An Empirical Study to Assess the Perception of Indian Consumers with Respect to Local Brands

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to acquire insights into the attitudes and preferences of Indian consumers toward the purchase of local brands. The purpose of the survey is to investigate the elements that impact Indian customers when making a purchase of a product or service, as well as their perceptions of the quality and reliability of local brands. Participants are going to be polled on how important and reliable they find local brands to be in comparison to international brands, how satisfied they are with the quality of local products, and how likely they are to suggest a local brand to others. In addition to that, participants will be asked for personal information like their age, gender, and income level to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, participants will be asked to offer their general impressions of local brands as well as their level of contentment with the options that are currently available. The findings of this survey will assist local brands to develop more effective marketing strategies and provide a better understanding of the requirements of Indian consumers. At the end of the survey, participants will be asked to offer their general impressions of local brands as well as their level of contentment with the options that are currently available.

Keywords: Indian consumer, local brands, purchase behaviour, quality, reliability, satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION
In the past, Indian customers have often been more likely to purchase products from local brands because they trusted these companies more and were more familiar with them. In addition, Indian consumers have typically been more familiar with local brands. Local brands have typically been favoured by customers because they are thought to be of greater quality, to be more affordable, and to be more readily available. In addition, many Indian customers have shown a greater propensity to purchase from local brands because of the cultural and community ties they share with the area as well as their dedication to supporting locally owned and operated companies. (Robert, 2022)

1.1 Background
In recent years, there has been a movement in the attitudes of Indian customers, as they are now more receptive to the idea of purchasing goods from international brands. This is because multinational companies provide customers with a greater selection, a higher quality product, and improved service overall. In addition, the proliferation of e-commerce platforms in India has made it much simpler for customers there to get their hands on products manufactured in other countries. As a result of this, Indian customers are becoming more receptive to the concept of making purchases not just from domestic but also from overseas businesses. (Baskar & Sundaram, 2014)

In general, Indian consumers still show a strong preference for local brands, although their opinions have become more receptive toward multinational companies in recent years. As a consequence of this, both domestic and international companies have the opportunity to target the market in India and capitalize on the country’s enormous pool of consumers. (Kumar, 2021)

The quality of the item is what differentiates shopping for Indian local brands from shopping for foreign brands as the primary distinction between the two. Local brands in India have the propensity to make items of poorer quality with materials that are less expensive, but multinational brands tend to use materials of a higher grade and are frequently subjected to more severe quality controls. Local brands in India typically have fewer features and fewer opportunities for customization, but international brands typically have a greater number of features and a wider variety of customization options. In addition, foreign companies often have a reputation for being more expensive than Indian local ones. This is due to the fact that international brands typically make use of more expensive materials and more sophisticated manufacturing procedures. (Jain, 2021)

When it comes to providing service to customers, overseas companies frequently do a better job than Indian companies that are locally based. The customer service departments of international brands are often larger, and they are frequently better able to respond quickly to questions from customers. In addition, foreign brands frequently provide additional after-sales service alternatives, such as refunds, replacements, and repairs, then domestic brands do. (Webster, 2000)
In conclusion, multinational brands typically provide a greater variety of things to choose from than do Indian indigenous ones. There is typically a wider range of options available with international brands, including a greater number of sizes and colours, as well as more sophisticated functions.

Buying products from worldwide brands rather than Indian local companies typically results in higher overall product quality, a greater number of features, improved customer service, and a greater number of available options. (Alves, 2020)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A scientific technique called consumer behaviour analysis looks at how customers select, acquire, and dispose of goods and services that meet their needs (Anderson et al., 2020). The significance of customer behaviour was stressed by Gupta and others. According to the authors, it is crucial for marketers to first understand consumer behaviour in order to choose the proper message, then choose the ideal frequency and time management to ensure success. This will allow them to reach out to customers at the appropriate moment. Understanding marketing strategy to meet customer needs requires a strong understanding of consumer behaviour: notes that one of the components of the category of "personal needs" is "learning about new trends." Additionally, it has been shown that "idea shopping" is categorised as a one-purpose category, which refers to "shopping to stay up with trends and new clothes, as well as to witness current items and developments." A large number of consumers browse to learn about the newest trends, products, or advances. Studies on young people wearing clothing need to be conducted with a large random sample size in order to generalize the findings, as little attention has been paid to young people as a viable market area in India (Seock & Bailey, 2008).

An effort has been made to comprehend the customer purchasing patterns of branded goods (Borhan, 2016). Researchers created a conceptual model that prioritised demographic factors. However, the process of identifying the variables that help us understand how consumers behave while buying branded clothing is still unfinished. It has demonstrated the necessity for additional studies on young people's product-buying behaviour (Krisha & Shylajan, 2007). Future research is required to take youth product consumption from various geographical areas into consideration. For a brand to gain customer loyalty, it is essential to satisfy its needs. In the context of the telecom business, a study that was conducted in the literature also revealed a separate function of customer loyalty in which interaction impacts, rather than direct influence, and prior usage anticipated consumer usage. For instance, in 2001 the little local Spanish clothing firm Zara became a fashion icon. According to LVMH fashion director Daniel Piette, with more than 2,000 stores, it is likely the most inventive and destructive retailer in the world (Nazi et al., 2021).

Concentrate on the value of style as a purchasing factor while making any choice. In addition, it was stated that one of the primary factors in any clothing purchase is style. When a product's availability and selection are taken into consideration as factors in the choice to purchase apparel, the style of the clothing will result from those factors (Park & Cho, 2012).

According to research, people who value originality highly tend to adopt new brands or products more quickly than people who value uniqueness less. The notion of customers' need for uniqueness discusses how a person's need for uniqueness can affect how brands respond to them and how much they want to stand out from the crowd by pursuing material possessions (Knight & Young Kim, 2007). It was discovered that it makes sense to assume that, under comparable conditions, individuals display differing degrees of demand for uniqueness, and that this can have a big impact on their purchasing decisions. Three different sorts of customer behaviour can serve as examples of this requirement for uniqueness:

- Innovative counter-conformity
- Unpopular decision counter-conformity
- Avoiding resemblance

Theoretically, an individual deliberately disregards established social standards in order to set themselves apart from the community, seeking distinction in defiance of normative pressure. In contrast to someone motivated by a desire for independence, the person is exposed to a set of social standards and actively attempts to stand out from the crowd by acting in a way that is inconsistent with those norms. It is ultimately up to the good to become a widely acknowledged symbol before it has any impact on the individual. These unique displays of identity are sought because of their well-known significance, which makes them accessible through a variety of media and contexts where there are fewer severe societal repercussions for being unusual. The acquisition of tangible commodities is therefore especially valuable in this sense (Raman & Aashish, 2020).

Research on consumer emotions is an intriguing area of study. By acknowledging the important role that emotions play in business, organisations may provide services to clients on new levels and in novel ways that will give them an edge over rivals and boost profits. Because they believe the brand delivers the correct features, quality, or emotional benefits, consumers may desire to buy a specific brand (Boonghee Yoo, 2020). A consumer's subjective assessment of a brand's general excellence or superiority is known as "perceived quality." It is a prerequisite for success in the marketplace, and many businesses today have made customer-driven quality a formidable tool for strategic advantage. The perception of
inner and external qualities associated with quality is mostly where the consumer's perception of quality originates. In actuality, the perceived quality is distinct from the real or objective quality (Panda et al., 2021).

Numerous studies looking at brand awareness, knowledge, and consumer purchasing patterns have been conducted in India. (Andrews, 2004) employed a stratified sample of 300 homes and an inter-category logit model to analyse how households made decisions about different product categories using metrics including brand loyalty, price sensitivity, store characteristics, and aisle presentation. According to the study, households across categories exhibit the same choosing behaviour depending on how similar the product categories are to one another. However, the study did not examine how brand preferences vary between different product categories (Ortmeyer et al., 1991). Two sets of comparable and dissimilar products were used to analyse brand choice using panel data from 343 households; they discovered that brand preference among the households differed for the two product sets.(Webster, 2000) emphasises the need of comprehending the connections among producers, sellers, and buyers; brand management is more successful when producers and sellers collaborate closely to improve the position of their respective brands in the marketplace. Because brand loyalty is positively correlated with brand trust, it is crucial to examine the connections between brand loyalty and marketing tactics.

### 2.1 Research Question

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- How do Indians feel about supporting their homegrown businesses by patronizing local brands?
- What are the attitudes and perceptions of local customers regarding the local brands?

### 2.2 Research Objectives

The researcher undertakes the following research objectives-

- To understand Indian sentiments towards purchasing local brands.
- To evaluate the customer attitude and perception towards local brands.

### 2.3 Hypothesis

The following hypothesis are undertaken for the study-

H0: The Indian consumers do not support local products and local business.
H1: The Indian consumers do support local products and local business.
H0: The Indian consumer has not awareness about local brands/products.
H2: The Indian consumer has awareness about local brands/products.
H0: Indian Consumer do not prefers to purchase local product or from local brands.
H3: Indian Consumer do prefers to purchase local product or from local brands.
H0: When customers are not aware about the local brands/products they are not more likely to make a purchase.
H4: When customers are aware about the local brands/products they are more likely to make a purchase.

### 2.4 Rationale of the Study

The idea of 'patriotism' provides a conceptual framework for understanding the feelings of Indian customers toward the purchase of local brands. The sense of love and allegiance that one has for one's own nation is the essence of patriotism. It is a feeling of pride in one's homeland as well as a willingness to defend it against influences from other parts of the world. Therefore, patriotism is a powerful motivator for Indian consumers to purchase local goods, as it acts as a means for them to express their allegiance to their country. This is because it provides an opportunity for them to support the economy of their own community. (Sanyal et al., 2014)

In addition, the term "nationalism" can be utilised to define the feelings of Indian consumers regarding the act of purchasing local brands. A person's commitment and dedication to their country is so great that it may drive them to act in a manner that is antagonistic towards the countries or cultures of other people. This extreme type of patriotism is what we mean when we talk of nationalism. This form of loyalty and devotion may be observed in the preference that Indian consumers have for local products; by doing so, they are demonstrating their dedication to their nation by supporting its commercial sector, which in turn demonstrates their allegiance to their nation.

In general, conceptions of patriotism, nationalism, and cultural affinity form the theoretical basis for the attitudes of Indian customers toward purchasing local products. This is the case because these ideas have a long history in India. Customers in India demonstrate their allegiance to their nation, their culture, and their common identity by favouring regionally produced goods and brands. (Whale, 2021)

In conclusion, the notion of 'cultural affinity' also plays a part in the attitudes of Indian customers towards the practice of purchasing locally produced goods. A sense of belonging to a specific culture or group is what's meant to be conveyed by the term "cultural affinity." It's possible that Indian customers have a deep connection to their own culture and the goods that come from it, which would explain their preference for domestic brands. This connection could be the result of a number of circumstances, including shared views and values, a common history, and a sense of shared identity among the parties involved. Customers in India demonstrate their commitment to both their nation and their culture when they purchase goods made in their own country.
Covid-19 has not only altered the manner in which we shop but also the reasons we choose particular brands and things to purchase. There is a growing emphasis on firms that are committed to purchasing locally, giving back to the community, and being open and honest about everything that goes into the production of their products. Covid-19 has not only altered the manner in which researcher shop but also the reasons we choose particular brands and things to purchase. (Fred, 2020) There is a growing emphasis on firms that are committed to purchasing locally, giving back to the community, and being open and honest about everything that goes into the production of their products. Because of the epidemic, consumers of all ages are gravitating toward traditional practices, whether in the realm of food, beauty routines, or health and wellbeing. The epidemic created an opportunity for regional goods to become more visible on the market. Because of difficulties in the supply chain and the need for products with which they are already familiar, customers are increasingly turning to regionally produced goods. People were naturally looking for ways to boost their immunity, improve their health, and even cope with concerns related to their mental health when the health halo was at its highest point. The utilization of time-honoured, ayurvedic components like giloy, ashwagandha, and other such substances was the solution to these problems. (Sheth, 2020).

ANALYSIS OF STUDY
According to the Exclusive Industry Trend report. Shopify India recently published an unprecedented market trend study based on their 2021 Customer Trends Survey. The Holiday Purchasing Outlook Report 2021 was created in light of the epidemic, even though the Indian retail industry is still undergoing significant changes in terms of customer behaviour and purchasing habits. Consumer buying tastes are changing as we approach the holiday season, according to a poll performed among 800 Indian buyers between September 15, 2021, and October 20, 2021, between metro and non-metro areas (Fred, 2020). By raising customer strategies and adapting to the new order, these trends will eventually determine the path that the Indian retail industry takes. Diwali is one of the most significant annual celebrations in India and coincides with the busiest shopping season of the year. Shopify India conducted a poll to understand shifting customer sentiments and trends in the lead-up to Diwali. The report’s primary goal is to investigate the effects that several lockdowns, changing retail environments, and a faltering market are having on consumer spending patterns and attitudes (Khare, 2012). The widespread use of mobile devices in India, firms choosing to use a direct-to-consumer model, improved last-mile delivery, and customer-friendly return policies are just a few of the elements that have encouraged millennial non-metro shoppers to use digital channels. While online shopping has become more popular among customers in tier-I Indian metropolises over the past ten years, the epidemic has sped up this rise and propelled it to new heights in tier-II cities and non-metros as well (Kumar et al., 2011). Online shopping is preferred by 53.5% of millennial consumers from non-metro areas, according to Shopify’s Festive Shopping Outlook Report. Nearly 58% of respondents said that during the holiday season this year, they will prefer to patronize and make purchases from small internet firms (Chakraborthy, 2020). Whenever it comes to gift-giving and holiday shopping, this stands in stark contrast to the typical lean toward high-end brands. By providing a variety of affordable options, as well as individualized attention and customized experiences, smaller merchants have been able to win over customers’ attention and allegiance. These advantages have been crucial in boosting e-sales at these tiny, neighbourhood shops, in addition to the emotional resonance that customers feel towards providing encouragement and assistance to companies that are struggling to survive. Instead of traditional holiday chocolates or dried fruit tokens, consumers are now more likely to favour presents with high functionality and use value. Consumers now recognize the necessity to constantly improve or repair their homes as a result of home confinement. It should come as no surprise that home furnishings and décor were at the top of this year's holiday shopping lists, with more than 50% of respondents indicating a preference to spend on presents in this category (Basha & Lal, 2019).

3. Data and Research Methodology
To better understand consumer purchasing habits, a thorough study was done. In order to gather information, a survey method utilising a self-administered questionnaire was used. The theoretical framework of the essay is built on secondary sources, including research papers, articles, publications, and articles on many factors that influence consumer purchasing behaviour. It is an empirical study at the moment (Dhiman, 2018).

3.1 Data Analysis

Table 3.1 Indian supporting their homegrown businesses by patronizing local brands

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>176.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>30.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>2.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis, i.e., the Indian consumers do support local products and local business. Indian are becoming aware about their local brands, and they prefer to support vocal for local more than international products. Nowadays Indian consumer are looking forward into local brands and promotes the brands from their neighbourhood that maintains good quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>28.96</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>10.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>0.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis, i.e., the Indian consumer has awareness about local brands/products. As a direct result of the epidemic, people in India now possess a stronger sense of devotion to their nation and neighbourhood, and as a direct consequence of this, they are more inclined to purchase at companies that are owned by people in their community. This is primarily the outcome of an increased awareness of how important it is to provide aid to local businesses while we are going through these difficult times. In relation, because of the closing of borders and the restrictions placed on global tourism, Indian customers are more likely to place their trust in local businesses. This is because local businesses are more likely than international businesses to have supply chains that are reliable and consistent. In moreover, local brands are generally believed to be of a greater quality, to give quality service to their clients, and to offer greater value for their money than their international counterparts.

Table 3.2 Attitudes and perceptions of local customers regarding the local brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>99.35</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>19.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>1.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
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</tbody>
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The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis, i.e., Indian Consumer do prefers to purchase local product or from local brands. The conclusions of the survey, which took into account the views of individuals, indicated that respondents aged 35-44 and older predict that companies would provide conferred by the constitution in packaged forms. As a direct consequence of the pandemic, consumers are more concerned about the quality of the products they purchase and are looking for goods that give transparency about the use of locally sourced components. The research also indicated that consumers have a rising preference for firms that are actively working to help local communities and offer something back to the community in which they live. In point of fact, research shows that middle-aged to older women, namely those in the age group of 35 to 44, are interested in buying things that benefit social causes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson correlation coefficient (r)</th>
<th>0.6118</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>1.066e-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size (n)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there is a significant large positive relationship between Customer Awareness about Local brands/products and Customer Willingness to Purchase Local brands/products, \( r (128) = .612, \)
\( p < .001 \). Since the \( p \)-value < \( \alpha \), \( H_0 \) is rejected and we accept the alternate hypothesis i.e. When customers are aware about the local brands/products they are more likely to make a purchase. The above analysis shows that the higher will consumer awareness about the local products the higher will be chances of customer making a purchase. In spite of the fact that Indians' attention on health has been steadily growing over the previous several years, the epidemic served to give this trend the necessary impetus. "Approximately 43 percent of buyers in today's market anticipate that the things they buy will have components that provide additional advantages. Because of the popularity of online shopping and improvements in delivery methods, conventional business models are now able to access customers, which makes it simpler for them to make use of locally produced goods.

"WOW Skin Science" is a business that has seen significant expansion over the course of the recent years. Its use of natural components in its goods has contributed significantly to the company's expansion throughout the years. Additionally, it has been making strenuous efforts to reduce the environmental impact of both its goods and their packaging. Similarly, another Indian brand “Boat” has decided to make the use raw materials from Indian in its electronic gadgets to support the vocal for local.

When discussing food items, we must consider: A significant number of customers are interested in regionally produced goods as a result of the perceived advantages of greater quality, enhanced flavour, and greater freshness. Consumers place a significant emphasis on the origin characteristic as a critical buying consideration. When it comes to organic produce, locally sourced foods might be seen either as alternatives or as additions to the organic options available.

Indian brands presently find themselves on the precipice of opportunity, apprehended in the windy conditions of political, economic, and intellectual shifts that have made the homegrown supposition more appealing than at any time in the past ten years. These shifts have made the homegrown supposition more appealing than it has ever been.

Let’s look at the percentage that shows the ‘Customers trust’ on products that are made in India. The 45% of the respondents agreed that consumer have a trust and believe on Indian made products, 30% agreed to this and 10% were neutral and other 15% showed likingness to outside products as trustworthy. We can conclude that Indian sentiments have a positive attitude towards the local products and local brands.

4. Results and Findings:

4.1 Hypothesis testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Accepted / Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Indian consumers do support local products and local business.</td>
<td>H1 was accepted and H0 was rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indian consumer has awareness about local brands/products.</td>
<td>H2 was accepted and H0 was rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Consumer do prefer to purchase local product or from local brands.</td>
<td>H3 was accepted, and H0 was rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When customers are aware of the local brands/products they are more likely to make a purchase.</td>
<td>H4 was accepted, and H0 was rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indians have access to many advantages from local brands, which is why, particularly after the epidemic, people have begun buying from local small and major enterprises. This is why local brands offer Indians many advantages. (Saluja, 2018) Local brands help Indian consumers. Their products are generally tailored to the Indian market, making them more likely to meet local tastes. Customers who buy from Indian firms boost the economy and create additional jobs. Finally, local companies often provide more personalized service since they know their customers better. Their prices and business operations are also more transparent. (DeVries & Fennis, 2019) Indian shoppers benefit in numerous ways.
by buying local items. It supports their economy, improves their services and goods, and meets their requirements and preferences in the greatest manner. The Indian Customers prefer local products more these days be it shopping a dress or buying vegetables the local vendors, brands and products are given more importance in the present time, even though some of the local products like clothing or other products are expensive, the consumers are preferring to support their neighbour marketers and trust on qualities of these products (Boonghee2020). Covid-19 has supported many local brands in proving their product quality and fulfilling the demands of the Indian sentiments. “Local and fresh are valued more. After the outbreak, Indians have started shopping from local small and large businesses because brands provide several benefits. Local brands benefit Indians. Local brands assist Indians. Their items are usually suited to Indian preferences. Indian company customers fuel the economy and generate employment (Fred, 2020). Finally, local businesses know their clients better and provide more customized service. Their pricing and operations are also clearer. Local shopping has several advantages for Indians. It boosts their economy, enhances their products, and best satisfies their needs.

5. CONCLUSION
Consumers are increasingly showing a preference for companies in which they can place their faith and where the experience is reliable, dependable, and, of course, risk-free. Although there has been considerable increase in the quantity of products with the label “Made in India,” consumers in India are seeing a transformation that is both more nuanced and positive. In a similar vein, we provide items to our clientele that are not only manufactured in India however that are also designed specifically with India in mind. The pandemic epidemic has had a considerable effect on the sector that deals in exports and imports. We’ve witnessed a lot of domestic goods and local producers emerge into the light as a consequence of labels like “Made in India.” Such efforts are delivering financial outcomes, which is also beneficial for supporting the Indian economy. Consumers in India are increasingly purchasing locally produced goods and brands, which is beneficial to the nation’s communities and economy.

REFERENCES: