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IMPACT OF BRAND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER/BRAND LOYALTY: A STUDY OF PACKAGED MILK BRANDS IN SURAT CITY, GUJARAT

DR. REENA CHHAJED
PRESTIGE TOWER, FLAT NO. 603, NEAR TATA MOTORS
CHALA

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to identify the impact of brand awareness on consumer's/brand loyalty. Questionnaires were distributed to collect the responses from the employees in services sectors and conveniently available general public while descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data and draw the conclusions. Brand Awareness and brand loyalty have strong positive association with purchase intention. Managers all over the world should strive to promote the brand awareness along with brand loyalty as both of them contribute towards positive purchase intentions.

KEYWORDS

brand awareness, brand loyalty, purchase intentions.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times consumers choose their favorable and familiar brands due to the rise in their consciousness. Consequently, the businesses in order to compete with others must create love for their brands in the minds of consumers. To understand this research better lets, understand the terms brand loyalty and brand awareness.

BRAND LOYALTY

Brand loyalty is defined as positive feelings towards a brand and dedication to purchase the same product or service repeatedly now and in the future from the same brand, regardless of a competitor's actions or changes in the environment. It can also be demonstrated with other behaviors such as positive word of mouth advocacy. Brand loyalty is where an individual buys products from the same manufacturer repeatedly rather than from other suppliers. Businesses whose value rests in a large part on their brand loyalty are said to use the loyalty business model.

A brand is seen as an idea or concept, not a product. This concept of a brand displays imagery and symbolism for a product or range of products. Brands can have the power to engage consumers and make them feel emotionally attached. Consumer's beliefs and attitudes make up brand images, and these affect how they will view brands they come into contact with. Brand experience occurs when consumers shop for or search for, and consumer products. Holistic experiences such as sense, relation, acting and feeling occur when one comes into contact with brands. The stronger and more relational these senses are to the individual, the more for likely repeat purchase behaviour will occur. After contact has been made, psychological reasoning will occur, followed by a buy or not-buy decision. This can result in repeat purchase behaviour, thus incurring the beginning of brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is not limited to repeat purchase behaviour, as there is deeper psychological reasoning as to why an individual will continuously re-purchase products from one brand. Brand loyalty can be shortly defined as the 'behavioural willingness to consistently maintain relations with a particular brand'. In a survey of nearly 200 senior marketing managers, 68 percent responded that they found the "loyalty" metric very useful.

True brand loyalty occurs when consumers are willing to pay higher prices for a certain brand, go out of their way for the brand, or think highly of it.

FACTORS INFLUENCING BRAND LOYALTY

Looking in more detail at the major factors that influence consumers' loyalty - not only to retailers but also to suppliers in all sectors, including business to business (B2B) - the six key areas of focus identified in the report can be summarised as follows:

1. CORE OFFERING

The companies that boast the highest levels of fiercely loyal customers have built that loyalty not on card programmes or gimmicks, but on a solid, dependable, core offering that appeals to their customers. These companies have focused intently on what they know appeals to the type of customers they want to attract, and have determinedly concentrated on delivering what is expected every time. North American retailer, Nordstrom (www.nordstrom.com), is well known for the loyalty of its customers. It built this loyalty by understanding what its customers wanted and then empowering its employees to deliver those needs consistently. Clearly, the data from a good loyalty programme should help the operator to improve this core offering by tailoring and moulding it more closely to the customers' needs and desires.

Elements of the core offering that have a large role in building customer loyalty include:

Location and premises

Location and premises clearly play a part in engendering loyalty. The Three L's of retail - "location, location and location" - are undoubtedly important, and attractive and functional premises are equally so.

Service

Whether selling services or products, the level of service perceived by the customer is generally key to generating loyalty. It can be argued that some customers buy only on price, so all that is necessary to retain their loyalty is consistently low prices. To certain extent that is true. But in most cases, any loyalty shown will be only to the prices instead of the business. Should a competitor offer even lower prices, those customers are likely to defect. Companies that have adopted a policy of everyday low prices (EDLP) can be more vulnerable to competition than those who have built their customers' loyalty on superior products or service.

The product or service

The products or services offered must be what customers want. The days when businesses could decide what they wanted to sell or supply, and customers would buy it, are long past. The customers' needs and wants are now paramount. If you don't meet them, someone else will.

2. SATISFACTION

Clearly, satisfaction is important; indeed, essential. But, taken in isolation, the level of satisfaction is not a good measure of loyalty. Many auto manufacturers claim satisfaction levels higher than 90%, yet few have repurchase levels of even half that. The situation is stacked against the business: if customer satisfaction levels are low, there will be very little loyalty. However, customer satisfaction levels can be quite high without a corresponding level of loyalty. Customers have come to expect satisfaction as part and parcel of the general deal, and the fact that they are satisfied doesn't prevent them from defecting in droves to a competitor who offers something extra.

The point is that, while high levels of customer satisfaction are needed in order to develop loyal customers, the measure of customer satisfaction is not a good measure of the level of loyalty. The two are not measuring the same thing.

3. ELASTICITY LEVEL

Elasticity expresses the importance and weight of a purchasing decision - effectively the level of involvement or indifference. This applies to both the customer and the business.

○ *Involvement*

The customer's involvement in the category is important: the more important your product or service is to the customer, the more trouble they have probably

taken in their decision to do business with you, and the more likely they are to stick with what they have decided. Most customers would be highly involved in the category when choosing a new car, a new jacket, or a bottle of wine. However, when choosing a new pair of shoelaces, involvement is not usually high. Businesses dealing in commoditized products and services cannot expect high involvement and need to earn loyalty in other ways.

○ **Ambivalence**

The customer's level of ambivalence is also important. Few decisions are clear cut. There are usually advantages and disadvantages to be balanced, and vacillation is unstable. Again, we see that the more commoditized a product or service, the more difficult it is to cultivate loyalty. It is only when points of differentiation are introduced that the customer has a valid reason for consistently preferring one particular supplier.

4. THE MARKETPLACE

The marketplace is a key factor in the development of loyalty. The elements most closely involved are:

○ **Opportunity to switch**

If the number of competing suppliers is high and little effort is required to switch, switching is clearly more likely. Conversely, the more time and effort invested in the relationship, the more unlikely switching becomes. The level and quality of competition has a significant effect on how easy it is for a customer to switch from any one particular supplier. When competitors are offering very similar products at similar prices, with similar levels of service, some means of useful differentiation has to be found in order to give customers a reason to be loyal.

○ **Inertia loyalty**

This is the opposite of ease of switching. Most banks enjoy a high level of inertia loyalty simply because it's often so difficult and time-consuming to change to a new bank and transfer direct debits and standing orders.

5. DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Jan Hofmeyr and Butch Rice, developers of The Conversion Model (which enables users to segment customers not only by their commitment to staying with a brand but also to segment non-users by their openness to switching to the brand), more affluent and better educated customers are less likely to be committed to a specific brand. They say that the commitment of less affluent consumers to the brands they use is often unusually strong - possibly because they cannot afford to take the risk of trying a brand that might not suit them as well. They also suggest that younger consumers are less committed to brands than older consumers.

Interestingly, these differences carry over into cultural groups as well: they find that French-speaking Canadians are more likely to be committed to a brand than English-speaking Canadians, and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans are more likely to be committed than English-speaking South Africans. In their excellent book, *Commitment-Led Marketing*, they show how commitment norms for the most frequently used brand of beer vary from country to country. At the two extremes we see both Australia and the UK (58%) and South Africa at 83% - a considerable difference.

6. SHARE OF WALLET

As markets become saturated and customers have so much more to choose from, share of wallet becomes increasingly important. It is cheaper and more profitable to increase your share of what the customer spends in your sector, than to acquire new customers. After all, that's what loyalty is really about. Totally loyal customers would give you a 100% share of their spend in your sector.

BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness is the extent to which a brand is recognized by potential customers, and is correctly associated with a particular product. Expressed usually as a percentage of the target market, brand awareness is the primary goal of advertising in the early months or years of a product's introduction.

Brand awareness is related to the functions of brand identities in consumers' memory and can be reflected by how well the consumers can identify the brand under various conditions. Brand awareness includes brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition refers to the ability of the consumers to correctly differentiate the brand they previously have been exposed to. This does not necessarily require that the consumers identify the brand name. Instead, it often means that consumers can respond to a certain brand after viewing its visual packaging images. Brand recall refers to the ability of the consumers to correctly generate and retrieve the brand in their memory.

A brand name that is well known to the great majority of households is also called a **household name**.

Brand awareness plays a huge part in the success of brands. There are many different ways to market a brand in order for it to display a certain image in the minds of consumers. It can be a logo, a name, a colour etc. that links itself to a brand in the mind of the consumer. Brand awareness and recognition is a step for marketers in communications as it affects the consumer choices that are made when it comes to the point of purchasing. A brand that is more well-known than others is more likely to be chosen for purchase over a brand where little is known about them.

Consumers are less likely to purchase from a brand they don't recognise or hardly recognize as it can be perceived as a risk for them and consumers do not typically like risks, as it means they could potentially waste their money.

Brand awareness can be separated into two different categories, brand recall and brand recognition. These can be indicated by multiple measures such as if the customer is familiar with the brand, knows the brand, and knows the characteristics of the brand. To be specific, the recall is the recollection the customer has of the brand; whereas recognition is the previous experiences the consumer has with the brand that enables them to distinguish it from others. Brand recognition is emphasized more rather than brand recall as the potential customers rely on information from others and the experience that they have had with this particular brand in their decision making factor, in other words "brand awareness acts as a certification. As a result, consumers' purchase decisions depend on whether they have seen or heard of the brand."

The significance of brand awareness is that consumers include it in their decision making process when purchasing then evaluating the product. A famous brand versus an unknown brand has a higher chance of being picked off the shelf due to the recognition the customer has towards it as it can increase their positive evaluation on the good and reduce the risks involved in trying a new product that the consumer is not confident in buying, thus meaning the brand with the higher awareness can strengthen their customer loyalty as the customer will continue to purchase the brand they know and love. This then means the well-recognized brand can afford to have a higher price compared to their competition as customers have a higher confidence in purchasing it and would rather pay more for a brand that has a higher awareness compared to the alternative. An influential aspect that increases brand awareness is celebrity aided brand recall, as "The effect of celebrity endorsement is high when the celebrity image and product fit is achieved." A study indicated that the impact that celebrity endorsement has on the future profits of the brand is positive, which recommends that the brand use some form of celebrity endorsement to increase brand awareness. This influences the awareness, as these leaders perceive a believable with an honest opinion, and are seen as influential leaders in the community.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To study the impact of brand awareness on consumer/brand loyalty.
2. To study brand awareness of packaged milk brands and analyze brand loyalty in surat city, Gujarat state of India.
3. To study the impact of brand loyalty on consumer purchasing behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection is done from primary and secondary source.

The primary sources of data are:

- Questionnaire

The secondary sources of data are:

- Published journals

- Research articles
- Websites

SAMPLE DESIGN

Since the objective of the study is to find out the brand loyalty of milk among consumers in Surat, Gujarat, the researcher has adopted convenient sampling technique for data collection. The researcher has taken a sample of 100 respondents from different areas of surat city. For the present study the researcher selects all brands of Surat City.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

This part analyzes the brand loyalty of milk of Surat District in various aspects.

1.1 AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The age is one of the important demographic characteristic of the respondents which influence their brand loyalty and their consumption pattern. Age wise distribution of respondents is shown in table:

TABLE NO. 1.1: AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr. no	Age of the Respondents(in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Below 20	14	14%
2	20-30	48	48%
3	30-40	25	25%
4	40-50	12	12%
5	Above 50	11	11%
6	Total	100	100.00

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table no. 1.1 shows that, among the 100 respondents, 14(14%) respondents are in the age group of below 20 years, 48(48%) respondents are in age group of 20-30 years, 25 respondents (25%) are in age group of 30-40 years, 12 respondents (12%) are in age group of 40-50 years and only 11 respondents (11%) are in age group of above 50 years. Hence, we can conclude on the basis of table that majority of respondents are belongs to 20-30 age group.

1.2 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT

Gender is an important demographic and social factor which influence the consumer's behavior, their brand awareness and brand loyalty. Usage of both men and women are different from each other. The distribution of respondents is given below:

TABLE NO. 1.2: GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr. no.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	40	40%
2	Female	60	60%
3	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

From the table no. 1.2, it can be inferred that among the 100 respondents, 40 respondents (40%) are male and 60 respondents (60%) are female. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of respondents are females.

1.3 MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Marital status of respondents is also an important factor which influences the brand loyalty. The distribution on the basis of marital status is shown in table.

TABLE NO. 1.3: MARITAL STATUS WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr. no.	Marital status	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Married	44	44%
2	Unmarried	56	56%
3	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table shows that among 100 respondents, 44 respondents (44%) are married Whereas 56 respondents (56%) are unmarried. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of respondents are unmarried.

1.4 EDUCATION STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

Education level of respondents represents the awareness level of respondents about the marketing environment. the education wise distribution of respondents is shown in table.

TABLE NO. 1.4: EDUCATION WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr.no.	Educational qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage(%)
1	12	44	44%
2	Graduation	40	40%
3	Post-graduation	11	11%
4	Diploma	5	5%
5	Other	0	0%
6	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table no. 1.4 shows that among the 100 respondents, 44 respondents (44%) have education qualification of 12th standard, while 40 respondents (40%) are qualified with graduate degree, whereas 11 respondents (11%) are qualified with post graduate degree and 5 respondents (5%) are qualified with a diploma. Hence it can be concluded from that the majority of respondents are qualified up to 12th standard.

1.5 FAVORITE BRANDS OF RESPONDENTS

Although various brands of packed milk are available in the study area, the table shows the favorite brand of respondents.

TABLE NO. 1.5: FAVORITE BRAND OF RESPONDENTS

Sr no.	Favorite brand	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Amul	71	71%
2.	Nestle	11	11%
3.	Mother diary	4	4%
4.	Tru	4	4%
5.	Danone	2	2%
6.	Dudhsagar	4	4%
7.	Kwality	2	2%
8.	Shreeji	1	1%
9.	Dynamix	0	0%
10.	Any other	1	1%
11.	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table no. 1.5 shows that among the 100 respondents, Amul is the favorite brand of 71 respondents(71%); Nestle is the favorite brand of 11 respondents(11%); mother dairy is the favorite brand of 4 respondents(4%); Tru is the favorite brand of 4 respondents(4%); Danone is the favorite brand of 2 respondents(2%); Dudhsagar best is the favorite brand of 4 respondents(4%); kwality is the favorite brand of 2 respondents(2%); Shreeji is the favorite brand of 1 respondent (1%) but Dynamix is not the favorite brand of any respondents and Any other is the favorite brand of 1 respondents. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of respondents' preferred Amul brand as their favorite brand.

1.6 SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PACKAGED MILK

Source of information about packed milk shows the awareness level of respondents about the different media of marketing communication adopted by the producers of branded packed milk. The table shows the different source of information from which the respondents get information about branded packed milk.

TABLE NO. 1.6: SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PACKAGED MILK

Sr. no	Source of information	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Family members	33	33%
2	TV ads	46	46%
3	Newspaper	6	5%
4	Peers	5	6%
5	Others	10	10%
6	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table no. 1.6, shows that among the 100 respondents, 33 respondents (33%) have heard about branded packed milk from their family member, 46 respondents (46%) heard about branded packed milk from TV ads, 5 respondents (5%) heard about branded packed milk from their peers, 6 respondents (6%) heard about branded packed milk from newspaper and 10 respondents (10%) heard about branded packed milk from any other source. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of respondents heard about branded packed milk from TV ads.

1.7 REASONS FOR USING BRANDED PACKED MILK OVER NON-BRANDED PACKED MILK

The consumers prefer a particular brand of packed milk for many reasons such as quality, price, availability and hygiene related factors. The marketer must have analysis the reason for preferring a particular brand which helps the marketer in taking various strategic decisions. The below table shows the reasons of using a particular brand.

TABLE NO. 1.7: REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE BRANDED PACKED MILK OVER NON-BRANDED MILK

Sr. no.	Reason	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Price	4	4%
2	Quality	62	26%
3	Hygiene related factors	11	11%
4	Easy availability	20	20%
5	Other factors	1	1%
6	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

Table shows that among the 100 respondents, 4 respondents (4%) choose the branded milk over non-branded milk due to price, 62 respondents (62%) choose branded milk over non-branded milk due to the quality of milk products, 11 respondents (11%) choose branded milk over no-branded milk due to the hygiene related factors of branded milk, 20 respondents (20%) choose branded milk over no-branded milk due to the easy availability and only 1 respondents (1%) choose branded milk over non branded milk due to the other factors. Hence it can be concluded that majority of respondents choose branded milk over non-branded milk due to the quality.

1.8 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BRAND LOYALTY OF RESPONDENTS (WITH WEIGHTED AVERAGE SCORE)

The purchase decision of consumers is influenced by various factors like quality, availability, advertising, taste, hygiene factors, advertising and reliability. These factors are shown below:

TABLE NO. 1.8: FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY OF BRANDED PACKED MILK

Sr. no.	Factors affecting loyalty	Total score	Weighted average
1	Full and Accurate information	363	3.63
2	Satisfactory Quality	400	4.00
3	Fulfill Health related standards	230	2.30
4	Freshness and hygiene	337	3.37
5	Good admissible life	310	3.10
6	Good taste of milk	383	3.83
7	Reliability	385	3.85
8	Easy availability	421	4.21
9	Overall Satisfaction	374	3.74
10	Liked by family members	327	3.27
11	Reasonable price	363	3.63
12	Good Indoor delivery	343	3.43

Source: Researcher's manual calculation

The table shows the weighted average score of the various factors influencing brand loyalty of respondents. It is clear from the table that the highest weighted average score which has been attained by easy availability of the milk with the total score 421. The second highest WAS (4.00) has been attained by the quality of the packed milk brand which obtained total score 400. The third highest WAS (3.85) has been attained by reliability of the packed milk brand with total score of 385. Fourth highest WAS (3.83) has been attained by taste of packed milk brand with total score 383; fifth WAS (3.74) has been attained by satisfaction level of packed milk with total score 374, sixth highest WAS (3.63) has been attained by the reasonable price of packed milk products with total score 363, seventh highest WAS (3.60) has been attained by the accurate information available about packed milk with total score 360, eighth highest WAS (3.43) has been attained by Indore delivery of packed milk with the total score 343. Ninth highest WAS (3.37) has been attained by freshness and hygiene factor with 337 total score, tenth highest WAS (3.27) has been attained by liked by family members with a total of 327, eleventh highest WAS (3.10) has been attained by admissible life of packed milk with 310 total score and last highest WAS (2.30) has been attained by health related standard factor with a total 230. Hence, it can be concluded from the table that highest weighted average score has been attained by the easy availability and quality of milk and last highest weighted average score has been attained by the fulfill health related standard of milk. Hence, it can be concluded that brand loyalty of respondents is highly affected by easy availability and quality and least affected by health related factors.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It is found that in age wise distribution of respondents, Majority of respondents (48%) belong to the age group of 20-30 years.
2. Majority of respondents (60%) are female in gender wise distribution of respondents.
3. Majority of respondents (56%) are unmarried in marital status distribution.
4. Majority of respondents (44%) are qualified up to 12th standard in education wise distribution.
5. Although different brands of packed milk are available in the market but it is found that majority of respondents (71%) preferred Amul brand as their favorite brand and repurchase Amul packed milk everyday (brand loyalty).
6. Majority of respondents (46%) heard about branded packed milk from TV ads.
7. Majority of respondents (62%) choose branded milk over non-branded milk due to the quality of the products.
8. Among the various factors, respondents gave first rank to easily availability and second to the quality of the packed milk and last rank to the health related standard. So brand loyalty of respondents is most influenced by easy availability and quality and least influenced by health related factors.

SUGGESTIONS

This study deals with the brand loyalty of packed milk among consumers of Surat city. After grasped up various factors and aspects, some relevant suggestions to solve the problem are provided here:

- Some respondents opined that the price of branded milk products is not reasonable, it suggested to the companies which produces the branded milk, that they should maintain reasonable price for their brand, it will certainly induce the new customers who belongs to middle and lower classes.
- Majority of respondents opined that although the different brands are easily available but Indoor delivery of branded milk is not satisfactory. Researcher suggests that manufacturer should adopt new and effective measures to distribute their brand to every area of the city.
- Majority of respondents also opined that durability or admissible life of branded milk is not so much satisfactory, in such case manufacturer should adopt effective measure to improve the life of the branded milk.
- Majority of respondents also opined that branded milk products don't match their health related standards. The researcher suggests to the producers that the ingredients of branded milk products should be healthy for the consumers.
- Majority of respondents also opined that the branded packed milk is not fresh and hygienic. The researcher suggests that freshness and hygiene factors of branded milk products should be improved and modified according to the needs of the consumers.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study is to assess the brand loyalty of customers towards packed milk and to study the factors affecting their brand loyalty. On the basis of analysis and interpretation, we can conclude that majority of respondents purchase branded milk because of easy availability, taste, quality and reliability of the products, these are the factors which influence their brand loyalty but they are not satisfied with the admissible life, hygiene factors and health related standard of the

branded packed milk. Competitions is also available in market for every brand, so branded milk like Amul, Mother dairy, nestle etc. should maintain its quality, taste, easily availability, freshness, convenience etc. Various milk brand need to correct its pricing strategy by compared with other milk brand. Now every brand facing tremendous competition from other brand of milk, in order to sustain in the market by giving better service, a company should always try to find out the satisfaction level of customers and should take all necessary steps and measures to retain the customers. In order to maintain the brand loyalty a company needs to strengthen their unique strategies. Consumer's orientated thinking helps the marketer to define consumer need from the customer's point view. At present the market of Amul brand is good and if efforts have been taken to maintain the same level, it assumed that, definitely it has a good and assured market.

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