

HOW IMPORTANT A ROLE DOES BRANDING AND PACKAGING PLAY IN THE CHOICES OF THE YOUTH?

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ABSTRACT

Branding and Packaging are important tools used by sellers to communicate information to buyers of consequence. The physical attributes of the product may, consciously or sub-consciously, affect the choice of a consumer. Along with the purpose of identification, it differentiates the product from other products of similar nature in terms of usage and quality and establishes the trust of knowledge of an unknown seller in the buyer's mind. Even as the world moves into an online mode of shopping, the appearance and brand of the product visible onscreen is disseminated by the marketer. Previous research has predicted that the results of buyers of consequence picking a product heavily depends on their ability to recognize the brand and its significance communicated through novel packaging. The paper aims to identify the role of Branding and Packaging in influencing the decision of young consumers in India. The age group taken into consideration for the purpose of this research involves the 15-29 bracket of consumers. Non convenient sampling method was used to develop a sample for the questionnaire. The research also uses longitudinal exploratory approach to further understanding and change in the mind-set of young consumers over the years.

Keywords: Branding, Packaging, Consumer, Consumerism, Quality Perception, Buying Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Attracting consumers into habitual buying of a replaceable product in an oligopoly market is an ardent task for sellers. Along with creating an unforgettable experience of usage and differentiation of similar products from competitors of consequence, they need to create a need in the mind of a buyer to use the same product again and again. For this purpose, a brand would break through the sub-conscious barrier of seller anonymity.

Packaging, on the other hand, will be used to please the senses of a buyer by having an attractive, colourful, novel, and aesthetic appearance. Many researches of the past and present have proven that a certain quality perception leads to a positive affirmation of buying behaviour as an action of the consumer, researched upon accepted by this paper as a linear relationship. Further, a non-convenient sample of the youth market of India was used for data provision in a survey conducted for the purpose of this research.

Through the course of this paper, an overview of the literature review in association with brand equity, brand awareness, quality perception (a part of consumer buying behaviour), brand association and brand loyalty are covered. The research methodology is discussed to give further details like data collection, sample size etc., in the study.

The study used SPSS software for carrying one way ANOVA to deal with the empirical findings of the study. The conclusion and suggestions are provided from the study to identify the gap and enable the future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ferrel and Pride (2003), brand equity includes the strength of the brand in market, including propriety brand assets responding to the brand's marketing and financial values. According to Keller (1993) brand equity is about value added to the products and services over a period. The brand value simply reflects how consumers positively or negatively respond to brand, quality and prices leading to a higher or lower market share and profitability gain for the firm. (Keller, 1993).

Aaker (1991) brand equity is something providing value to the name and symbol of the brand and in-turn providing value to the organization, it also provides value to the consumers. He defined brand equity as an asset and liability aspect associated to the products name and symbol which is having correlation with the benefit added or deprived to its customers.

According to Aaker (1991), brand equity can be defined as 'a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to the symbol and name of a brand, which is directly correlated to the value added or removed from a product or service.

Positive, client-based brand equity has the ability to lead to higher revenue, lower costs; thus, creating a higher profit for the organization. This has a direct correlation towards the organization's ability to increase prices, consumer willingness to seek or reject them via various channels of distribution, effective communication between the parties, effective marketing and success of various brand extensions and licensing opportunities.

The Consumer behaviour analysis involves how a consumer, or a group of consumers make buying decisions, purchase, use or throw away products, services, or experience to satisfy their needs, wants and desires (Solomon et al, 2008). A brand is a mix of its name, logo, package design, term, or combination of above all to differentiate its offerings from the competitor and providing a distinctive value to the product.

Malapropism between the terms brand and product is extremely common, but they add two different values into the life of a consumer. McQuiston (2004) defined product as a goods produced in a factory outlet and the final value of any product depends on customer perception and their buying experience to it. He also explained that successful brands have an enduring quality and will be able to sustain for a long time in the market and creating better customer satisfaction than others.

Further, Aaker (1991) claimed that brand equity could be classified into five different levels as brand loyalty, brand awareness, customer perceived quality, brand association elements and finally assets of the brands like patents, trademarks designed to it.

Among the above mentioned five brand equity categories, customers' choices, and decision-making process, along with reactions to the brand that can be readily adopted by consumers (Barwise, 1993; Yoo et al, 2000. Tong & Hawley (2009) took a quantitative approach to brand equity by linking customer satisfaction to it. Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) cited those consumers tend to associate positive attributes to the items that they can recall and informed to them through an effective promotional channel.

Brand associations of a product is highly impacted by the customer perceived quality while buying the goods or services. Customers tend to link the brand association with attributes like images, attributes, symbols, and organizational factors. The brand equity of any successful

brands has a strong customer loyalty which increases the customer satisfaction. It also carries a strong brand image among the buyers to carry a distinctive positioning element in the brand.

Aaker (1991) defines brand awareness as the recall value and ability of a consumer to recognize a brand and helps to identify the specific product category by means of quality perception of product or marketing effectiveness of brand. Aaker claims that brand awareness plays the biggest role in influencing a consumer's buying decision, as he/she would feel more comfortable in making a purchase decision about a product, brand or known brand-associated product of quality. Unknown brands do not create trust in the minds of customers due to seller anonymity.

In finality, consumers who identifies and recalls the brand name are more likely to recognize and make a purchasing decision in favour of the known brand than an unknown brand. Grewal et. al (1998) opined that consumer decision making process is highly influenced by brand awareness of the buyers. It is also a crucial factor in the buying process of habitual customers behaviour favouring the brand. In certain products, Brand awareness is strongly amalgamated in the consumers' mind to influence their buying behaviour. The benefit of brand awareness is that customers exhibit a greater degree of trust while making their buying decision. Hoyer & Brown, (1990) felt that brand awareness helps to develop a relatively positive opinion about the well-known brand among the consumers. The unknown brands must face an intense competition from the popular and established brands in the market.

According to various authors like Herbig & Milewicz (1993), Janiszewski & Osselaer (2000), Turley & Moore (1995), brand awareness of any buyer is strongly influenced by elements like Brand Name and Logo of the product designed. This mainly helps the buyers to understand the symbolic elements designed in the product and easily helps them to recognize in the market. It also helps the consumers to identify the service providers who distinctively function and offers superior values to them in the buyer's market.

According to Aaker (1991), the brand name is the fundamental element to recognize the distinctiveness of any product offered to the consumers. Moreover, the name of brand is the most important ingredient in raising brand awareness about the brand. Keller (2008) maintains that brand name helps to identify the theme and association of the product in a most simplified manner to its customers. Brand names can be the most important and helps to design the communication elements very effectively in the minds of consumer. Some companies brand name may not have a strong emotional connection with the buyer but still it is captivating and a name that people can remember with ease.

Symbols build brand awareness, hence brand equity in the long run. From the above discussion, we can put forward us,
First hypothesis: Buying behaviour of consumers is dependent on brand awareness.

Quality perception was defined by Zeithaml (1998) as consumer understanding of the product quality and service with respect to its purpose and his/her requirement. Quality perception is a powerful strategic tool, with many organizations using Quality perception statistics to improve the quality of product and service. It helps in understanding majority of consumer requirements and modify product or service in accordance with that. It even helps a company in deciding a pricing strategy, proving to add multi-purpose value to an organization.

An organization which is ambitious about gaining a high market share within their segmented market must take Quality perception of consumers into account, as a bad image and a lack of awareness of product can be mortifying for a brand or brand association. Perceived quality depends on a consumer's knowledge, previous experience, risk perception etc. It also

depends on the current situation and mind-set of a consumer such as purpose of purchase, purchase power etc. (Jacoby & Olson, 1985).

The look, feel, touch and experience of a product plays important roles in building a brand's quality perception in the minds of consumers. As Ajay and Murthi (2008) claim in their quality perception research, consumers prefer buying from well-known brands due to previous experiences, better marketing and good word-of-mouth, leading to a favourable. Quality perception in the minds of a consumer.

This results in a belief that branded products and aesthetically sound products are qualitatively superior due to the presence of funds being spent on it. They believe that the risk present in an unknown product does not exist in a well-known brand.

Therefore, our **second hypothesis** can be stated as: Perceived quality based on branding and packaging affect the choices of consumers.

METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was administered using online data collection forms prepared by the utility of Google forms. Age group of consequence sampled in the questionnaire was 15-29. Only those products were considered which are easily replaceable and doesn't have a lasting impact in the pocket of the consumer.

Products which will be considered for this research was Toothpastes, soaps, cosmetics, stationary, soft drinks. Questions based on their preferences, reasons for preferences, thought process before switching interests between brands, frequency of buying replaceable items, paid price range, importance given to price, significance placed on quality, importance placed on marketing were administered via the online data collection form. Regression analysis, cross-tabulations were majorly will be used to analyse the data.

The data collection lasted thirteen days. The questionnaire was sent to more than two hundred people, out of which response was received from 120 people belonging to the required age group. Anonymity was maintained throughout the process of filling and submitting the questionnaire. A few demographic details such as age (a prerequisite of 15-29 was mentioned) and gender was asked in the questionnaire.

Thirteen Questions based on their buying behaviour was recorded using the responses and spreadsheet option of google forms. Among those who answered the questionnaire, 51.7% were females and 45.8% were males.

A few questions which were asked were 'Do you make purchasing decisions of daily-used products at home? (e.g, soap, toothpastes etc.)'; 'Do you pay attention to the brand of the daily-use product while making a buying decision?'; 'If your answer was 'yes' or 'decision depends on product', which daily use product commands your attention towards the brand?' etc. Their responses based on packaging influencing their buying decision was also noted and analysed.

The responses can be noted in '<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1w9MKlxfO-OUAfJVLmtyLGG4PhwOw0Thqn2gkFELY5uo/edit#responses>' in Figure 1.

Data Analysis and Findings

As stated above, the gender ratio of responses is as mentioned in the graph.

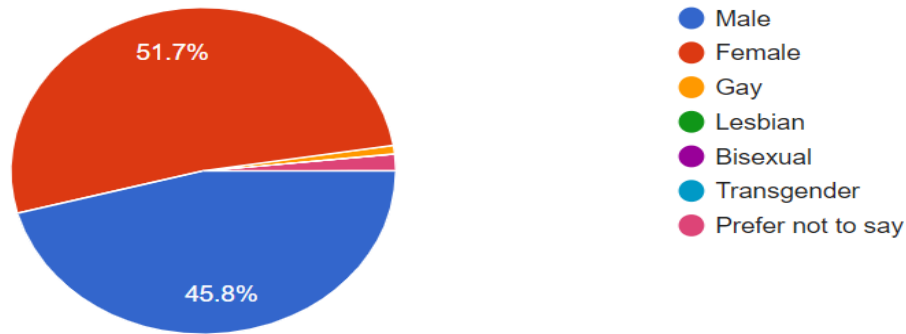


Figure 1
SHOWING GENDER RATIO OF RESPONSES

Percentage of youth making purchasing decisions at home is as mentioned below in Figure 2.

Do you make purchasing decisions of daily-used products at home? (e.g, soap, toothpastes etc.)

120 responses



Figure 2
SHOWING PURCHASING OF YOUTH ON THEIR DAILY PRODUCT IN HOME.

The above results show that majority (68.3%) of Indian Youth do have purchasing power in their families, irrespective of financial independence. Those who don't make a final decision alone would make if after consultation with their families in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1					
ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR: PURCHASING DECISION					
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	Standard Deviation
Female Purchasing Decision	53	133	2.509434	0.408563	0.639189436
Male Purchasing Decision	54	144	2.666667	0.339623	0.582771517

Table 2 ANOVA ON PURCHASING DECISION						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.661259	1	0.661259	1.769186	0.186364813	3.931556
Within Groups	39.24528	105	0.373765			
Total	39.90654	106				

Using a single factor ANOVA testing on the Youth populace divided based on gender for a 95% level of confidence and giving a quantitative magnitude of 3 for “Yes”, 2 for “Sometimes” and 1 for “No”. From the mean of the data, we can see a partiality towards “yes” in both the genders, with the male youth showing more purchasing power than the female youth as they have a higher mean. Males also show a lower variance and standard deviation and are clustered around the mean with fewer outliers, when compared to the female gender Tables 3 and 4.

The p value, F value and F critical value show that there is a lack of interdependence on purchasing decisions based on gender.

Percentage of Indian Youth focussing on brand while making a purchasing decision is as mentioned below in Figure 3.

Do you pay attention to the brand of the daily-use product while making a buying decision?

120 responses

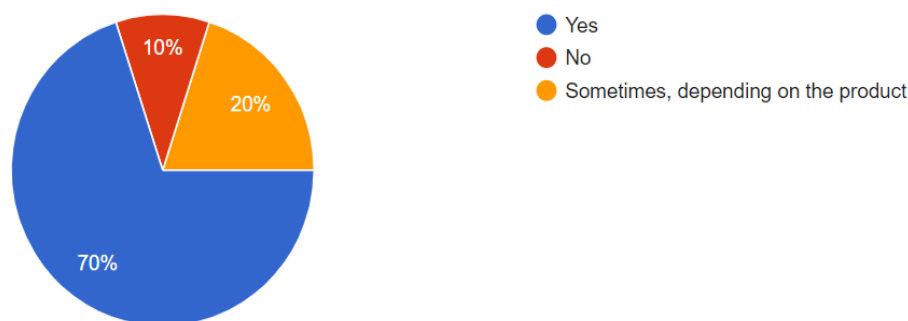


Figure 3
SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF INDIAN YOUTH FOCUSING ON BRAND WHILE MAKING A PURCHASING DECISION

From the above graph, it can be noted that 70% of the Indian Youth place emphasis on branding while making a buying decision in Table 4.

Table 3 ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR: BRANDING IMPORTANCE					
Groups		Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Female	Branding	63	167	2.650794	0.359959

Importance				
Male Branding Importance	55	144	2.618182	0.462626

Table 4 ANOVA ON BRANDING IMPORTANCE						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.03123	1	0.03123	0.076591	0.782464636	3.922879
Within Groups	47.29928	116	0.407752			
Total	47.33051	117				

Using the previous study of single factor ANOVA and giving a quantitative magnitude of 3 for “Yes”, 2 for “Sometimes” and 1 for “No”, Females give more importance to branding of daily use products than males, gaining a score of 2.651, while males scores 2.62. Also, females have proven to show lesser deviation from the mean (more importance to branding) in comparison to males. The p value, F value and F critical value show that there is a lack of interdependence on branding decisions based on gender. Among the youth focussing on brand, the habitually bought items which require brand focus in the minds of the consumer is as mentioned below in Tables 5 and 6 and Figure 4.

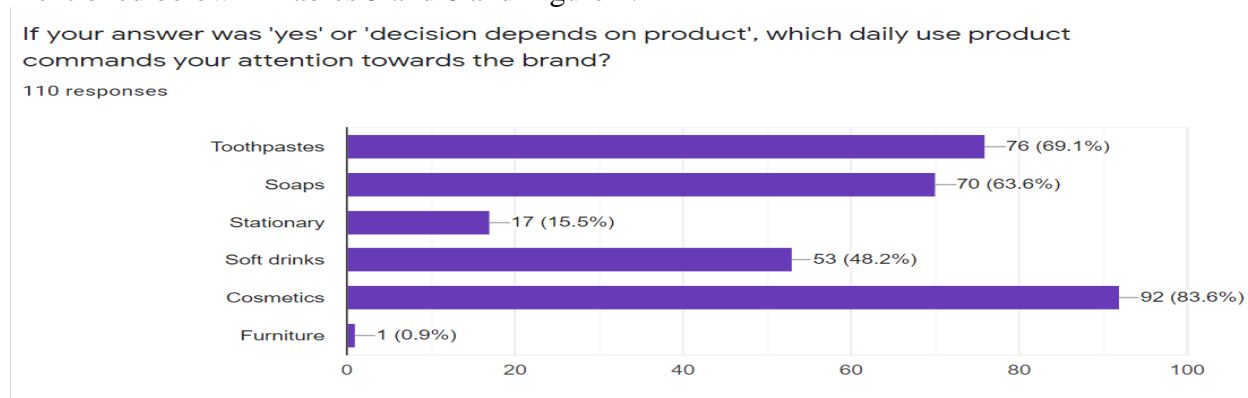


FIGURE 4
SHOWING THE FOCUS OF YOUTH ON BRAND

Many findings can be noted in this answer. Firstly, brands are given most importance in cosmetics (83.6%) and least importance to brand is given while buying stationary items (15.5%). Brands of toothpastes and soaps are almost given equal importance in the minds of a consumer. Soft drinks are cattle classified, maintaining a position in the middle; showing that branding of

soft drinks is important, but need not be given the most attention by an organization in Table 7 and Table 8.

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
In case of toothpastes, will you choose a known brand which charges higher than an unknown cheap brand?	120	427	3.558333	1.542787
In case of Soaps, will you choose a known brand which charges higher than an unknown cheap brand?	120	458	3.816667	1.680392
In case of Stationary, will you choose a known brand which charges higher than an unknown cheap brand?	120	371	3.091667	1.731022
In case of Cosmetics, will you choose a known brand which charges higher than an unknown cheap brand?	120	459	3.857143	2.089588
In case of Soft Drinks, will you choose a known brand which charges higher than an unknown cheap brand?	120	413	3.441667	1.794888

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	46.3804	4	11.5951	6.561306	3.6E-05	2.386935
Within Groups	1049.71	594	1.767194			
Total	1096.09	598				

With a sample of 120 customers, the following daily use items were surveyed: toothpastes, soaps, stationary, cosmetics and soft drinks. 5 for “Irrespective of price difference, I will choose the known brand if I had a good experience using it or have seen it in advertisements”, 4 for “I will go for the more expensive branded option as higher price means higher quality.”, 3 for “If the hike in price is between 10-40%, I will go for the known brand”, 2 for “I will go for cheaper product” and 1 for “I will choose the unknown brand”. In accordance with the results, customers show maximum brand consciousness for cosmetics, and least for stationary.

The p value is below 0.05, showing high interdependence between all groups. A brand conscious customer is most likely to show brand consciousness for all the daily use products. The same is indicated in f test too.

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Male for Toothpastes	55	194	3.527273	1.513131
Female for Toothpastes	63	229	3.634921	1.558116

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.334028	1	0.340277	0.221365	0.638885	3.922879
Within Groups	178.312	116	1.537175			
Total	178.653	117				

In accordance with the results for a 95% confidence interval, toothpastes show an above average brand consciousness in the minds of the customer, with them going for the branded option above the unbranded one.

The p value, F value and F critical value show that there is a lack of interdependence on branding decisions based on gender in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9				
ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR FOR SOAPS				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Male for Soaps	55	200	3.636364	1.86532
Female for Soaps	63	255	4.047619	1.336406

In accordance with the results for a 95% confidence interval, soaps show a high brand consciousness in the

Table 10						
ANOVA ON SOAPS						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	4.966432	1	4.966432	3.3138099	0.079109	3.922879
Within Groups	183.584	116	1.582624			
Total	188.551	117				

minds of the customer, with them going for the branded option above the unbranded one. Females have shown an extremely high brand consciousness in comparison to males. Males also show a higher variance in their decisions compared to females, making females target customers for branded soaps. The p value, F value and F critical value show that there is a lack of interdependence on branding decisions based on gender in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 11				
ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR FOR STATIONARY				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Male for Stationary	55	180	3.272727	2.164983
Female for Stationary	63	187	2.968254	1.353815

Table 12						
ANOVA ON STATIONARY						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	2.7222	1	2.722198	1.57227	0.212405	3.922879
Within Groups	200.846	116	1.731428			
Total	203.568	117				

Stationary has shown the least brand decision making requirements in the minds of a consumer, with females showing a below average preference for branded stationary; although males show a higher variance in their decisions compared to females; making branded stationary a questionable decision in the minds of young consumers in Table 13 and 14.

Table 13				
ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR FOR COSMETICS				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Male for Cosmetics	55	209	3.8	2.237037
Female for Cosmetics	62	246	4.467742	1.933369

Table 14						
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ANOVA ON COSMETICS						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.82007	1	0.820072	0.395032	0.530912	3.923599
Within Groups	238.735	115	2.075961			
Total	239.556	116				

In accordance to the results for a 95% confidence interval, cosmetics show a high brand consciousness in the minds of the customer, with them going for the branded option above the unbranded one. Females have shown an extremely high brand consciousness in comparison to males. Males also show a higher variance in their decisions compared to females, making females target customers for branded cosmetics in Table 15 and 16.

Table 15 ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR: SOFT DRINKS				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Male for Soft Drinks	55	198	3.6	1.911111
Female for Soft Drinks	63	212	3.365079	1.622632

Table 16 ANOVA ON SOFT DRINKS							
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit	
Between Groups	1.62055	1	1.620554	0.922382	0.338848	3.922879	
Within Groups	203.803	116	1.756924				
Total	205.424	117					

In accordance to the results for a 95% confidence interval, toothpastes show an above average brand consciousness in the minds of the customer, with them going for the branded option above the unbranded one from Tables 17-20.

The following two questions was intended to recognize the importance of branding in the minds of the consumer in Figure 5.

If you had to make a choice between an unknown daily use product or a known daily use product, which one will you choose?

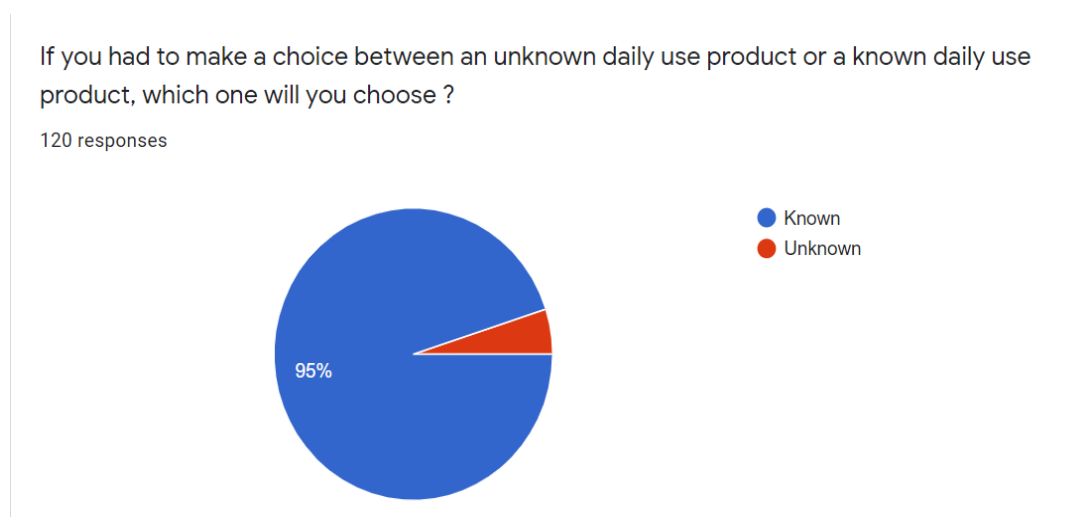


Figure 5
SHOWING RESULTS OF CHOICE BETWEEN AN UNKNOWN OR A KNOWN DAILY USE PRODUCT

Table 17				
ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR: BRANDED OR UNBRANDED				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Female: Branded or Unbranded	63	123	1.952381	0.046083
Male: Branded or Unbranded	55	108	1.963636	0.03569

Table 18						
ANOVA ON BRANDED OR UNBRANDED						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.00372	1	0.00372	0.090193	0.764469	3.922879
Within Groups	4.784416	116	0.041245			
Total	4.788136	117				

When given a choice between branded product and unbranded product with no other information such as cost, quality etc., both genders show an extremely high partiality towards the branded product. With an extremely high mean and a very low variance, Branded products have proven to be chosen by consumers irrespective of gender. The p value, F value and F critical value show that there is a lack of interdependence on branding decisions based on gender. If a well-known Known Brand for the daily use products mentioned above charges lower than an unknown brand, which one will you choose in Figure 6.



Figure 6
SHOWING RESULTS OF CHOICE BETWEEN AN UNKNOWN OR A KNOWN BRAND

Table 19 ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR FOR KNOWN + COST				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Female: Known + Cost	63	62	0.984127	0.015873
Male: Known + Cost	55	52	0.945455	0.052525

Table 20 ANOVA ON KNOWN + COST						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.043916	1	0.043916	1.333408	0.250573	3.922879
Within Groups	3.820491	116	0.032935			
Total	3.864407	117				

From the above two questions, the importance of brand awareness and its influence in making a purchase decision can be clearly noticed. 95% people would choose a branded product over an unknown product if they are unaware of the quality of both products, and 95% people will choose a branded product if it is cheaper than an unknown product. Price made a negligible difference in this case; brand awareness is clearly the most important factor in Figure 7.

The remaining two questions focus on the importance placed on packaging by consumers of a product in Tables 21-24.

Which combination of products are you more likely to choose? (choose any 2)

120 responses

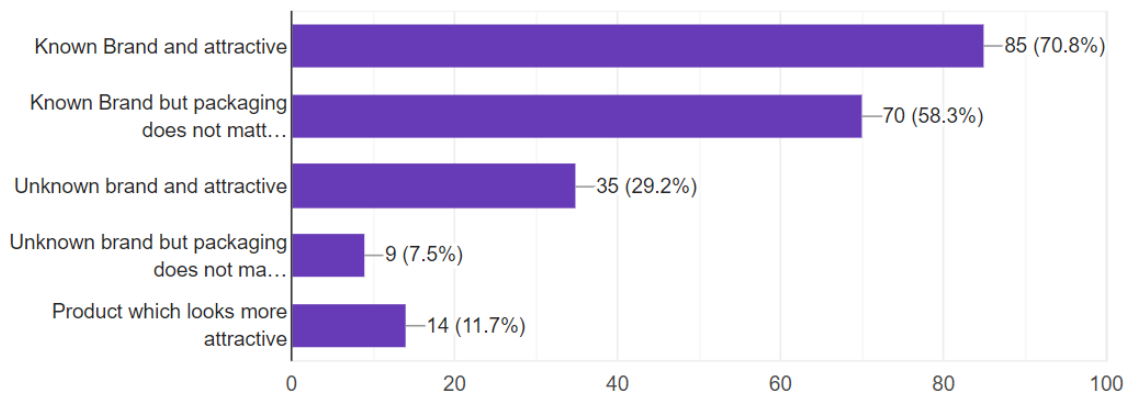


Figure 7
SHOWING RESULTS OF PREFERENCE OF YOUTH ON COMBINATION OF PACKAGING AND BRAND

Which product are you more likely to pick from a shelf?

120 responses

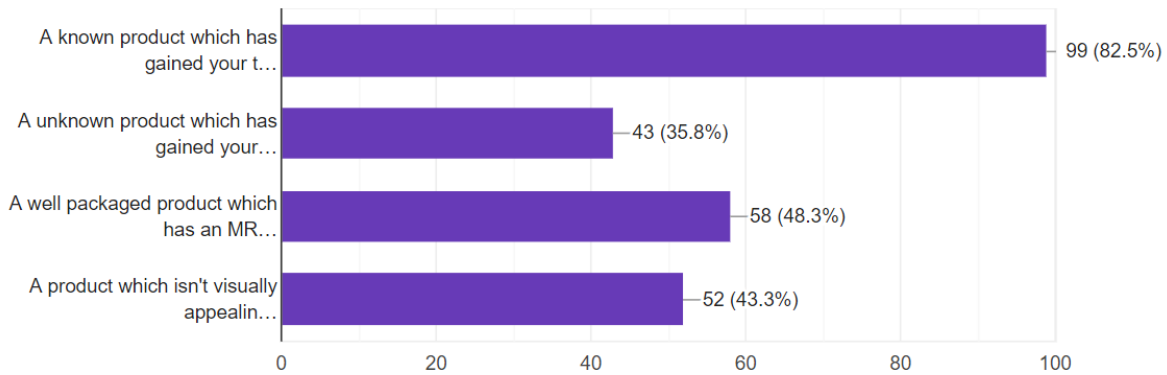


Figure 8
SHOWING RESULTS OF YOUTH PREFERENCE ON TAKING PRODUCT FROM SHELF

This chart shows that a significant amount of importance is placed on packaging (Option 1, 4 and 5), although branding is given more importance than packaging in Figure 8.

Table 21 ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR FOR AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE IS PLACED ON PACKAGING			
Groups	Count	Sum	Average
Packaging more important than branding	49	196	4
Banding and packaging equally important	85	255	3
Only branding important	70	140	2
Both unimportant	9	9	1

Table 22 ANOVA ON AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE IS PLACED ON PACKAGING						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-Value	F crit
Between Groups	147.8592	3	49.28638	65535	-	2.647801
Within Groups	0	209	0			
Total	147.8592	212				

The F test shows the high interdependency between the groups.

Table 23 SHOWING THE HIGH INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN THE GROUPS			
Groups	Count	Sum	Average
Packaging + higher cost	58	116	2
No packaging + lower cost	52	52	1

Table 24 SHOWING THE HIGH INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN THE GROUPS

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit
Between Groups	27.41818	1	27.41818	65535	3.929012
Within Groups	0	108	0		
Total	27.41818	109			

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations involved in this research, which is mentioned as follows: Firstly, a higher percentage of responses were received in the female category (56.4%), which indicated that the responses aren't gender neutral. Also, the sample size cannot be taken as an indication for the entire youth populace currently residing in India. Further, human errors while filling the form, biases, mistaken marking, and perceptions cannot be neglected, neither rectified.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results were achieved by applying the results from a sample size of 120 Indian youth respondents. The results obtained are compared with the hypothesis set at the beginning of the analysis. Among those who answered the questionnaire, 51.7% were females and 45.8% were males. 68.3% of Indian Youth do have purchasing power in their families, irrespective of financial independence. Females give more importance to branding of daily use products than males, gaining a score of 2.651, while males scores 2.62. Also, females have proven to show lesser deviation from the mean (more importance to branding) in comparison to males. A significant amount of importance is placed on packaging (Option 1, 4 and 5), although branding is given more importance than packaging.

First hypothesis: Buying behaviour of consumers is dependent on brand awareness. – True
 Second hypothesis can be stated as: Perceived quality based on branding and packaging affect the choices of consumers- True.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly indicates the importance of branding for any marketers to effectively target their consumers. A positive brand image always helps the marketers to position the product favourably in the minds of consumer. It also helps them to differentiate their product offerings among the clutter of brands. Since the modern-day consumers are very sensitive to product quality, effective branding helps to boost the customer loyalty towards the brand. The marketers need to understand the segment differences like age, gender, income to position their brands successfully in any chosen market. Many consumers strongly associate the product quality with the brand name. Hence, they need to consciously design and communicate the branding elements to the target market.

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