and enduring, increasing in level of gravity.

Warmth

The extent to which the brands makes consumers feel a sense of calm or peacefulness, sentimental, warmhearted, or affectionate about the brand.

Fun

These are also upbeat types of feelings when brand makes consumers feel amused, light-hearted, joyous, playful, cheerful and so on.

Excitement

It relates to more upbeat type of feelings- the extent to which consumers feel energized and a feeling that they are experiencing something special.

Security

It occurs when brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort, and self-assurance

Social Approval

Social approval is when brand results in consumer having positive feelings about the reactions of others i.e. when consumers feel others look favorably on their appearance, behavior, and so on.

Self-respect

It occurs when the brand makes consumers feel better about themselves. When consumers feel a sense of pride, accomplishment, or fulfillment.

Brand feeling and brand perception is much affected by brand experiences. This can be done through wide range of contact and touch points. This includes advertising, personal experience with the brand, word of mouth, personal interaction with the company people, telephone interaction, company web pages and many more¹⁰. Advertising can help to elicit both judgment and feeling responses and be especially critically in linking feelings to the brand¹¹.

According to Rameshwarkumar, Brand associations in the psyche of consumers are created by associating messages /feelings /situations with the brand¹². The logic behind it is that there are specific situations which trigger off pleasant sensations and feelings and these situations are being associated with the brand. When a brand aggressively creates visibility using these visuals for a period of time,

consumer may internalize the brand as part of feelings and experiences associated with these situations. The following have to be taken before a brand decides to use a specific feeling/ situation:

1. Researching the market is prerequisite, as a suitable emotion is required to be paired with the brand. The emotion or specific situation (i.e. relevant stimulus) is likely to be the core aspect of the brand imagery and has to be selected with great care;
2. The imagery selected to be paired with the brand, has to be relevant to the product category;
3. It is essential for a brand to plan a specific emotional proposition (can even be functional) to ensure that brand offers a sustainable differentiation in long run;
4. A marketer should be extremely careful in selecting an association (can even be jingle) especially, when stimuli (picture/visual/song) selected is over exposed to consumer;
5. Negative emotions may also be used. But research shows that using strong fear appeals may be counterproductive.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the concept of brand feeling
2. To compare rural and urban consumers brand feeling for selected FMCG brands

Research Methodology

The research design used for this study was based on exploratory and descriptive research. The sample size was 938 consumers from rural and urban area of Latur district. Multistage sampling technique was used for sample selection. Rural and urban consumers were selected from different demographic strata based on gender, age, education, income etc. A structured questionnaire was used for collecting primary data; considering literacy barrier Marathi questionnaire was used for interviewing rural consumers. A pilot survey was conducted for selection of FMCG brands. Sixteen brands from eight product categories were selected on the basis of availability in retail outlets.

Findings and Discussion

Table no 1. Brand Feelings (%) among Urban and Rural Consumers

SN	Brand	Region	Love	Fun	Excitement	Security	Social approval	Self respect	Can't say
1	Lux	Urban	24.36	11.95	15.17	18.16	9.88	0.7	19.77
		Rural	18.09	4.97	19.08	19.88	5.36	2.38	30.01
2	Santoor	Urban	22.75	8.96	12.18	29.88	6.43	2.06	17.7
		Rural	24.65	5.36	18.88	23.26	4.57	0.99	22.06
3	Wheel	Urban	17.24	7.58	17.01	36.78	4.13	1.6	15.63.
		Rural	15.30	1.98	16.5	43.34	3.77	0	18.88
4	Rin	Urban	15.4	8.5	15.63	32.18	12.87	0.92	14.48
		Rural	14.11	1.78	15.9	32.6	4.57	1.39	29.42
5	Nirma	Urban	20.22	4.36	9.19	27.58	5.05	1.37	32.18
		Rural	13.51	2.38	17.49	37.37	6.16	1.59	21.07
6	Wheel powder	Urban	14.25	7.12	15.4	29.42	9.19	7.81	16.78
		Rural	13.12	2.38	15.7	33.2	5.16	0.19	30.01
7	Parachute	Urban	21.83	9.88	15.63	38.16	4.13	1.14	9.19
		Rural	18.68	3.57	20.27	40.35	3.77	1.39	11.72
8	Navratna	Urban	8.27	22.98	14.25	16.55	12.87	1.6	23.44
		Rural	8.34	22.46	15.7	12.72	5.16	3.37	32

9	Fair & Lovely	Urban	24.59	6.89	23.9	22.98	6.66	2.06	12.87
		Rural	27.23	5.16	20.47	14.91	5.57	2.18	25.24
10	Fair & Handsome	Urban	7.58	8.73	13.1	14.94	16.55	4.13	34.94
		Rural	6.36	5.96	19.68	12.72	5.96	3.37	45.72
11	Colgate	Urban	19.08	7.35	15.63	40.68	3.44	1.83	11.95
		Rural	15.9	6.95	16.1	39.36	4.17	0.59	16.69
12	Close up	Urban	8.27	15.17	20.45	26.89	8.04	1.83	11.95
		Rural	10.73	9.94	19.08	20.67	5.16	0.99	33.2
13	Parle	Urban	31.03	13.56	23.44	16.55	5.74	0.68	8.96
		Rural	36.18	13.12	13.51	16.3	4.17	1.39	15.1
14	Good day	Urban	18.16	23.9	17.93	13.33	12.64	2.29	11.72
		Rural	19.68	17.89	15.9	12.52	4.57	2.38	26.83
15	Brooke Bond	Urban	11.03	16.55	18.62	12.41	11.72	3.9	25.74
		Rural	12.72	7.35	19.68	10.33	6.16	2.78	40.75
16	Tata	Urban	11.72	13.33	29.19	16.32	8.04	1.83	19.54
		Rural	14.91	5.56	22.46	12.32	6.75	3.77	33.99

(Source: Primary data)

Lux Soap

Love feeling was more common among urban respondents. Maximum number of rural respondents was having no feeling for LUX soap.

Santoor Soap

Security feeling was most common for both rural and urban respondents.

Wheel Soap

Rural and Urban respondent's feelings about wheel soap were almost similar. Security feeling was highest in both categories.

Rin Soap

Security feeling was most common for Rin soap among both Rural and Urban consumers.

Nirma Soap

The feeling of security was more common among rural respondents. Majority of urban consumers were not having any feelings about Nirma soap.

Parachute Oil

Rural respondents feel more secured than urban one, at the same time the percentage of respondents who have no feeling was more in rural region.

Navratna Oil

Majority of rural and urban consumers were not sure for feeling about Navratna hair oil. Brand preference among rural and urban consumers was only 5.76% and 15.62 % respectively.

Fair & Lovely

The percentage of love feeling was highest

for both rural and urban respondents. The percentage of respondents having no feelings is more in rural part than the urban part.

Fair & Handsome

The percentage of respondents who have no feelings was more in rural category than urban one. This may be because users of Fair & Handsome were more in urban area (17.93%) than rural (10.93 %).

Close-up

The percentage of respondents having no feeling was more in the rural area than urban. This may be because users of Close up were more in urban area.

Parle

Love feeling was most common for Parle brand among rural and urban consumers. Also, the dispersion of feelings among rural and urban respondents was almost same for Parle.

Good Day

Fun feeling was most common among urban consumers whereas rural consumers (23.06% preference) were not sure.

Broke Bond

Both rural (19.68% preference) and urban (22.75% preference) consumers were not sure about broke bond brand.

Tata Tea

Urban consumers feel excited about Tata tea whereas rural consumers were not sure.

Table no.2 Descriptive Statistics for brand feeling of selected FMCG brands

Brand	Rural				Urban			
	Brand Preference (%)	Brand Feeling			Brand Preference (%)	Brand Feeling		
		Mode Value	Feeling	Standard deviation		Mode Value	Feeling	Standard deviation
LUX soap	26.441	7	Can't say	2.200052	39.54	1	Love	2.134386
Santoor soap	58.051	1	Love	2.1445	40	4	Security	2.036779
Wheel soap	70.77	4	Security	1.832016	41.6	4	Security	1.857414
Rin soap	23.85	4	Security	2.033783	50.8	4	Security	1.819043

Wheel detergent	34.79	4	Security	2.016624	34.48	4	Security	1.906835
Nirma detergent	52.48	4	Security	1.872541	40.91	7	Can't say	2.241286
Parachute oil	85.05	4	Security	1.732812	71.3	4	Security	1.727619
Navratna	5.76	7	Can't say	2.196627	15.62	7	Can't say	2.027352
Fair & Lovely	76.73	1	Love	2.27836	66.89	1	Love	1.910897
Fair & Handsome	10.93	7	Can't say	2.08181	17.93	7	Can't say	2.014095
Colgate	69.38	4	Security	1.841137	67.12	4	Security	1.775621
Close up	14.51	7	Can't say	2.1231	20.68	4	Security	1.855991
Parle- G	71.76	1	Love	2.109905	54.94	1	Love	1.805448
Good day	23.06	7	Can't say	2.271389	37	2	Fun	1.893086
Brooke Bond	19.68	7	Can't say	2.258264	22.75	7	Can't say	2.101879
Tata tea	35.98	7	Can't say	2.218875	42.98	3	Excitement	1.936568

(Source: Primary data)

Out of all feelings, Love feeling was maximum for Lux, Fair & Lovely and Parle brand. Fun feeling was highest for Navratna and Good day brand. Excitement feeling was most common for Brooke Bond and Tata brand. Feeling of Security was more

common for rest of the brands such as Santoor, Wheel soap, Rin, Nirma powder, Wheel powder, Colgate and Close up. The feeling of self-respect was lowest for all brands among urban respondents.

Table No.3 Top three brands for each brand feeling

S.No.	Brand Feeling	Top three brands	
		Urban region	Rural region
1	Love	Parle, Fair & Lovely and Lux	Parle, Fair & Lovely and Santoor
2	Fun	Good day, Navratna and Brooke Bond	Navratna, Rin and Brooke Bond
3	Excitement	Tata, Fair & Lovely and Parle	Tata, Fair & Lovely and Parachute
4	Security	Colgate, Parachute and Wheel soap	Wheel flake, Parachute and Colgate
5	Social approval	Fair & Handsome, Rin and Navratna	Tata, Brooke Bond and Nirma
6	Self respect	Wheel powder, Fair & Handsome and Goodday	Tata, Fair & Handsome and Navratna
7	No feelings	Fair & Handsome, Nirma and Brooke Bond	Fair & Handsome, Brooke Bond and Tata

(Source: Primary Data)

Conclusion

- All sixteen FMCG brands were available in both rural and urban region, but still a significant difference in brands feeling was observed for six brands such as Lux, Santoor, Nirma, and Close up, Good day and Tata tea.
- Brand feeling was same for Wheel soap, Rin soap, Wheel detergent powder, Parachute oil, Fair & lovely, Colgate & Parle-G brands. Though it was same, the percentage of responses was different.
- Both rural and urban consumers were not sure for Navratna, Fair & Handsome and Brooke bond brand.
- It is found that brand feeling is dependent on brand preference; consumers with low brand preference were not sure about brand feelings.

End Notes

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