

Brand Awareness and Preferences towards Woodland Products

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Abstract

The global fashion industry is expanding at a rapid pace, and the footwear industry doesn't want to be left behind. In today's world, shoes are no longer just seen for their utility (as footwear), but they have also become a part of an individual's lifestyle that can reflect their social position and personality. This article aims for a comprehensive understanding of rural consumers brand awareness. The first challenge is reaching the rural buyers, because of scattered villages which make them inaccessible. The next challenge is lack of brand awareness. The study of buyer behaviour is the study of how they make decision to devote their available resources like time, money and effort on consumption related items. The study also focuses on why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it & how often they use it.

Keywords: Rural, Buyer Behaviour, Brand Awareness, Footwear.

Introduction

Brand awareness and preferences play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and influencing purchase decisions. In today's competitive business landscape, establishing a strong brand presence and understanding consumer preferences are key to achieving business success. Brand awareness refers to the level of recognition and familiarity consumers have with a particular brand, while brand preferences encompass the specific choices and preferences consumers have for certain brands over others. The importance of brand awareness and preferences lies in their ability to impact consumer purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and market share. Brands that are well-known and preferred by consumers have a competitive advantage and are more likely to attract and retain customers. Furthermore, understanding consumer preferences enables businesses to align their products, services, and marketing strategies to better meet customer needs and expectations. Woodland is a well-known outdoor footwear and gear manufacturer. The brand was formed in 1978 in Quebec, Canada, and has since gained international recognition for its sturdy and useful goods built for outdoor sports and adventures.

1. Footwear

Woodland is most known for its footwear, which is made to resist rough terrain and inclement weather. Hiking boots, trekking shoes, outdoor sandals, and casual shoes are among their footwear options. These devices are noted for their durable design, good grip, and waterproof qualities, making them suitable for hiking, camping, and other

2. Accessories

Woodland sells a variety of outdoor items in addition to boots and clothes. Backpacks, duffel bags, wallets, belts, caps, and socks are examples. The accessories are intended to complement the brand's footwear and garments by adding practicality and durability. Woodland's product range is designed for outdoor enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and those who appreciate durability and performance in their footwear and clothing. Woodland has earned a reputation as a recognized brand in the outdoor market due to its emphasis on quality, practicality, and sustainability.

Review of Literature

Seshadri (2016) compared the strategies of marketing products to urban and rural market. To sell products to rural market companies should alter its strategies to be successful. But most of the companies do not understand this and even after understanding they ignore while executing. Rural market certainly will bring a competitive advantage to the companies. The study also aimed to understand the potentiality of Indian rural markets, people's preference patterns and the brand preference patterns by the rural people towards mobiles. With the help of structured questionnaire primary data were collected for this research. The results of the research study indicated that there is a significant relationship between demographic factors and brand preference. The authors also concluded that rural buyers have a specific brand preference and choice towards mobiles phones. Rural buyers consider various factors like price, features of the product, service, brand image, availability etc. Before taking decisions while purchasing mobile phones.

Mayuri (2016) in her study stated that buying capacity of rural market is less than the buying capacity of urban market. This study revealed that the rural buyers are not price conscious but give preferences to quality of the product. The study further revealed that educational status influences the attitude and perception towards the products to be selected and the consumption pattern and behaviour of the household normally varies with the size of family. Shakthiman et al. (2014) in their research specified that how rural and urban people perceive the concept of "Brand". The authors also compared the rural and urban buyer behaviour with respect to brand preference. The results of the study concluded that pricing is a strong influence factor on preferring rural consumers. Brand awareness plays a major role in decision making by urban consumers.

Agarwal & Sunil (2014) stated that buyer behaviour research is the scientific study of the processes about how buyers select, secure, use and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs. If customer understood then only marketers can satisfy the needs of the buyers. The main aim of this research study is to study the demographic differences in 37 consumers' purchasing behaviour of persons living in Madhya Pradesh and when they buy WOODLAND products. To understand the behaviour of customers a survey was established and administered across some parts of Madhya Pradesh. The results approve the factors influencing consumer buying behaviour for tooth paste brands obtainable in the market.

Seema (2015) conducted a study entitled rural consumer buying behaviour and brand awareness of durable products. The results of the study reveals that brand awareness and brand knowledge of rural buyers, product awareness and product knowledge have significant effect on their behaviour towards purchase and consumption. Buyers' loyalty towards a specific brand has an instrumental influence on buying behaviour of rural consumer. This research study aided the marketers to understand how rural buyers use product and their level of brand awareness to formulate marketing strategy in the increasing competitive environment.

Jyoti & Devi (2014) explored the buying behaviour of rural consumers. The authors studied the brand awareness and influence of demographic factors on brand preference. The study concluded that brand awareness in rural markets with respect to WOODLANDs in general and toilet soaps in

particular is showing an increasing trend. People living in rural India are enthusiastic and curious to learn new things and thus are becoming more demanding. The authors opined that it is not an overnight change but took many years to witness these changes and there are several factors involved, viz., Globalization, uprising in telecommunication, exposure to culture of cities, higher education, and migration of people to cities for employment for the change.

Preeti & Raman (2013) studied that Fast Moving Consumer Goods sector is contributing to India's GDP and also contributing to the demand of lower and middle-income groups in India. 73% of WOODLAND products are sold to middle class people in which over 52% is in rural India. WOODLAND companies focus to make business in rural market for these reasons. Rural Indian market opportunities are unlimited especially for WOODLAND goods. Urban market saturation forced many WOODLAND companies to move to rural market with new strategies to target rural buyers.

Karthikeyan (2011) has specified that the customer brand preference in urban areas towards mobiles is equally influenced by quality, price, technology and durability and also customers are considering the quality of product with suitable price.

Satyam & Manish (2011) through their study stated that rural consumer behaviour is more complex because of lack of homogeneity in buyer groups in factors of demographics- Age, occupation, education and income. Indian economy is vibrant, people's income is rising and the habits, preferences and attitude of buyers are changing. The authors have identified three challenges in rural market for a marketer to overcome. Distribution, consumer awareness, influence are the three challenges to be understood and overcome by the rural marketers. This research study on understanding rural buyer behaviour infers how and why consumers react to the decisions of marketers. Consumer behaviour is the study about how buyers take decision to spend their time, money and effort on consumption related items and includes the study of why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it & how often they use it.

Muhammad Imtiaz (2009) in his study indicated that brand awareness is not related to perceptions of buyers particularly in the case of milk brands. The author further specified that perceptions of buyers have no direct link to consumer brand loyalty for any packed milk products and brands. The study concluded that the packaged milk product category determines no substantial interceding role for perceptions between awareness and consumers brand loyalty.

Statement of the Problem

Various research studies related to brand awareness and brand preferences of rural consumers are reviewed. From the reviews, it is found that all the studies have attempted to examine the rural consumer behavior of various product categories in general. Studies were conducted to identify the brand awareness of buyers towards WOODLAND products, their preferences and the influences of media separately with small sample sizes. Most of the studies were conducted to understand the behavior of buyers living in the urban and semi-urban. This study was exclusively conducted in Nagercoil town of Kanyakumari District in Tamilnadu and covered general factors influencing the buyer behavior, brand awareness, brand preferences and media influence in the purchase decision. The study filled the gap of understanding the rural buyers brand awareness and brand preferences towards WOODLAND brands.

Methodology

The type of research is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is essentially a fact finding related largely to the present, abstracting generalization by cross sectional study of the current situation. The population of the study is considered to be general public using woodland brands.

The researcher used simple random sampling as the sample technique. The researcher used percentage analysis, Chi- square test and correlation techniques for this study.

Table Showing Respondent’s Demographics

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	56	69.8
Female	24	30.2
Total	80	100
Age		
18-25	32	44.2
25-30	34	38.4
30-45	14	17.4
Above	45	0 0
Total	80	100

The table shows the items of the sample based on the demographics information of the participants. In terms of gender, the percentage of male is 69.8% and female is 30.2%. The total number of age is 44.2% for those aged 18 to 25, 38.4% for those aged 25 to 30, and 17.4% for those aged 30-45.

Correlation Analysis

- Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between gender and gender discrimination affect the woodland Brand.
- Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is significant relationship between gender and gender discrimination affect the woodland Brand. Since = 1. It shows there is a positive relationship between gender and gender discrimination which affect the woodland Brand.

Conclusion

Brand awareness and brand preference of rural consumers towards woodland brands is the topic of the study selected because rural areas are the untapped market in India with high potential. Urban market to some extent is stagnant and highly competitive. To sustain their business and growth companies operating in urban market should go rural. But they cannot go with the same strategies. Modification in the marketing mix elements attractive and suitable to the rural market is certainly beneficial to the woodland players. This study focused mainly on the rural consumer behavior towards selected woodland brands with reference to personal product. Sometimes companies spend time, funds and efforts carelessly on certain areas of marketing such as brand promotions, celebrity endorsements, targeting the rural consumers without understanding the usefulness of it. This study is helpful for the woodland brand players to understand the differences between rural and urban customers behaviour. An important contribution through this research study is that it proposed and tested hypothesis establishing the relationship between the various factors affecting consumers and their awareness / preferences in buying woodland brands using rural buyers as sample. This research study also identifies the factors influencing consumer preferences in making decision to buy woodland brands. Studying differences among consumers of diverse socio-economic categories on factors influencing their awareness and preferences for woodland brands is a significant contribution to examine the differences among users with various levels of exposure and preferences.

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