



## Regional Influences On Brand Consciousness In Jammu And Kashmir

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### ABSTRACT:

*It has been found by a huge panel of researchers that customers prefer those brands which they remember most. Therefore managers strive hard to present their brand in such a way that it would be more effectively remembered by the consumers than their competitors. Thus the present study aims at finding the differences in the brand consciousness across four sub cultural groups of Jammu and Kashmir viz. Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and the Gujjars. It has been found that the consumers of Jammu are more brand conscious followed by the consumers of Kashmir region then Ladakh region and the Gujjars being least brand conscious*

### BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS:

It is generally believed that a brand helps a manufacturer or marketer to differentiate his product from those of competitors. The American market association has defined brand as a “name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them intend to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of seller and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Keller, 2003, p 3). (Hankingson and cowking, 1996 p 1) define brand as “a product or service which can be distinguished from its competitors”. (Mooij and Hofstede, 2011) has defined brands as augmented products. A brand is used to recognize the goods and services of a seller and consists of a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or any combination of these (Bennett, 1988). Brand name can enhance brand awareness and/or help create a favorable brand image for a newly introduced product (Keller et al.; 1998).

A series of researchers have also investigated the role of brand logos in creating positive consumer response to the brand (Henderson and Cote 1998; Henderson et al. 2003; Henderson et al. 2004; Klink 2003; Pieters and Wedel 2004). Brand names and logos are well known means to pass the brand identity to consumers (Aaker 1996; Henderson and Cote 1998; Shimp 2003). Brands serve as markers for the offerings of a firm (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Customer views a brand as specific quality standard, a symbol of trust and the reduction in the risk of being cheated (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). (Schmitt, 1999) has carried forward two approaches to branding viz. Identifier and experience. The identifier makes consumer awareness about the brand and helps to recognize the brand. The identifier includes names, logos and

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slogans. According to experience approach the names, logos and slogans helps in developing the emotional relationship between the brand and the customer. For example it gives a customer the sense of belongingness to a particular group or community or a life style. (Keller, 2003) views brands to be of two types, smaller brand which includes names, signs, slogans etc. And a big brand which earns reputation, fame and awareness. The consumers are attracted towards an esteemed brand name and motivate them to purchase the brand repeatedly, thereby minimizing the chances of switching due to price (Cadogan and Foster, 2000). (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993) has acknowledged the theoretical and practical significance of brand names. We need a brand name for positioning of a product (Aaker, 1991). It is very easy to advertise a famous brand than non famous brands (Keller, 2003). Brands serve as cultural markers (Holt, 1998). The meaning of a brand name changes from one culture to another (Joy, 2001; Sherry, 1983).

Various studies have been carried out on the standardization and customization of global marketing programs. Some of examples are (Gatignon and Vanden Abeele 1995, Samiee and Roth 1992, Szymanski et al. 1993). Global companies of Western origin take a strict care in formulating brand positioning statements, brand personalities, so as convey the same message to global customers and are trying being consistent in their messages throughout the world. But only those brand personalities are attributed to brands by consumers that fit their own cultural values, not the values of the producer of the brand (Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). Same global brand is got different brand images in different cultures (Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). Different brand personalities have been attributed by the consumers to the Red Bull brand which has been marketed with a consistent brand identity (Foscht et al. 2008). (Jiang, 2004) investigated the role of brand name in consumer decision making during a customization process. Brand name was found to be an important decision variable for customization in terms of getting a better preference matches. Brand name still holds an important role in consumer communications. (Aaker et al., 2004) carried out a research to find out the development and evolution of relationships between consumers and brands. Their findings suggested developmental form and dynamics are influenced by experiencing a transgression and the personality of the brand.

Culture specific brand personality factors have been studied by many authors like (Sung & Tinkham, 2005; Aaker et al; 2001). The brand personality factors are specific for specific cultures. For example Ruggedness is for United States, peacefulness is for Japan and Spain and passion for span (Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). (Sung & Tinkham, 2005) in their study of brand personality structures in Korea found two specific Korean brand personalities named as passive likeableness and ascendancy for global brands like Nike, Sony, Levi's, Adidas, Volkswagen and BMW. Cultural and linguistic aspects of branding have also been examined by many researchers, e.g., difference in the effectiveness of Chinese versus English brand names (Schmitt et al. 1994, Pan and Schmitt 1996, Zhang and Schmitt 2001), The market value of the global brands (Steenkamp et al.; 2003). Marketers are portrayed as cultural engineers, organizing how people think and feel through branded commercial products (Douglas, 2002).

### 3. METHODOLOGY:

The questionnaire was piloted with sixty respondents to determine the potential effectiveness of the questionnaire and for face validity and final questions were rated on a five-point agrees–disagree scale. Alpha coefficients for the scale dimensions were reasonable. The questionnaire was administered to systematic sample of sample size of five hundred and twenty was selected. A sample of 210 from Kashmir, 190 from Jammu, 65 from Ladakh and 55 from Gujjars were included in the current study. The total sample size of this study was 520. Out of the five hundred and twenty, only 483 questionnaires were completely filled up and were fit for analysis. This is approximately 92.88% response rate. Such a response rate was considered sufficient for statistical reliability and generalisability (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001) and satisfactory especially when compared with previous research works on consumer decision making styles This relatively high response rate was attributed to the self-administered approach undertaken in distributing the questionnaires. SPSS software was used for the data analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to check reliability and Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was carried out to retain the more significant items and eliminate the insignificant items. To ensure that the sample is adequate for the factor analysis Kaiser-Meyer-Okin measure of sample adequacy was calculated which was greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was greater than 1 (Hair et al, 2006). Factor loadings of 0.4 and above were extracted in the factor matrix and the factors with the loading below 0.4 were deleted.

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSIS

Rotated Component Matrix	
Item	Loadings
<b>Brand Consciousness</b>	<b>(<math>\alpha = .75</math>)</b>
The well-known brands are best for me.	.87
The more expensive brands are usually my choices	.43
I prefer buying the best selling brands.	.83
The most advertised brands are usually very good choices.	.74
Private brand can equally be perfect vis-à-vis a well known brand as long as it satisfies my need.	.47

(Source of the items: consumer style inventory developed by Sproles and Kendall, 1986)

Values in parentheses represent reliabilities for each factor.

#### 4. ANALYSIS:

One way ANOVA was used to test the significance between Subcultural factor (Region) and (Brand Consciousness). The results indicate a significant interaction effect between

Brand Consciousness and Region ( $F = 47.60$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).

TABLE 2:  
Descriptive statistics and result of ANOVA test for Brand Consciousness for four sub cultural groups.

Consumer Behavior Dimension	Sub-Culture Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.	Remarks
Brand Consciousness	Jammu	179	3.52	.97	47.60	.00	Significant
	Kashmir	198	3.23	.68			
	Ladakh	52	2.78	.71			
	Gujjars	54	2.11	.57			
	Total	483	3.16	.90			

#### 5. FINDINGS:

Therefore it can be revealed from the analysis that significant differences exist in the brand consciousness across the four regional sub cultural groups. Further it is revealed from the findings that the Jammu region has attained a highest mean in the brand consciousness (3.52) followed Kashmir with a mean value of (3.23), then Ladakh the mean value = (2.78) and the Gujjars have attained a lowest mean of (2.11). It can be noted that the differences between the means of Jammu region and the Kashmir region are not so high and the means of the Ladakh and Gujjars are so low as compared to the Kashmir region and the Jammu region. Thus it can be concluded that the people of Jammu are more Brand Conscious than the people of the Kashmir and the People of Kashmir are more Brand Conscious than the people of the Ladakh. People belonging to Ladakh are more brand conscious than the Gujjars. The Gujjars are least brand conscious than all. The differences in the brand consciousness between the Kashmir region and the Jammu region are not

so high.

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

It has been concluded from the findings that the Brand Consciousness is very low in the Ladakh region and the Gujjrs. Managers need focus on these two subcultural groups. They should use the marketing tools like Advertisement, promotion and other tools to make their brands familiar to the consumers of these two subcultural groups.

Most of the research projects are characterized with some limitations which hamper the applicability of the results in every case, so as the limitation of the present study is that the study has been conducted only for personal care products only. The future research can be carried on a variety of products and regions to seek the extent to which the results can be generalized.

A brief description of these factors given by (Sproles and Kendall, 1986) is given below:

#### 1. BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS:

This factor identifies a brand consciousness, "price equals quality" consumer characteristic. It measures consumer's orientations toward buying the more expensive, well known national brands. High scorers are likely to believe that higher price means better quality. They appear to have positive attitudes towards department and specialty stores, where brand names and higher prices are prevalent. They also appear to prefer best selling advertised brands.

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