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Editorial

On availability heuristics, the world bank and IMF, and US higher education.

_Gurumurthy Kalyanaram_

Availability Heuristics

Human beings and even experts appear to have a relative short memory on even recent history, and project the immediate outcomes to future. Availability heuristic operates with a vengeance.

This happens with financial markets. Stock market goes up, goes up more, and goes up even more -- and we start believing that going up is the only directional outcome. Soon there is correction. This happens with housing markets. This happens with energy markets. This happens all time, all over.

We forget that there is cyclicality. There is regression to the mean.

This is true for political markets. There is plenty of data. Even in India, there is enough data. In mid-1980s Modi's party had members in the national parliament. Just 2. As late as 3 years back, Modi's party had 117 legislators. Now 281 of them. Congress party had over 400 legislators in mid-1990s. Today, about 40-45. In the last 25 years, say since 1991, Congress-party has led the national government for about 15 years, supported a government for about 2 years. Modi's party had led the government for about 8 years -- and it will definitely do so for the next 3 years. And there is plenty of empirical evidence elsewhere. In the US, as recently as in 2008 when Obama won the Presidency, analysts were going on and on about structural changes in demography -- changes that doomed the Republican Party. But in the last 8 years, Republican party has won majorities in the both the legislative chambers (House and Senate.) After President Eisenhower's era of peace and prosperity the country opted for one of the most expansionist -- almost socialist -- government in the 1960s. In UK, as recently as 1990s the Labor Party was supposedly finished because Margaret Thatcher had structurally recast the country's debate and political framework. Not so. Labor part got elected 3 times in 1990s and the first decade of 2000s. Though Winston Churchill won the War for the British, the electorate rejected the Conservative party in the 1945 elections.

The empirical evidence for cyclicality is overwhelming.

The World Bank and The International Monetary Fund

The non-US, non-Japan, non-Western Europe world has always looked upon IMF and the World Bank with suspicion. Because of US and Europe have been the most significant financial contributors, and the drafters of the original agreements in Bretton Woods Conference, they have had significant powers at these institutions, including the fact that leadership of the Bank is always an American and the Fund an European. Given the current voting rights, it appears that this is not about to change for the next few decades.

As if the Fund agrees with the skepticism, the Fund itself has published a manuscript -- fresh off the press -- criticizing the Fund for pushing its agenda, instead of delivering the growth. Here is the abstract: "Instead of delivering growth, some neoliberal policies have increased inequality, in turn jeopardizing durable expansion." And the manuscript:
US Higher Education and The President's Recognition of Contribution to Knowledge

US is a special destination for Higher education. No other country can claim to democratization of high-quality higher education. That’s why US economy is the most robust and innovative, and will continue to be so for the next 50 years. No other country -- small or big -- can match this.

Let us look one institution: MIT. MIT is a special place. MIT is one of 4 or 5 American universities which makes its (undergraduate) admissions decisions need-blind, but all the admittees are given financial aid (based only on need) and MIT meets each admittee’s full financial burden. MIT does not have legacy admissions, but respects letter from a very engaged alumnus. I have probably made 4-5 references to the undergraduate program, and about 4-5 to graduate programs.

Because of MIT’s extra-ordinary generosity of meeting each admittee’s full financial burden, the median debt burden of a student after 4 years of study is only $18,000 -- almost unbelievable.

MIT recently launched MIT for Better World in Cambridge. Here is what President Reif had to say: "I am pleased to announce that today we officially launch the MIT Campaign for a Better World. Humanity faces urgent challenges—challenges whose solutions depend on marrying advanced technical and scientific capabilities with a deep understanding of the world's political, cultural, and economic complexities. We launch the Campaign for a Better World to rise to those challenges and accelerate positive change. We aim to raise $5 billion to amplify the Institute's distinctive strength in education, research, and innovation. Together, through this Campaign, we will give the brilliant minds and hands of the MIT community the fuel and the focus to make inspiring progress. Each of us—alumni, friends, and partners—has an important role to play in shaping the future of MIT and the world, and I am privileged to join you in this work. With your help, we can build a better world."

The National Medal of Science is a Presidential Award given to individuals "deserving of special recognition by reason of their outstanding contributions to knowledge in the physical, biological, mathematical, or engineering sciences." In 1980 Congress expanded this recognition to include the social and behavioral sciences. Two of the recipients this year resonate in a personal manner with me.

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY ("For her insightful work in condensed matter physics and particle physics, for her science-rooted public policy achievements, and for her inspiration to the next generation of professionals in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields.) Dr. Jackson is the first African-American person to get a doctoral degree in Physics from MIT, which she did so in 1973. Her area of doctoral specialization was

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1 I got to attend the marvelous announcement and the gala dinner. And I got to meet and connect with so many interesting thinkers, including Nobel Laureate Richard Schrock of Chemistry. Richard and his wife were marvelous. Richard recorded a 3-minutes video of his seminal discovery for the benefit of my daughters, Anagra and Subhaga. He also wrote a note on the program for them encouraging them to join/contribute to Science. And there were so many other interesting meetings, including those with Deans (and former Deans) Dave Schmittlein, Dick Schmalensee, Glen Urban; Institute Professor Tom Magnanti; MIT President Reif and his wife Christine, Susan Hockfield (former President); MIT Corporation Chair Bob Millard, John Reed (former Chair), and Desh Deshpande (Corporation Member); Ray Stata (Founder, Analog Devices); and Sanjay Sarma (MIT VP for Digital Learning).
theoretical elementary particle physics. I have known Dr. Jackson for sometime. She is a remarkable scientist, but also a no-nonsense and very insightful academic and policy leader.

Dr. Rakesh K. Jain, Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, MA ("For pioneering research at the interface of engineering and oncology, including tumor microenvironment, drug delivery and imaging, and for groundbreaking discoveries of principles leading to the development and novel use of drugs for treatment of cancer and non-cancerous diseases.) Jain, who is also the director of tumor biology laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital, has a B.Tech in Chemical Engineering from IIT-Kanpur. Jain is a member of all three branches of the US National Academies – the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Sciences – and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Gurumurthy Kalyanaram is Distinguished Research Professor at NMIMS university, and he is the Editor of NMIMS’s two prestigious scholarly journals: Management Review and Economic and Public Policy Journal. Dr. Kalyanaram is also currently advising MIT Global Startup Workshop, and its India and Asia initiatives. He holds professorial affiliations with City University of New York (Part-time) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Visiting Research Professor). He is also serving as the President of Global MIT South Asian Alumni Association. Dr. Kalyanaram’s Educational Services include leadership in a school education project in India and digital learning, and counseling about colleges and universities.

Dr. Kalyanaram earned his Ph.D. in Management Science in 1989 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He holds an MBA from the University of Texas at Arlington and a BE in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the University of Madras. His dissertation was adjudged a finalist in the AMA Doctoral Dissertation Award in 1989 and in the Academy of Marketing Science Doctoral Dissertation Award in 1990. In 2002, MIT recognized him for his contributions and service with the Harold Lobdell Award. Among his other recognitions are: Outstanding Educator of the Year by Greater Dallas Asian American Chamber of Commerce, and he has been listed in the Who's Who in America.

Dr. Kalyanaram's prior appointments include: Advisor and Director of Research Center, American University of Armenia and Central Bank of Armenia; Advisor and Mentor, AACSB Accreditation; Department Chair and Professor, International University of Japan; Editor, NMIMS Management Review; Founding Director of full-time Cohort MBA Program; Director of all Masters’ Programs (including MS, evening MBA, full-time MBA); Chair, Department of Marketing, The University of Texas; Program Director of MBA Programs in U.S. and abroad (Canada, China and Middle-East) and Director of Faculty Research, New York Institute of Technology; Dean of University Research (Business, Commerce, Engineering, Pharmacy, Science,
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Dr. Kalyanaram has also served as a distinguished scholar at the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, and the East-European and Russian Research Center. He has been the Associate Editor of Management Science and currently serves on three editorial boards. He is also a reviewer for 13 journals in marketing, economics, and management. He has authored and/or co-authored over 50 journal articles. His areas of expertise include public policy, international commerce, economics and trade, education and the impact of law and regulation on economy, society and development.
Latitude of Quantity Acceptance: Conceptualization and Empirical Validation

Gordhan K. Saini
Arvind Sahay
Gurumurthy Kalyanaram

Introduction

As a result of increasing costs, consumer packaged goods companies (i.e., fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies) are facing significant pressure on operating margins. For example, the increasing cost of raw material resulted in a steep decline of almost 50 percent in operating profit margins in the second quarter of 2010 for Britannia (Economic Times 2010). Firms have been using innovative strategies to adapt to increasing costs in materials. One such strategy has been to decrease the quantity (weight) of a product packet while keeping the price constant. For instance, Frito lay has reduced the weight per pack by ten to twenty percent; Cadbury has reduced the pack size of Bournville chocolate by seventeen to eighteen percent (DNA Syndication 2011) and ITC has substituted raw material edible oil with butter, reduced the quantity per pack and also hiked the price of high-margin biscuit packs (Economic Times 2010).

In the quantity reduction strategy, it's the consumer who takes the hit as he is offered a lower quantity of the same product at the same price. The major argument in favor of quantity reduction is that the consumer is less likely to notice it as compared to the price increase. However, such a strategy may be successful in the short term and may be more feasible for brands with high equity as compared to low equity brands, (as found in extant studies level of equity and market share are positive correlated) because the consumer is less likely to switch a brand with a higher loyalty than a brand with lower loyalty (e.g., Fournier 1998). In general, brands with higher equity generate significantly higher customer preferences and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, and Donthu 1995). However, there are several practical questions which a marketing manager would have to answer: – for example, what would be the impact of quantity decrease on high equity brands vs low equity brands? How much quantity reduction is possible for a brand under a specific product category? Can low equity brands increase their market share by offering higher product quantity at the same price? Further, in this paper, we attempt to answer these very questions by manipulating product quantity of eight selected brands with different levels of product involvement, brand equity and purchase frequency, asking two specific questions: First, is there a latitude of acceptance with respect to small quantity changes? Second, is there an asymmetric effect of quantity reduction (higher unit price) versus quantity increase (lower unit price)?

¹This research article has been published in Academy of Marketing Science (Italy), 2015 Proceedings.
Hypotheses

Consistent with the extant literature, we argue that the consumer generally has a reference price for a SKU (stock keeping unit) and this reference tends to be sticky. As discussed earlier, firms consider reducing the product quantity keeping its price unchanged, as one of the options to minimize the adverse impact of higher input cost. Research has shown that consumers have a latitude of indifference around a reference point across many situations/stimuli (e.g. amount of lighting in a room, lifting weights, fluctuations in asset levels, price levels) (Luo 1998; Kardes 2013). Therefore, consumers would be indifferent to this change to an extent, as they are in the case of reference price and other assessments. Evidently, the quantity decrease scenarios are similar to price increases in the sense that they offer lower quantity of a product at the same price, leading to higher per unit price.

We postulate the following three hypotheses with regard to latitude of quantity acceptance and the quantity increase or decrease per unit price.

Hypothesis 1: There exists latitude of quantity acceptance (LQA).

Hypothesis 2: Quantity increase (lower per unit price) will increase consumer purchase intention. Similarly, quantity decrease (higher per unit price) will decrease consumer purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of quantity reduction (higher per unit price) will be more for a large market share brand than the effect of quantity increase (lower per unit price) for a small market share brand when the market share differential is large.

Data Collection And Measurement

Selection of Product Categories

First, we selected four product categories - perfumes, fairness cream, antiseptic cream and aerated beverages, which belonged to high/low involvement and high/low purchase frequency. In order to establish that the selected product categories truly fall in the assumed category, pre-test I was done on 40 respondents using Mittal’s (1989) purchase involvement scale. Purchase involvement scale showed adequate reliability and generated Cronbach Alpha from 0.619 to 0.832. The product categories of perfumes (5.53) and fairness creams (5.48) had high mean scores as compared to antiseptic cream (5.03) and beverages (4.12). T-tests were conducted to establish that the mean score of high involvement product categories are statistically different from the mean scores of low involvement product categories. T-test produced a t-value of 4.56 and p-value of less than 0.05 showing statistically significant difference between high involvement (i.e., perfumes and fairness cream) and low involvement (i.e., antiseptic cream and beverages) product categories. Overall, the results were as expected on the product involvement dimension while they were reverse to the expectations on the purchase frequency dimension for high involvement product category.

Identification of Brands in Product Categories

Second, we identified brands under each product category and conducted pre-test II on 40 respondents to determine the brand equity of each brand under each category. Brands were identified through a combination of methods which included judgmental sampling, websites of online retailers, informal discussions with prospective respondents and discussions with subject matter experts. In pre-test II, we employed the Yoo and Donthu (2001) scale for
measuring brand equity, and the scale showed sufficient reliability, measured in Cronbach Alpha.

Based on pre-test II results, we finally selected eight brands: Calvin Klein, Ferragamo (high involvement–high frequency), Boroline, Himalaya (low involvement–low frequency), L'oreal, Chambor (high involvement–low frequency), Coke, Mirinda (low involvement–high frequency).

**Measurement of Purchase Intention and Latitude of Quantity Acceptance**

Thirdly we measured purchase intention and found LQA for each brand. We therefore propose that the LQA is the level of quantity within which a brand is able to maintain fifty percent of its existing market share. Specifically, we find lower LQA for a high equity brand, i.e., the volume level till which at least fifty percent of the initial consumers remain with the brand when the quantity is reduced. Similarly, we find the upper LQA for a low equity brand, i.e., the volume level is stable till it attracts additional customers to the extent of at least fifty percent of the initial consumers. An initial market share is calculated for both the brands by keeping both the quantity and price constant, and this market share is indicative of the difference in brand equity of the selected brands.

Using LQA, we also attempt to establish the effects of brand equity on consumer purchase intention when the product quantity is changed keeping other factors, like price, constant. To achieve this, we designed a standard questionnaire in which we varied the quantity of different brands in steps, and at each step, the purchase intention was recorded and measured using simple one-item seven point Likert scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. A total of 88 useable responses were obtained. The respondents were pursuing their post graduate degree in business management from a business school. Average age of respondents was 22 years, and 53 of them were male. Keeping other parameters constant, purchase intention for each brand was recorded at six quantity levels, i.e., original quantity level and five quantity decrease steps for high equity brand, and original quantity level and five quantity increase steps for low equity brand.

**Empirical Analysis And Discussion Of Results**

**Empirical Support for Hypotheses**

Our results support the hypotheses with which we had set off on this study, and as expected high equity brands command larger initial market share than low equity brands. Overall, the decline in market share of high equity brands is much sharper than the gain in market share of low equity brands. Under the high equity brand category, the market share declined by as much as fifty percent after quantity reduction in the first two steps except for Boroline, where it happened at the third step. Contrary to this, none of the low equity brands were able to achieve even fifty percent gains in market share due to the quantity increase. We find that there exists LQA in both high and low equity brands thus supporting our hypothesis 1. However, the range of the LQA is wider for low equity brands than for the high equity brands. Thus, high equity brands are more elastic to quantity reduction while consumers avoid buying low equity brands even if they are offered in higher quantity at the same price point (i.e., low unit price).

We find the positive and negative changes in the consumer purchase intention due to the quantity increase and decrease respectively, supporting hypothesis 2. Specifically, a lower per unit price has increased the market share of low equity brands up to forty seven percent (i.e., Himalaya) while a higher per
unit price has decreased the market share of high equity brands up to eighty one percent (i.e., Calvin Klein). Thus, the erosion in market share due to quantity reduction is more for a high equity brand than the gain for a low equity brand due to quantity increase, supporting hypothesis 3. The range of decline for high equity brands is from twenty six to eighty one percent, while for low equity brands, the gains range from twenty to forty seven percent, except in the case of Mirinda.

ANOVA and ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) results show that there exists significant main effect of product involvement, brand equity and purchase frequency with p-value <0.01. Also, there is an interaction effect between product involvement and brand equity, and three-way interaction between product involvement, purchase frequency and brand equity with p-value <0.10. The interaction effect between product involvement and frequency, and frequency and brand equity is statistically insignificant. The interaction effect between product category involvement and brand equity suggests that the consumer may react differently to brands with different equity depending on whether the brand belongs to high or low involvement product categories. We find that for the low equity brand, purchase intention is lower for the high involvement product category than for the low involvement product category.

Summary of Research and Managerial Findings
In general, the data supports the extant findings with regard to reference price (Kalyanaram and Little 1994; Krishnamurthi, Mazumdar, and Raj 1992; Mayhew and Winer 1992) but in the context of latitude of quantity acceptance. However, the exact effect depends on the brand equity, where quantity fluctuation seems to exert more influence on high equity brands than on low equity brands. The results relating to the effect of low and high unit prices on consumer purchase behaviour support literature on quantity discount (i.e., Gu and Yang 2010) and quantity surcharge (i.e., Manning, Sprott, and Miyazaki 1998; Whitefield, Lawson, and Martin 1995) though its captured through quantity change scenarios. We find that the effect of quantity reduction (higher per unit price) is higher for a high equity brand than the effect of quantity increase (lower per unit price) for a low equity brand. Such results are not unlikely because consumers may consider quantity discounts (i.e., quantity increase scenarios in this study) as gains received from buying larger package sizes with lower unit prices as suggested by Gu and Yang (2010) and quantity surcharges (i.e., quantity decrease scenarios in this study) as losses. Also, if consumer is able recognize the higher unit price (i.e., quantity surcharge) then it may lead to negative evaluation of brand and customers may feel exploited, consistent with Widrick (1979b) and Whitfield, Lawson, and Martin (1995), leading to lower purchase preference. Thus, lower (higher) per unit price is perceived as gains (losses). However, a consumer reacts more sharply to losses (i.e., quantity decrease in this study) than to gains (i.e., quantity increase in this study), such findings corroborate earlier literature (Hardie, Johnson, and Fader 1993; Kalwani et al. 1990; Mayhew and Winer 1992; Putler 1992).
References


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Impact of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation process on Users' performance

Bharti Motwani

Abstract

ERP systems are enterprise-wide application packages that are designed to provide information systems integrated support to various business functions. Though ERP has numerous benefits to the organization, its implementation involves amendments in business process and software configuration for better compatibility. This study will attempt to technically address these largely unfounded ERP implementation problems while helping to lay a roadmap for user performance of ERP systems. A clear and emerging new channel in the space of ERP systems is implementation. A key challenge with gaining user adoption of ERP systems is the proper implementation of ERP systems. Structural Equation Modelling using PLS software was applied for the analysis of data. The study found that Hardware and Project Management Resources used during ERP implementation were associated with the user performance.

Keywords: User Performance, ERP Systems, ERP Implementation
**INTRODUCTION**

An ERP system is a standardized off-the-shelf information technology (IT) package providing the first real opportunity for modern organizations to integrate their business processes and functions (Klaus et al., 2000; Davenport, 2000). With an ERP environment, transactions are treated as part of the inter-linked business processes (Gupta, 2000). Yen et al. (2002) prefer to define ERP as “software that can be used to integrate information across all functions of an organization to automate corporate business processes; a business management system that integrates all facets of the business.” O'Leary (2004) defines ERP as, “ERP systems are computer-based systems designed to process an organization's transactions and facilitate integrated and real-time planning, production, and customer response.”

According to Burton (1999), enterprise systems can integrate the key business processes of an entire firm into a single software system that allows information to flow seamlessly throughout the organization. Kumar and Hillegersberg (2000) defined ERPs as “Configurable information system packages that integrate information and information-based processes within and across functional areas in an organization.” ERP is a driver of comprehensive change, business process improvements, and process orientation (Akkermans et al., 2003).

**RATIONALE**

ERP systems provide numerous benefits to an organization. But on the other hand, an ERP project failure may threaten the existence of an organization. A wrong ERP project selection would either result in project failure or weaken the system to result in an adverse impact on company performance (Wei and Wang, 2005). Soh et al. (2000) reported that many large organizations that have installed ERP system had to abandon their implementation. Chakraborty and Sharma (2007) also reported that 90 percent of all initiated ERP projects failed due to mismanagement of the projects. Implementation of ERP systems is quite complex since it shifts a significant proportion of the implementation effort from code development to the configuration of a pre-existing software package and complexity from technical to organizational factors (Grabski et al., 2011; Somers and Nelson, 2001; Akkermans and Helden, 2002) and involves amendments in business processes and software configuration for better compatibility (Davenport, 2000; Holland and Light, 1999; Gibson et al., 1999). Also, an ERP system is not as much a technological exercise as it is an organizational revolution (Bingi et al., 1999; Davenport, 2000) since it interacts with actors of the organization (Boudreau and Robey, 2005). Therefore, it is critical for organizations to have as much information as possible prior to embarking on an ERP project and require an evaluation of ERP. In India, empirical studies on ERP are almost negligible and particularly none of them have primarily focused on pre-implementation. Hence, this study was undertaken to assess the impact of resources involved in ERP implementation on users’ performance.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Critical Success Factors of ERP Systems**

One of the most enduring research topics in the field of information systems (IS) is that of success. But, the findings from studies that investigated the impact of contingency factors on IT success or effectiveness cannot be considered sufficient for ERP systems because ERP systems are different from other IT systems (Davenport, 2000; Klaus et al., 2000; Markus and Tanis, 2000; Martin, 1998) as their implementation often includes constructed
technological, operational, managerial, strategic, and organizational components (Stefanou, 2001; Yu, 2005). Though an organization may have spent a huge amount for ERP systems, it may still face difficulties during the implementation phase. Sammon and Adam (2005) also reported that the planning phase of an ERP implementation project, the complexities of the ERP market and complex implementation process caused high rates of failure in ERP project implementation.

Holland and Light (1999) in their study have reported two causes of implementation problems: technical and organizational aspects. The common problems include migrating legacy data and applications into the ERP system, training IT as well as non-IT personnel, and creating a culture that is adaptable to the new processes (Gale, 2002). Verville et al. (2005) stressed that ERP software also has some barriers. Soh et al. (2000) pointed out the problems which are caused by the difference between functionality offered by the package and that required by the firm in ERP projects. While trying to adjust the ERP software and the system in the enterprise, there will be some barriers. Barriers cause firms to experience a decrease in organizational performance instead of realizing improvements (Hirt and Swanson, 2001). Hawking et al. (2004) investigated the role of barriers in limiting the realization of benefits; they categorize barriers as people, processes and technology related barriers.

Cissna (1998) finds that factors relating to top management support, assignment of best people to implementation teams, and strong involvement of people from the field are important in reducing the resistance to changes involved in ERP implementation. Gupta (2000) illustrates several common problems associated with ERP implementation which included resistance to change, unplanned costs associated with new requirements emerging after the freezing stage and poor training of end-users. Organizational change is one of the most important barriers encountered in transition to new systems and business processes (Kumar et al., 2003) and is an important reason for failures (Al-Mashari et al., 2003; Khawk, 2006; Hong and Kim, 2002).

Bernard et al. (2004) suggested that ERP implementation entails considerable risks, which must be mitigated in an appropriate manner. Wei et al. (2005) and Wei and Wang (2004) identified the criteria that should be used in selecting the ERP system. Sedera et al. (2003) and Wang and Chen (2006) investigated the effect of contingency factors on success of an ERP system. Møller (2005) discussed the expectations for the future development of ERP systems. Ng et al. (2002) depicted ways to prioritize between the different ERP maintenance initiatives and system review during the post-implementation phase. Ifinedo (2007) investigated the impact of organizational IT factors like IT assets, IT skills, IT resources, and satisfaction with legacy systems on ERP system success.

Saini et al. (2010) developed a conceptual model based on three factors, namely, people, organizational and technological aspects for evaluation of critical success factors. Esteves and Pastor (2000) classify critical success factors into Organizational and Technological, and then further sub-divide them into strategic and tactical factors. Somers and Nelson (2001) identified 22 CSF and evaluated them across stages of ERP implementation. The top six factors across the stages were: top management support, project team competence, inter-departmental cooperation, clear goals and objectives, project management, and inter-departmental communication. Another
comprehensive examination of the critical success factors of ERP implementation was carried out by Nah and her colleagues (Nah et al., 2001, 2003; Nah and Delgado, 2006); they identified seven broad categories.

Wu et al. (2006) in their study included 22 semantic differential items measuring end-user satisfaction and two seven-point Likert-style global items measuring perceived overall satisfaction and perceived ERP success level; these 22 items included relationship, communication with the ERP project team; domain knowledge and attitude of the ERP project team; training; documentation; required time for ERP implementation; accuracy; timeliness; reliability; response time; completeness; output requirement; relevancy; system stability; auditing and control; ease of use; usefulness; feeling of user involvement; system understanding; system flexibility and system integrity.

**User Performance**

According to Amoako-Gyampah (2007) and Ifinedo (2007), management and users of ERP are two different groups. User satisfaction is regarded as the best surrogate measure of Information System success (Seddon and Kiew, 1994). Zviran et al. (2005) examined, in the ERP context, the relationship between user satisfaction and perceived usefulness. Calisir and Calisir (2004) constructed an instrument that consisted of 28 items measuring six interface usability characteristics, namely system capability, compatibility, flexibility, user guidance, learn-ability, minimal memory load for determining perceived usefulness and ease of use. Kositanurit et al. (2006) identified six factors as having an impact on individual performance namely system quality, documentation, ease of use, reliability, authorization and utilization. Seder et al. (2003) measured the individual impact of ERP system implementation with four items namely learning, awareness/recall, decision-making effectiveness and individual productivity.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is directed to companies that had already implemented an ERP system. Specifically, the survey was administered to employees of manufacturing companies who were involved in the ERP implementation process and are now the end-users. Three criteria guided the selection of the cases: (a) the firm should be in manufacturing, (b) it must have been using an ERP system for at least 1 year, and (c) it must have been using the system in at least two core business processes.

**Tool for Measuring ERP Success in the Implementation Phase**

The degree of project success should be assessed in terms of 5 components that are mainly required to produce a computer-based information system i.e. hardware (central processing unit and all of its support equipment), software (computer programs and the manuals), people (vendor, user, top management, consultant), data (facts used by programs to produce useful information) and procedure resources (policies administering operation of a computer system).

Since an ERP system is a computer-based information system, we have taken the same components for our study. Questions were developed after extensive literature review of the critical factors. For measuring the success of ERP in the implementation phase, a list of 48 items was formed. Screening by removing the irrelevant items and decision of a panel of judges resulted in selection of 37 items (with 78% acceptance) which were allocated in 8 different resources of ERP.
implementation, namely, project management resources, hardware resources, software resources, database resources, top management resources, user resources, vendor resources and consultant resources. These items in the tool were employed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. It was ensured that the content of the items selected and the reliability of the tool was determined by Cronbach's alpha method and the reliability coefficient alpha (α) was 0.95 showing high reliability of the tool.

**Tool for Measuring User Performance**

Since determination of effects of ERP is complex and one requires a deeper understanding of it in its actual context, a qualitative methodology is more appropriate (Bourlakis and Bourlakis, 2006). Hence, the focus of this paper will be on the operational and intangible gains resulting from ERP implementation (which will be operationalised by many variables tested in this study). The performance indicators chosen were actually taken by managers and ERP vendors through interviews, together with the literature review. For measuring the effect of ERP on user performance on the whole, a list of 12 items was formed. Because the study incorporated tools that were new to Information Systems research, further retesting of these tools was deemed necessary to assess their robustness to a different population of firms. Also to derive confidence in subsequent analysis, a pilot survey was executed before conducting the main survey. The purpose of the pilot survey was to examine whether or not the proposed model was well developed and suitable to analyze ERP success. The conceptual ERP success model and contents of the main survey were modified based on the results of the pilot survey; it provided 9 items that were selected for submission to the panel of judges for assessing content and to construct validities. Subsequently, these 9 items of measuring user performance were allocated into three facets, namely, Employee’s Job Performance, Employee’s Job Satisfaction and Adaptability and Growth. These indicators in the tool were employed on a 7-point Semantic Differential scale ranging from 'very low' to 'very high' for both before ERP implementation and after ERP implementation. After ensuring the construct validities of the items selected, the reliability of the tool was determined by Cronbach’s alpha method. Reliability coefficient alpha (α) was found to be 0.94, showing excellent reliability of the tool.

**Tool for Data Analysis**

After collecting the data, Structural Equation Modelling using smart PLS Graph was employed for data analysis for arriving at meaningful conclusions. PLS-Graph was used to test the hypothesized relationships among the study variables. The choice was motivated by several considerations. PLS is a non-parametric estimation procedure (Wold, 1982). Its conceptual core is an iterative combination of principal components analysis relating measures to constructs, and path analysis capturing the structural model of constructs. The structural model represents the direct and indirect causal relationships among constructs. It can be used to estimate models that use both reflective and formative indicators, are more appropriate for analyzing moderating effects because traditional techniques cannot account for measurement error in exogenous constructs (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982). Besides, it allows for modelling latent constructs under conditions of non-normality, and is appropriate for small to medium sample sizes (Chin, 1998a, 1998b; Chin and Newsted, 1999).
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The model was designed to study the effect of different components of ERP during the implementation phase on the changes caused by ERP on user performance. To assess the psychometric properties of measurement model, individual item loadings, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were examined of the reflective first-order factors (project management, hardware, software, database, top management, user, vendor and consultant resources).

The loadings of the measurement items on their respective factors were examined. Finally, the model included the items whose loadings were above the threshold value on their respective factor and were statistically significant at the 0.001 level, which provides support for convergent validity (Figure 1). 3 items (one each from database resource, consultant resource and project management resource) were deleted which included – 1. There was difficulty in transferring data from previous software; 2. There was a good relationship and communication with the project team, and, 3. During the ERP implementation, milestones were set with measurable results.

Figure 1: Model Displaying Relationship Between Resources of Implementation Phase and Change Caused by ERP on User Performance after Removal of Some Items

The study assessed convergent validity by examining composite reliability and average variance extracted from the measures. Although many studies have used 0.5 as the threshold reliability of the measures, 0.7 is a recommended value for a reliable construct (Chin, 1998a, 1998b). For the reflective measures, rather
than using Cronbach’s alpha, which represents a lower bound estimate of internal consistency due to its assumption of equal weightings of items, a better estimate can be gained by using the composite reliability measure (Chin and Gopal, 1995). As shown in Table 1, the internal consistency of all reflective constructs clearly exceeded 0.70, suggesting strong reliability. For the average variance extracted by a measure, a score of 0.4 indicates acceptability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). From Table 1, it is clear that AVE by all reflective measures is greater than 0.4, which is above the acceptability value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
<th>Project Mgmt</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Top Mgmt</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>0.694982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>0.305126</td>
<td>0.754983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>0.628844</td>
<td>0.244345</td>
<td>0.82462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Mgmt</td>
<td>0.694108</td>
<td>0.533947</td>
<td>0.642109</td>
<td>0.65422</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software</td>
<td>0.346308</td>
<td>0.498346</td>
<td>0.328747</td>
<td>0.563933</td>
<td>0.67082</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Mgmt</td>
<td>0.34006</td>
<td>0.861455</td>
<td>0.269485</td>
<td>0.584234</td>
<td>0.589578</td>
<td>0.646529</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User</td>
<td>0.654504</td>
<td>0.425645</td>
<td>0.523713</td>
<td>0.61673</td>
<td>0.496072</td>
<td>0.498999</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>0.568176</td>
<td>0.39387</td>
<td>0.352898</td>
<td>0.568528</td>
<td>0.473539</td>
<td>0.493656</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Verification of Convergent Validity

Finally, the study verified the discriminant validity of the instrument by comparing the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It is clear from Table 2 that the square root of the average variance extracted for each construct is greater than the levels of correlations with other constructs. The results of the inter-construct correlations also show that each construct shares larger variance with its own measures than with other measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
<th>Project Mgmt</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Top Mgmt</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.817062</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>0.617062</td>
<td>0.68837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>0.683405</td>
<td>0.244345</td>
<td>0.82462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Mgmt</td>
<td>0.428084</td>
<td>0.523713</td>
<td>0.496072</td>
<td>0.498999</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software</td>
<td>0.346308</td>
<td>0.498346</td>
<td>0.328747</td>
<td>0.473539</td>
<td>0.493656</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.82462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Mgmt</td>
<td>0.418066</td>
<td>0.536064</td>
<td>0.728066</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User</td>
<td>0.484786</td>
<td>0.643474</td>
<td>0.784786</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>0.617062</td>
<td>0.68837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Verification of Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is also confirmed when items related to a particular factor have the highest load on that factor and is higher than a difference of 0.2 on the other factor in the cross loadings table. When we look at the cross loadings Table 3, we find that these conditions hold good (in some cases, difference is nearly equal to 0.2, which is acceptable).
Table 2: Verification of Discriminant Validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>consultant</th>
<th>database</th>
<th>hardware</th>
<th>project mgmt</th>
<th>software</th>
<th>top mgmt</th>
<th>user</th>
<th>vendor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cr1</td>
<td>0.575617</td>
<td>0.024173</td>
<td>0.282681</td>
<td>0.369545</td>
<td>0.02773</td>
<td>0.059517</td>
<td>0.375763</td>
<td>0.349833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cr2</td>
<td>0.661533</td>
<td>0.152246</td>
<td>0.436934</td>
<td>0.439492</td>
<td>0.131918</td>
<td>0.173652</td>
<td>0.344448</td>
<td>0.29212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cr3</td>
<td>0.614996</td>
<td>0.269268</td>
<td>0.47954</td>
<td>0.433869</td>
<td>0.318602</td>
<td>0.290249</td>
<td>0.450383</td>
<td>0.419653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cr4</td>
<td>0.718843</td>
<td>0.320196</td>
<td>0.405112</td>
<td>0.529687</td>
<td>0.327749</td>
<td>0.3488</td>
<td>0.523268</td>
<td>0.479544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cr6</td>
<td>0.633798</td>
<td>0.166982</td>
<td>0.413419</td>
<td>0.442723</td>
<td>0.285301</td>
<td>0.171009</td>
<td>0.400974</td>
<td>0.260485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dr1</td>
<td>0.227468</td>
<td>0.722313</td>
<td>0.114701</td>
<td>0.381655</td>
<td>0.346749</td>
<td>0.597334</td>
<td>0.326457</td>
<td>0.307251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dr2</td>
<td>0.235466</td>
<td>0.792155</td>
<td>0.248092</td>
<td>0.426518</td>
<td>0.406428</td>
<td>0.704386</td>
<td>0.320401</td>
<td>0.291925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Cross Loadings Table
The PLS modelling approach involved two steps - validating the measurement model and then fitting the structural model. The former is accomplished primarily by reliability and validity tests of the measurement model, followed by a test of the explanatory power of the overall model by assessing its explained variance, and the testing of the individual hypotheses (structural model). The model shows that the explanatory power for user performance is 93.8%, which is considered excellent for studies of this nature. For testing the individual hypotheses, a bootstrap resampling procedure was conducted and coefficients were estimated for the following hypotheses:

\( H_{01} \): User Resources during implementation phase of ERP system does not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{02} \): Top Management Resources during implementation phase of ERP system does not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{03} \): Project Management Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{04} \): Vendor Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{05} \): Consultant Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{06} \): Database Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{07} \): Hardware Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{08} \): Software Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{09} \): Database Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{10} \): Project Management Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

The results of their study indicated strong positive relationships between IT success, on the one hand, and ERP success, on the other. The former is accomplished primarily by reliability and validity tests of the measurement model, followed by a test of the explanatory power of the overall model by assessing its explained variance, and the testing of the individual hypotheses (structural model). The model shows that the explanatory power for user performance is 93.8%, which is considered excellent for studies of this nature. For testing the individual hypotheses, a bootstrap resampling procedure was conducted and coefficients were estimated for the following hypotheses:

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\( H_{04} \): Vendor Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{05} \): Consultant Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{06} \): Database Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{07} \): Hardware Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{08} \): Software Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{09} \): Database Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

\( H_{10} \): Project Management Resources during the implementation phase of ERP system do not have an association with change caused by ERP system on user performance.

The results indicated that vendors and consultant capabilities of larger organizations, but also because incompatibility of features with the organization’s information needs and business processes. To achieve the greatest benefits provided by an ERP system, it is imperative that the business processes are aligned with latest configuration. In accordance to our study, managers with latest configuration.

**Table 4: Correlation between Resources in Implementation Phase and User Performance**

| Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | Standard Error (STERR) | T Statistics (|O/STERR|) |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| consultant -> employee | -0.04361 | -0.03526 | 0.049693 | 0.049693 | 0.877681 |
| database -> employee | -0.06519 | -0.09032 | 0.100748 | 0.100748 | 0.647091 |
| hardware -> employee | 0.277712 | 0.261293 | 0.055887 | 0.055887 | 4.969163 |
| project mgmt -> employee | 0.828264 | 0.830346 | 0.061399 | 0.061399 | 13.48976 |
| software -> employee | -0.12253 | -0.14373 | 0.095038 | 0.095038 | 1.289315 |
| top mgmt -> employee | 0.180061 | 0.223019 | 0.156435 | 0.156435 | 1.151025 |
| user -> employee | -0.18698 | -0.20635 | 0.133779 | 0.133779 | 1.397707 |
| vendor -> employee | 0.175462 | 0.19741 | 0.132787 | 0.132787 | 1.321382 |

In our model, components of ERP in the implementation phase explained 93.8 percent of variance for user performance. Ifinedo and Nahar (2009) used SEM techniques and assessed the structural model and found that \( R^2 \) is 0.18, which suggests that the exogenous factors explained 18 percent of the variance in the ERP success construct and considered it adequate for a study of this nature. The results of their study indicated strong positive relationships between IT assets and IT resources, on
the one hand, and ERP success, on the other.

From Table 4, it is clear that hypothesis $H_0$ and $H_a$ stand rejected at 5% level of significance because the calculated value of $t$ is more than the tabulated value (1.645). Thus, hardware and project management resources involved in the implementation phase are associated with changes caused by ERP on employee performance.

Our study found an association between project management resources and change in user performance. In accordance to our study, managers have reported that one of the problems associated with implementing packaged software is the incompatibility of features with the organization’s information needs and business processes. To achieve the greatest benefits provided by an ERP system, it is imperative that the business processes are aligned with the ERP system. For mid-sized organizations, the risks associated with implementing ERP may be greater than those for larger enterprises, not only because they lack critical human and technical capabilities of larger organizations, but also because they have fewer resources to rely on in case of disaster. However, Sammon and Adam (2004) noted that high rates of failure also exist in ERP project implementation due to the combined effect of inadequate organizational analysis at the beginning of the project, the complexities of the ERP market and complex implementation. Ferratt et al. (2006) investigated more than 70 enterprise-resource-planning (ERP) projects and found that greater success in implementation is related to greater adoption of best practices.

The results indicated that hardware and networking resource were associated with changes caused by the ERP system on user performance of the organization. Hence, the vendors should make sure that adequate infrastructure is planned for in a way that it becomes reliably available well in time (both for the pre-implementation and the post-implementation stages). They should ensure network support, deploying of adequate server/network, even during the training/modelling phase and introducing new PCs with latest configuration.

The results showed that top management is not associated with user performance of an organization. In contradiction with our study, Bajwa et al. (1998) and Wang and Chen (2006) reported that top management support and engagement of quality vendors and consultants are among the most widely cited positive influences in the success of newly diffusing IT systems. However, Lorca and Andrés (2011) results indicate the importance of managers’ independence to implement an ERP system.

At a general level, evidence from Thong et al. (1996), Bajwa et al. (1998) and Deloitte Consulting (2000) show that there are critical, positive relationships between IT success, on the one hand, and top management support, quality services from external entities, and a clear business vision for IT adoption, on the other. In accordance with our study, the results of Nah et al. (2006) indicated that enterprise-wide communication and a project management program are key factors influencing the success of ERP implementation, while other factors such as top management support as well as teamwork and composition are not as critical to the outcome.

Our study indicated that vendors and consultant
resources do not contribute to the performance of users. However, in contradiction, Ein-Dor and Segev (1978), Thong et al. (1996) and Bajwa et al. (1998) identified that external expertise (quality vendor/consultant) positively influence the success for IT systems. Gefen and Ridings, (2002) study also affirms that the systems' benefits and impact tend to be rated highly when quality vendors/consultants are engaged.

The study indicated that user resources are not associated with user performance. In contradiction to our study, a study by Ziad et al. (2010) shows that there is a positive relationship between ERP’s implementation success and employee satisfaction; also there is a statistical relationship between enhancement and ERP’s success, weak relationship between ERP’s success and ease of use and training factors as well as most of these companies depended on the internet. The study by Daoud and Triki (2013) showed that the user’s satisfaction and enhancement factors had a significant impact on ERP’s implementation success. The study also showed that ease of use and training did not have a significant impact on ERP’s implementation success.

**CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

Our study provides managers with a clear view of the relative performance of the various parts of the enterprise, which can be used to identify needed improvements and take advantage accordingly. Managers could periodically evaluate the performance indicators in the study, benchmark the results with the expected satisfaction levels and diagnose which factors are problematic and need further consideration. Organisations that have future designs will form a clear understanding of business requirements, gain more vision and acquire ability to expand knowledge and skills to better assimilate and utilize ERP system, and therefore minimize the risks associated with this particular investment. Taking into account the most important needs of the implementation, the overall ERP architecture should be established well before deployment. To ease the process, rigorous and sophisticated software testing should be performed. The ERP team should consist of “best and brightest brains” in the organization. It should include cross-functional expertise and a blend of internal staff and external consultants. The amount of interaction between them is a contributing factor for the success of the project. Communication among various functions/levels and specifically between business and IT personnel is another identified critical area. This requires a communication plan to ensure that open communication occurs within the entire organization, including the shop-floor employees as well as with suppliers and customers.

Since the research was conducted in manufacturing organizations with a unique organizational culture, the results might not hold true in other organizations and environments of other cities. Hence, the result cannot be generalized and therefore variation in the user’s perception can be checked by conducting the same research at different locations. A similar study examining the same subject in a diverse sample of other types of organizations could serve to further extend and enhance these findings in different types of industry. This opens the scope for comparative research in the ERP system since users belonging to different types of organizations will have different exposure and perception related to ERP system.

The sample of the study targeted individuals belonging to manufacturing organizations where ERP was
installed at least a year ago. Since ERP is becoming a pre-requisite for manufacturing organizations, it was found during the study that the number of organizations opting for ERP is increasing. Many organizations implemented an ERP system recently, but could not be considered for the study due to the time factor. A study however, can be done to understand the perception of those companies too. Also, longitudinal data gathered after a satisfactory time frame from the same companies, by surveying the same respondents, will reveal whether the level of satisfaction has changed and which factors, if any, contributed to this change. Furthermore, through empirical research, it would be interesting to explore possible differences in the perception of respondents.

The study has given emphasis on the perception of ERP users who have experienced usage of an ERP system. The period of comfort with the technology, level of experience, amount of usage and frequency of assessing ERP could be considered in order to segregate the ERP user into early adopter, late adopter or laggard. Hence, it opens scope for further research in the special context of ERP users. As this study was based on a self-administered exploratory survey where only close-ended questions were used in the response sheet, it restricted the ability of the researcher to ask open-ended questions, which may have assisted in offering a better understanding of the effect of ERP on organizational performance and productivity.

Managers may want an in-depth evaluation of the ERP system in their organization. A case-study method might also have been adopted for evaluation of the effect of an ERP system on a single organization. Similar studies can also be carried out on cross cultural domains to explore cultural dissimilarities and to explore whether the effect of ERP system is consistent across cultures or not. Conducting a study in these areas can help compare the results and look at the gap in order to further investigate the effect of an ERP system. Although major resources were identified to illustrate successful implementation of ERP, more detailed studies are required that can focus on specific stages of the implementation process (i.e. planning, justification, installation or commissioning) and their effect can also be determined. However, results of this study provide a foundation for future studies on effects of an ERP system on organizational performance and productivity.
References


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Understanding the Emergence of Aspirational Luxury and the Role of Digital Platforms among Women Consumers in India

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Abstract
India has become a booming market for luxury products. With a tremendous increase in the number of high net-worth individuals, consumer spending has risen significantly. Simultaneously, digital platforms are changing the way luxury is consumed. Additionally, social reforms have made women more independent. These changing dynamics have increased the presence of many luxury brands on digital media, especially to target women consumers. This study aims to understand the emergence of aspirational luxury and the role of digital platforms among women in India. A total of 65 respondents were analyzed in this qualitative study (30 in-depth interviews, 20 netnography subjects, and 15 industry professionals for verification study). It was interesting to identify the various aspects of aspirational luxury among women such as perception, value, attitude, motivation, and selective purchase. We found that aspirational luxury is related to exclusivity, craftsmanship, different offerings of brands and the value that is provided to the consumers. Subsequently, the consumption of these brands is driven by private and public motives. Additionally, digital platforms have created a strong bonding between these brands and consumers as they focus on visual imagery.
1. INTRODUCTION

India has been historically known for luxury brands since the 16th century. The elite class of society i.e. Maharajas (kings) consumed luxury products since this era. More importantly, in India, luxury is consumed not only by older consumers, but also by young consumers. In fact, due to demographic dividend, young consumers have outnumbered older individuals (Nyeck & Houde, 1996; Okonkwo, 2009). Additionally, the emerging middle class and young consumers, who have a high disposable income, have started using these products. These consumers have been instrumental for the higher growth rate of the luxury market in India, which is estimated to be around US $2581.4 million (Euromonitor International, 2015). In the future, India will account for 10% of global luxury sales, making it the fifth largest luxury market in the world.

Additionally, these young individuals are tech savvy and widely use digital platforms to purchase branded products. India has a total of 402 million internet users (PTI, 2015) and 143 million social media users (Bhargava, 2015) who use these platforms widely for luxury consumption. This digitization has positively impacted online luxury consumption in India. Consumption of branded products via digital platforms by consumers also varies according to the gender. It is interesting to observe that young and affluent women have increased their potential to purchase these luxury products (Banta, 2014). Luxury purchases by women have increased from a modest 7% in 2005 to 30% in 2011 (Seidelmann, 2011).

This segment has inspired the emerging class of digital natives to acquire more luxury brands. They make this market potentially promising and lucrative. Unfortunately, we do not have exclusive studies that have captured these elements. In the luxury branding literature, there have been studies on the meaning and perception of luxury in different cultures (Miller & Mills, 2012), purchase behaviour process (Jain, Pingle, & Daswani, 2012), luxury buying behaviour (Jain, Roy, & Ranchhod, 2015), role of culture and demographics in influencing luxury consumption (Godey et al., 2013), levels of luxury consumption (Schultz & Jain, 2015), and consumption of luxury by women (Hudders, De Backer, Fisher & Vyncke, 2014; Wang & Griskevicius, 2013; Al-Mutawa, 2013; Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). However, exclusive studies on aspirational luxury and the role of digital platforms among women consumers are not available in the public domain. Therefore, this study will fill this gap and comprehend the emerging area and domain.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Luxury and Consumers

Luxury has evolved as a concept since the ancient era and continues to wield considerable influence on markets (Herrmann & Huber, 2000). It has generally been associated with premium price, aesthetics, quality, poly sensuality, scarcity, uniqueness, superflawlessness, personal history and ancestral heritage, brand loyalty and subconscious associations (Hudders et al., 2014; Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Dubois & Czellar, 2002, Herrmann & Huber, 2000). However, the scholars are unable to provide a universally accepted definition (Godey et al., 2009). This is due to the subjective and experiential dimensions of luxury (Hudders et al., 2014).

Added to these dimensions is the complexity involved in assessing the role of societal comparison and the resulting pressures on consumers (Bogaerts & Pandelaere, 2013). This complexity was further observed in studies of perception of luxury and its
relation to price display, luxury consumption behaviour (Bilge, 2015) and the types of luxury. Yet, the studies have not led to substantiation and closure. Therefore, after assessing that the concept of luxury is ambiguous and subjective, there is a need to understand different types of consumers.

Consumers focus on luxury products which are acquired by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, acting as antecedents and precedents (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). Self-esteem, self-reward and self-respect are motivations to attain the perceived social image, which is often contingent on the media used by the consumer (Adema, 2015). Additionally, consumers not only believe in functional utility but also in the sensorial appeal that a luxury brand is supposed to offer (Lisa & Turunen, 2015).

Consumers are influenced by unique experiences and memorable events at their personal level (Atwal & Williams, 2009). These experiences are specifically related to the feelings of the individuals towards luxury brands (Keller, 2009). These feelings include warmth, fun and excitement (Sung, Choi, Ahn, & Song, 2014). Of equal importance to consumers are the dimensions of security, social approval and self-respect (Fujiwara & Nagasawa, 2015). The first three feelings are experiential in nature while the other three are private.

To summarize, the motivations of consumers for luxury products vary with their values, behaviour and experience. The experience and feelings for luxury brands have further evolved into a new category known as aspirational and new luxury.

2.2 Evolution of Aspirational and New Luxury

Traditional or true luxury possesses traits such as innovation and creativity which are reflected in the adaptability of the fashion industry in its deluxe segment (McKinsey, 2015). Innovation and creativity are expected to be backed by consistency, quality, and tight distribution (Som & Pape, 2015).

As noted earlier, consumers of luxury products do not restrict themselves to utility though they place great importance on the same. Thus, exclusivity, heritage and craftsmanship act as key differentiators of luxury products and brands (Deloitte, 2015). Due to the close interface between luxury goods and reputation, consumers seek impeccable global reputation and a distinct brand identity in the products they invest in (Qi & Dandan, 2013). In a parallel to this, the mass-marketing of luxury products has made these brands more accessible and affordable to the masses (Content Marketing Institute, 2015). This has led to the constitution of a new luxury that is more democratized and made it an achievable aspiration (Borstrock, 2013). New luxury is consumer-centric, which leads to greater loyalty (Interbrand, 2015). It is an extraordinary element for ordinary people with a high aspirational quotient (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

New luxury comprises of human involvement and unrestricted distribution (Burberry, 2014). Greater unrestricted channels enhance the reach of the company and the brand to the consumer which helps the brand customize and deliver the intended brand experience (Schmidt, Dorner, Berg, Schumacher, & Bockholdt, 2015). Thus, there is a different strategy for pricing, brand extensions, sophistication and consumer satisfaction here (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Truong et al., 2009). The new luxury paradigm stems from the ideas of ‘populence’, mass production and distribution of premium products (Granot, Russel & Alejandro, 2013).
The dimension of new luxury has changed the consumer behaviour as it has become more digitized leading to an expected global online market for luxury goods (McKinsey, 2014). The luxury consumer has become quite adept at technology usage which is reflected by the preponderance of luxury brands digitizing their engagement (McKinsey, 2015). The new luxury behaviour is very different from offline elements. Interestingly, Neilsen (2000) has identified six groups of consumers; social shopper, habit shopper, ethical shopper, value shopper, experimental shopper and convenience shopper. A large proportion of luxury consumers belong to the experimental and convenience shopper category (Okonkwo 2009). These online luxury consumers are high net worth individuals with high literacy, mobility and intercultural awareness. They switch brands often and expect security and instant gratification from their shopping experiences (Akin & Secilmis, 2015).

The online luxury buying decision occurs in a four-stage process which involves a thorough evaluation of the website. The first stage is functionality (Garrett, 2012); the second stage is familiarity; the third stage is internalization or brand affiliation and the final stage is evangelism or the stage of cult for the website. This customer experience highlights the need to create memorable shopping experiences.

To summarize, the online consumption habits of a luxury consumer differ from the online consumption of habits of non-luxury consumers because of disparity in income levels, culture, age and vanity (Ghosh & Varshney, 2013). Hence, it is important to understand the motivations and behaviour patterns of online luxury consumers.

### 2.3 Luxury and Consumers on Digital Platforms

The internet and digital platforms have provided easy accessibility to consumers to websites of luxury brands. Luxury brands regularly update their collections and events on social media with the objective to garner interest, generate awareness, engagement and build loyalties. Additionally, fashion trends are promoted across blogs and social networks exhibiting Trickle-Across Theory (“fashion moves horizontally between groups on similar social levels”) (King, 1963). Luxury fashion enthusiasts follow blog updates and trust their community members for tips and information (Hoon Kim & Xu, 2013). Luxury consumer behaviour has changed dimensions because of digital media (Martini Report, 2015). Luxury consumers wish to experience the luxury retail experience online and from the comfort of their home. Thus, online shopping for luxury brands is now an integral part of the buying behaviour pattern of consumers (Liu, Burns, & Hou, 2013). Despite this, it must be noted that online consumer behaviour is very different from offline behaviour. A large proportion of luxury consumers focus on the experience and convenience. These online luxury consumers are high net worth individuals with high literacy, mobility and intercultural awareness. Due to this, they expect preferential treatment from the brands (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). The web experience of the online luxury consumers is driven by their emotions (Ullah, Amblee, Kim, & Lee, 2015). At the same time, they are also motivated by utilitarian benefits. Thus, luxury fashion consumers regularly surf the internet to find specific products and often compare to ensure that they get the best deal; this element is important for female consumers. Interestingly, women spend significantly more time online on luxury products than their male counterparts (Garber, 2012).
2.4 Luxury and Women Consumers
The purchasing power of women has enhanced significantly and their share in total luxury purchase is at around 60% (McKinsey, 2012). Women consumers have become more excited about luxury brands and are increasingly buying unexpected luxury products (Singh, 2014). This has ensured that women consumers now channelize their time and resources in terms of experience, status enhancement and financial value (Srinivasan, Srivastava, & Bhanot, 2015).

Thus, women are increasingly purchasing luxury products to reward themselves, for gifting, for ostentatious consumption, for investment and to express themselves (Seidelmann, 2011). Women who buy luxury products and services are influential, wealthy, independent and emotional, and often seek advice from fashion communities (KPMG, 2015). They are highly adept at using online platforms to optimize their acquisition of luxury products (Schultz & Jain, 2013). The online consumption habits of women luxury consumers vary because of disparity in income levels, culture, age and vanity (Ghosh & Varshney, 2013). The most desired products in the luxury segment are apparels and accessories (Said, 2013). Therefore, fashion, beauty and leisure brands are favoured by women. They give importance to the latest trends seen predominantly in Asian countries with similar trends across the world (Luxury Outlook, 2015). This trend is complemented by the cultural dimension comprising of social class, ethics, aesthetics and other complex factors that have a great degree of influence (Keisidou, Sarigiannidis & Maditinos, 2011). This behaviour is also observed in the context of consumers from an emerging country like India. More specifically, Indian women purchase luxury products collectively at their family jewellers (Puddick & Menon, 2011).

2.5 Luxury and Indian Consumers
Indian consumers use the parameters of value, style and aesthetics in evaluating luxury brands rather than only price (Jain et al., 2012). These characteristics, especially sensory experience and aesthetic alignment, facilitate luxury brands in developing enduring engagement that helps in strengthening the relationship with consumers (van Rompay, Fransen, & Borgelink, 2014). Thus, Indian consumers are open-minded and willing to experiment as they want to experience innovative products and brands to make sure they are not lagging behind in the innovation trajectory (PwC, 2011). This preponderance does not disconnect them from their traditional values, ethos and culture (EY transactions, 2015). Indian luxury consumers are extremely sophisticated in their assessment of brand features using the latest technology for the same (Assocham, 2014). This evaluation is primarily undertaken independently as they shop alone. They also make assessments with their internal stimulus and hedonic traits that emphasize on value, quality and self-indulgence (Jain et al., 2012). Therefore, it can be stated that the Indian luxury consumers aim for hedonic, elegant and value oriented attributes (Dhar & Wertensbroch, 2000). These elements can be studied quite well by using a framework that associates values, attitudes, motives and behaviour i.e. Value Cascade Positioning.

2.6 Theoretical Framework
Value Cascade Positioning (VCP) was introduced by Herrmann and Huber (2000). VCP maps the brand identity based on the consumer’s values which further influences consumer behaviour. Values impact brand preferences and behaviours (Da Silva Añaña & Nique, 2007). This relationship between values and consumer
behaviour also includes influence by other factors such as attitudes and motivation.

Values, attitudes, motivations and consumer behaviour vary in time at an abstract level. Values are extremely generic and trans-situational because of a high level of abstraction. Subsequently, attitude and motivations change quite frequently. Values facilitate the individual to assess themselves and influence attitude and future actions. Values are concepts and affect the behaviour, transcend the particular environment, facilitate selection and also follow the sequence of importance. Building upon attitude, they are the most intimate feelings that reflect an individual's favourable and unfavourable inclination towards the brand or product (Da Silva Añaña & Nique, 2007). Lastly, behaviour is formulated from beliefs, values and attitude from the integrative cognitive processes. This entire process affects the behaviour of an individual towards the brands and choices. Thus, decisions are made in accordance with the ultimate value of the person.

Additionally, the motivation to buy the brand is ultimately derived from the individual's perception that is developed from feelings and gratifying desires (Peter & Olson, 1990).

Earlier studies have categorized values into different types (Rokeach, 1973). This study implements the value types as defined by Schwartz (1992; 2012). This theoretical framework is completely based on human values. The values were defined post extensive research across 60 countries and different cultures. There are ten basic values assigned along with their sub-values. Table 1 below lists the values along with their descriptions. Schwartz categorizes these values into two major dimensions, namely, openness-to-change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence. This theory also states that these values reflect the motivation of the individuals as they illustrate the desirable goals and objectives. More importantly, this theory states that values serve as the internal guide for consumers and control their social elements. This affects their behaviour as it becomes socially acceptable and satisfies the demands of other individuals (Schwartz, 2012). More specifically, consumers of a collectivistic culture pay adequate importance to the welfare of their in-group individuals as the emphasis is on benevolence (Schwartz, 1992).

Therefore, we explore this framework to understand aspirational luxury and the role of digital platforms among women consumers in India with specific focus on their perceptions, values, attitude and behaviour. To achieve this objective, we have used qualitative methods as this area needs robust exploration. We conducted two studies to understand the nuances of aspirational luxury and its association based on digital platforms.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study 1

In-depth interviews were conducted primarily to understand consumers' perception of luxury, motivation for consumption and online behaviour habits. The subjectivity of the research questions requires detailed and purposeful conversations (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 1995) with respondents. The basic purpose of the study is to understand the perception, values, attitude and motivation of women consumers for aspirational luxury while understanding the role of digital media platforms.
4.1.2 Sampling
The snowball sampling approach was implemented where we gathered respondents from the circle of acquaintances (Garding & Bruns, 2015). The sample size consisted of 30 respondents from Mumbai who were women consumers. Mumbai constitutes 30% of luxury consumption in India (Amarnath, 2012). Therefore, this city was selected for the present study as several luxury consumers reside in this geographical area.

Subsequently, three screening criteria were implemented; Socio-Economic Class A or A+, age group of 20-35, frequency of online shopping (Jain, Vatsa, & Jagani, 2014). Moreover, the participants' interest and understanding of luxury brands were assessed through the luxury consumption scale (Dubois & Czellar, 2002).

4.1.3 Protocol
A semi-structured format of interviews was followed to ensure natural conversation through pre-decided questions (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The length of the in-depth interview was an hour. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. An interview guide was prepared on the basis of the literature review and research questions. The protocol was associated with the meaning and perceptions of aspirational luxury. Additionally, there were questions related to the motivations, feelings, experiences, processes and challenges that affect the consumers when they use digital platforms for their luxury purchases.

4.1.4 Data Collection and Usage
Data was collected from women consumers who were from socio economic classes A and A+ as they were the actual buyers. These respondents were from Mumbai as this city has a high luxury consumption pattern. Further, the respondents were in the age group of 20-35 years since this age group is a large buyer base for luxury brands. Snowball technique was used and they were invited to a quiet and comfortable location to conduct the interviews. Their insights and perspectives were gathered from in-depth interviews about aspirational luxury and the role of digital platforms in their purchases. This was explicited further by exploring their perceptions, values and attitude towards these elements. This process was carried out to retrieve the data, gather information and achieve the objective of the research.

The other research technique, netnography is elucidated in the following section.

4.2 Study 2
Netnography is a technology focused natural and immersive research method similar to ethnography (Kozinets, 2002). It is a contemporary research method that effectively captures online social interactions as cultural artefacts in the right context. In this study, netnography was applied on ‘found online data’ to study the online behaviour and activities of luxury consumers across digital platforms. The specific purpose of this study was to understand the actual behaviour of women consumers in terms of aspirational luxury with the focus on digital platforms.

4.2.2 Sampling
The online activities of 20 respondents were studied across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. These social media platforms were selected because of a larger women consumer base following varied interests on fashion, luxury, lifestyle, photography, travel and art. Popular Indian
and global luxury fashion bloggers, as defined by Harper’s Bazaar top bloggers list (2015), were also studied.

4.2.3 Protocol
The protocol primarily had three steps. First, we received permission from the respondents; second, data collection was carried out qualitatively through direct notations of online communications along with interpretations and observations of the interactions. The qualitative data points included the content, tone, imagery, context of status updates, new posts, comments, pins to boards and conversations (Kozinets, 2010). The final step was to reduce misinterpretations and maintain research ethics and trust amongst respondents (Kozinets, 2010).

4.2.4 Data Collection and Usage
Data was collected from online conversations, communications and interactions of these respondents. This process included collecting data related to their updates, new posts, comments, pins, imagery, visuals, information shared and dialogues. These elements were strictly based on the objective of the study as only data in sync with the purpose of the research was retrieved. This information was integrated with the in-depth interviews that were carried out in study 1 to include the actual behaviour of respondents.

4.3 Verification
The industry perspective was studied to understand the strategy of luxury fashion brands in the digital medium and further corroborate the findings of the consumer study. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights from the marketers.

4.3.2 Depth Interviews
A total of 15 marketers were interviewed via the snowball sampling method. The mix of industry professionals included luxury brand managers, digital marketing professionals, luxury designers, e-commerce marketing managers, bloggers and academicians.

4.3.3 Protocol
The interviews were conducted via traditional and new media to comprehensively extract data from various marketers. The total duration of each interview was around 45 minutes. The responses were transcribed, audio recorded and verified by the professionals.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to ensure modifications to questions to suit the area of expertise of the respective industry professional. The interview had three phases: the first phase was an introduction followed by an understanding of the Indian luxury market and luxury consumers where the emphasis was on the meaning, perception, and purchase processes used by these individuals. The second phase examined the online strategies adopted by luxury brands and their impact on luxury consumers. Lastly, the challenges faced by marketers were discussed. Finally, the marketers were thanked for their valuable time.

5. ANALYSIS
The inductive approach was used to derive the themes, categories and framework after triangulating data from transcripts, observations and netnography (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The purpose of inductive analysis was to develop significant themes without restraints on the data. A systematic reading and coding of the transcripts allowed the identification of themes that were developed in cohesion with the research.
One of the research objectives was to understand the perception of luxury amongst women consumers. The analysis of the excerpts highlighted the different perceptions of luxury. The respondents further differentiated luxury into two categories of 'True' and 'Affordable' luxury. Thus, initially, verbatim data on the perception of luxury, primarily true and affordable luxury, was analyzed. More importantly, the central theme of the paper was to understand the perceptions, values, attitude, motivation and behaviour of women consumers towards aspirational luxury with a specific focus on the usage of digital platforms. These dimensions are illustrated clearly in the subsequent sections.

5.1 Perception of Luxury
5.1.1 True Luxury
Most of the respondents considered true luxury as highly priced because ‘price’ is the indicator of precious and exclusive products. This high price was considered as ‘true luxury’ by the respondents. They thought that a product which was highly priced would need to be ‘true luxury’. A respondent (female, 23 years) described, “True luxury for me would be the best suite in a seven star hotel. The price would be out of charts, almost unattainable and I would be able to pay without any care.” Another respondent (female, 24 years) aligned true luxury with the qualities of ultimate exclusivity by stating, “It has to be high couture, maybe an Oscar De La Renta gown made with millions of dollars of money exclusively in an Atelier in Paris.” The aspect of longevity in luxury was another sub-dimension. Respondents wanted true luxury to never go out of fashion and always remain classic and elegant.

Additionally, experience and emotions were two other imperative elements of true luxury brands that were mentioned by the respondents. A respondent (female, 27 years) stated, “True luxury is something that you should feel and experience. It is extremely emotional. This level of luxury wishes to speak to you and wants you to enjoy that store experience.” Another respondent (female, 24 years) described a memorable store experience, “My friends and I were strolling in Palladium when we entered the Salvatore Ferragamo store. The sales representative did not judge us by our appearance; instead he showed us a big brand book of Ferragamo which contained the heritage of the brand and all its collections. This presented an extremely favourable picture of the brand. I know that I can’t afford this brand now, but whenever I will be able to, I will surely purchase footwear from Ferragamo.” This insight suggests that visuals and images about luxury brand heritage are important dimensions for the consumers to influence their buying behaviour in the stores. Additionally, consumers felt comfortable at the stores when they were not assessed in terms of their appearance.

However, a few respondents demonstrated some hesitation in the consumption of true luxury brands. The reason for this behaviour was their low purchasing power. This lack of financial support made these individuals more apprehensive about luxury brands. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated apprehension about consumption of true luxury by saying, “I would think twice before purchasing a BMW. I wouldn’t want to overuse BMW. There is a certain fear and anxiety attached to something so precious that I don’t want to overuse it. I want to use it over a long period of time and keep it in the best possible condition.” Further, the
sub-dimension of personalization was also associated with true luxury. A respondent, female, 23 years, mentioned, “I have seen a hand painted Louis Vuitton in Paris for one particular client. Louis Vuitton also goes to the extent of carving your name on a piece of leather. Even Tiffany does that; they engrave a handwritten personal message on their jewellery. Also Alexander Mcqueen does that. But an affordable luxury brand won’t take that extra step to do this for you; they might even charge you for it.” Another respondent expressed similar views about personalization of luxury brands, “They want you to have that personal touch; they want to know who is wearing them, so they will do everything to pursue you.”

Thus, it can be deciphered that true luxury is associated with high price, exclusivity, quality, luxurious experience, personalization and apprehensive consumption. Further, let us now understand the orientation of other types of luxury such as ‘affordable luxury’ stated by the respondents of this study.

5.1.2 Affordable Luxury
The present study found that respondents associated affordable luxury with goods that can be bought easily as they are less expensive and need low purchasing power. A respondent, female, 23 years, claimed, “My reasonably well paying job allows me to afford a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes.” “Affordable luxury is like spending six to seven thousand rupees on a stay in Taj or Marriot. This money does pinch my pocket, but it is still luxury and I can afford it” (female, 24 years). Interestingly, respondents, through projective techniques, described affordable luxury as ready-to-wear and high street fashion. Further, high frequency of consumption also emerged as another sub-dimension of affordable luxury. A respondent, female, 23 years, expressed the views about affordable luxury as, “I might end up buying at least once in three months. I end up using affordable luxury more often especially if it’s a personal care product of a particular brand of make up or perfume.” Some respondents highlighted the visibility of affordable luxury brands. A respondent, female, 23 years, expressed, “Michael Kors has become so accessible that in my college, I see almost twenty girls carrying the brand. You can see it everywhere. It’s crazy!” The findings from the study also illustrated the concept of fast fashion as affordable luxury in India. A respondent, female, 23 years, described affordable luxury as, “Being able to buy brands like Zara, Mango and Steve Madden.” To provide evidence for this concept, the frequency of the different names of the brands mentioned in the interviews and netnography was evaluated. Fast fashion brands such as Zara, TopShop, Aldo, Mango and Forever 21 were mentioned very frequently by the consumers in both the methods. Further, respondents did not hesitate in purchasing and consuming affordable luxury. “I would not think twice before spraying Chanel perfume” (female, 21 years).

To summarize, the dimensions of affordable luxury include accessible, moderate price, high frequency, fashion oriented and high consumption. Subsequently, the discussion between true and affordable luxury led to the emergence of aspirational luxury.

Respondents considered true luxury to be outside the consideration set because of its high price. Their present purchasing power permitted them to purchase affordable luxury goods. However, they desired for aspirational luxury that had certain elements of true luxury. However, as the prices go up so do the products become purchases for the future.
Thus, Figure 1 mentioned below provides a diagrammatic representation of the position of aspirational luxury in the affordable-true luxury continuum.

**Figure 1: Emergence of aspirational luxury**

![Diagram representing the position of aspirational luxury](image)

*X is a representative price point figure calculated with the example of luxury bags

Source: Author

This prior understanding of the concept of aspirational luxury was further delved into by the three studies in the research methodology. The individual analysis of these studies was integrated through a Proposed Model derived from the conceptual framework of Value Cascade Positioning. This proposed model in Figure 2 explains the consumption behaviour of aspirational luxury. The model also demonstrates how the digital presence of luxury brands leads to the emergence of aspirational luxury. Since it is a cyclical model, aspirational luxury consumption behaviour fosters online platforms. Further, the subsequent sections entail detailed explanations of each element of the proposed framework.

**Figure 4: Proposed framework of Aspirational Luxury**

![Proposed framework of Aspirational Luxury](image)

Source: Authors
To understand online luxury consumption behaviour of women consumers, the verbatim transcripts and netnography observations were analyzed together and categorized into values, attitudes, motives and behaviour. Subsequently, each category was thematically analyzed to understand components of the VCP framework, thereby determining online aspirational luxury consumption behaviour.

5.2 Values: Self-Enhancement

Values were derived by decoding and classifying the online activities of women consumers. The themes were assigned from the Value System by Schwartz (2012). Thus, self-enhancement was the primary human value associated with online luxury consumption.

The findings indicated that independence, personal growth, novelty, decision making and ambition are very important for women luxury consumers. Further, these sub-values were categorized into the values defined by Schwartz.

The three emerging dominant values include self-direction, achievement and stimulation. Self-direction highlighted the values of independence amongst the consumers along with their capability to explore and make decisions. Achievement was expressed as the decision making ability and need for personal growth and ambition of individuals. Finally, stimulation was driven by novelty seeking and independent decision making of the respondents.

These values, in turn, shaped the attitudes of the women consumers during their online aspirational luxury consumption. The subsequent section highlights women's attitude towards aspirational luxury.

5.3 Attitudes

The concept of aspirational luxury was delved into further by thematically analyzing the attitudes of the respondents. Similar statements were grouped into categories and over-arching themes were assigned. The following themes have been identified.

5.3.1 Meaning of Aspirational Luxury: Exclusivity and Uniqueness with Competent Price

This theme elucidated the meaning of aspirational luxury as exclusivity and extraordinary service at a competent price. This was clearly indicated by the willingness to pay a higher price for luxury that is more exclusive and unique than affordable luxury. A respondent (female, 25 years) supported this insight with an example as she expressed, "Right now, I can comfortably buy a Michael Kors bag for twenty thousand. I would love to have a Louis Vuitton bag but I can't afford it. But I aspire for better luxury options slightly above my income level so that I can purchase in around two years." This insight clearly stated that affordable luxury is manageable and products from 'true luxury' at an exclusive and premier price were considered as the future purchases. Additionally, respondents felt that they could indulge in conspicuous consumption with affordable luxury. A respondent (female, 23 years) supported this argument and expressed that, “Most of the true luxury bags and clothes are over-priced. If I could purchase luxury at a lower price, I would totally flaunt it.”

Further, the scope and potential of aspirational luxury that emerges from the midst of affordable and true luxury was also discussed by the respondents. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated, “There is no end to aspirational luxury. The more luxury you can afford, the more you want the unaffordable. For some, owning an LV or Chanel bag and a couture dress from..."
Mcqueen or Dior is aspirational.” Respondents further discussed the various aspects of aspirational luxury among various products and service categories. A respondent (female, 28 years) stated, “Aspirational luxury is seven star hotels, starting prices of forty thousand for even small things like wallets, going to the Derby, big events and parties with socialites.” Interestingly, other respondents considered designer jewellery, clothes, exotic destinations and accessories as aspirational luxury as well. They also mentioned that when ‘true luxury’ with premium price has been purchased, better care and maintenance was required. A respondent (female, 25 years) expressed, “It is something which is very exclusive, very high in terms of quality and if it’s a service, for instance business traveller, then if I am the receiver, I have to be taken care of till the very end.” However, they felt that aspirational luxury was manageable. A respondent (female, 23 years) expressed, “For me, aspirational luxury is some form of designer wear, customized for me. I hope that someday I can own just one piece of it, if not the entire collection.”

To summarize, respondents emphasized on the requirement of exclusivity and uniqueness at a reasonable price for aspirational luxury as they have become value conscious. Respondents also used vivid examples of different products and services to reiterate their stance.

**Insight 1: Aspirational luxury is associated with exclusivity and value provided by the brands**

5.3.2 Motivations: Private and Public Consumption

This theme focused on the attitudinal motivations for consumption of aspirational luxury. The two major motivations include private and public consumption. Private consumption of aspirational luxury indicated individualistic, sophisticated and hedonistic motives. Consequently, public consumption of aspirational luxury was driven by social acknowledgement.

To emphasize on individualistic and sophisticated personal consumption, a respondent stated that she consumed luxury for her individual fascination and satisfaction. She further expressed that this consumption was not conspicuous. Further this idea was supported by a luxury designer who expressed that aspirational luxury acts as an inspiration to work harder for the ‘true luxury’.

Another respondent felt that aspiration luxury enhanced the confidence of the individuals as they felt more elegant and sophisticated. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated, “I find myself to be a more sophisticated individual if I am using something which is luxurious per se.” Additionally, respondents also associated aspirational luxury with high self-esteem. A respondent (female, 23 years) mentioned, “It’s about owning that luxury product.” Further, this self-esteem was related to the achievement, success and ownership of luxury brands by several individuals. A respondent (female, 23 years) stated, “I want to be able to say one day that I deserve to own these shoes.”

Further, the ownership of aspirational luxury brands was related to personal pleasure and hedonic consumption. These arguments were further substantiated by the expressions made by several respondents as, “It makes me feel good” and “I feel worth it.” More specifically, respondents expressed their desire to be pampered and wooed. A respondent (female, 23 years) indicated, “If I am going to an uber luxurious restaurant, then I wish to be doted on completely. The luxury brand should pour me a glass of champagne and make me feel really important.”
Therefore, it can be stated that the exclusive experience of owning aspirational luxury can enhance the personal happiness of the respondents.

To exhibit the public motivation factors, respondents showcased the need to make a statement and get noticed. The unique aspect of aspirational luxury was discussed by a respondent (female, 23 years), “I don’t like it when luxury brands become really mass. Even LV’s have become so common in Mumbai, it is almost mundane now. I aspire for a bag that ensures that I stand out in a crowd.” Uniqueness and exclusivity were imperative for the individuals. A respondent (female, 23 years) indicated, “When I walk into a room wearing luxury clothes, I want people to go - wow!” Further, the importance of peer group acceptance was also emphasized by the respondents. A respondent (female, 24 years) stated, “I would like something I could show off in front of my peer members or my circle of influence.” “It makes you feel like you are a part of a clique” (female, 23 years). More importantly, some respondents also indulged in conspicuous consumption of aspirational luxury. A respondent (female, 22 years) expressed, “Aspirational luxury is about wearing branded clothes, wearing nice shoes and bags and going to fancy places for good food or coffee.”

Thus, the personal attitude of respondents towards aspirational luxury included individualism, sophistication and hedonism whereas social acknowledgement amongst peer group was a public motivating factor.

Insight 2: Consumption of aspirational luxury is driven by private and public motivations of individuals

5.3.3 Characteristics of Aspirational Luxury: Craftsmanship

This theme describes craftsmanship as a primary characteristic of aspirational luxury. The theme emerged from the projective technique (word associations) that was used as a technique supporting the in depth interviews. Words such as elegant, well made, tailored, classy, rich look, high fashion, timeless, haute couture and vintage were used to describe the luxury aspirational brands. Further, some respondents also stated that aspirational luxury should give a glimpse into the heritage of the brand. A respondent (female, 29 years) stated, “I would want something long-lasting and classy. It should never go out of vogue and I should be able to pass it down my generations as well.” Thus, these words and excerpts demonstrate the common notion of excellent craftsmanship.

Insight 3: Craftsmanship is an imperative attribute of aspirational luxury brands

Further, the themes, categories and evidences summarized in Table 1 describe the attitude of respondents towards aspirational luxury.
Table 1: Summary of themes that describe the attitude towards aspirational luxury

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of Aspirational Luxury</td>
<td>Exclusivity and Uniqueness with Competent Price</td>
<td>“Right now, I can comfortably buy a Michael Kors bag for twenty thousand. I would love to have a Louis Vuitton bag but I can’t afford it. But I aspire for better luxury options slightly above my income level so that I can purchase in around two years”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Motivations                     | Private Consumption                         | “I find myself to be a more sophisticated individual if I am using something which is luxurious per se”  
                              |                              | “It makes me feel good”                                               |
|                                 | Public Consumption                          | “It makes you feel like you are a part of a clique”                      |
| Characteristics of Aspirational Luxury | Craftsmanship                             | "well made, tailored, classy, haute couture, vintage”                     |

Source: Author

Further, we will discuss about the motivations related to online aspirational luxury consumption.

5.4 Motivations

5.4.1 Accessibility

This theme describes the ease in accessing luxury aspirational brands on the internet. Many respondents perceived that they were 'just a click away' from these brands. They also felt that it was easier to access these brands via digital platforms rather than going to the stores or high end malls, especially when they were travelling. A respondent (female, 25 years) explained, “If I am in Ahmedabad and I want to buy a Furla bag, I can get it online. I can also immediately see other different designers that I like and purchase online instead of going to the designer store.” Many respondents even discussed the varieties and availability of brands via digital platforms. A respondent (female, 26 years) expressed, “Most of the times, I never like the collections in the stores. I quite like checking the collections online and yes, if I really like something, I would purchase it.”

Interestingly, a luxury designer (female, 24 years) also explained how social media and blogs have enabled luxury brands to become more accessible. “To consume a luxury brand, you don’t need to actually purchase it; you can virtually experience the products by viewing the luxurious photos on Instagram and blogs.” Another designer had similar views, “It is very easy for new products to enter the market. Earlier you couldn’t display your collections in stores without doing a fashion week, or know someone. In today’s time starting was much easier. Marketing through social media is easier to handle on your own. You don’t even need to have a website. Inquiries can float in through the Facebook page.” These thoughts were further developed by another respondent who expressed that the accessibility of international brands through social media has increased motivation for consumption of these brands. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated, “I find it very interesting and I really like the fact that Louis Vuitton now have their Instagram accounts because earlier they would come across as very inaccessible. The brand would come
across as snooty, because I feel even though you are luxury brand you need to make potential customers aware of your brand and quality so I am very happy that these brands are now accessible.” These insights were further substantiated by Netnography as this study also found that respondents regularly follow luxury aspirational brands on social network platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook.

To summarize, comfortable online accessibility motivates consumers to buy aspirational luxury brands. Digital platforms offer varieties and the latest collections of these brands that can be easily compared and assessed before purchase. This increased accessibility of these brands on social networks has reduced the distance between the brands and the consumers. Individuals can easily get a glimpse of this luxury world through social networks. This creates a luxurious aura around the brands which motivates the existing and potential consumers.

**Insight 4: Increased accessibility of aspirational luxury brands on digital platforms has developed a close bonding with the consumers**

**5.4.2 Ease of Navigation**

The theme of ease of navigation focused on the ability of consumers to smoothly navigate the brand websites according to their need. Respondents appreciated clutter-free navigation of luxury aspirational websites. This positive web experience encouraged their desire for self-assistance.

A respondent (female, 26 years) expressed, “The online space is more organized, especially if you are looking for specific things. It is not cluttered; if you know your size well, you can easily purchase online.” Respondents felt that digital platforms provided better options of choosing brands. They felt that online platforms provided them the freedom to select products unlike the stores where staff members promote products for sale. A respondent (female, 24 years) stated, “Online you can be as granular as you want. You can choose the filters you like - be it by price, colour, style - whatever you want!” Another respondent (female, 23 years) voiced similar views, “Sometimes I am not confident walking into a luxury store. Many times I have observed that the sales representatives have their own lingo with the regular customers. This makes me feel very out of place. I like that in the online space; I don’t have to feel unsure about myself. I have the freedom to see what I want.”

To summarize, the ability to navigate the purchase process is a motivating factor for several respondents. This motivation is mainly driven by the value of self-direction and stimulation.

**Insight 5: Consumers are motivated by easy navigation on aspirational luxury brands’ digital platforms for online purchases**

**5.4.3 Variety and Product Building**

The motivation of variety seeking and product bundling were primarily identified through netnography. Respondents often visited luxury fashion e-commerce sites such as Netaporter, Shopbop, Perniaspopupshop and Asosas where several products of various designers were available at one destination. Product bundling was another motivation because respondents had the option of comparing brands and viewing them in different categories. Further, to facilitate the purchase process, respondents widely used the ‘You may also like’ tab on the e-commerce websites to check out different purchase options. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated, “Netaporter,
penniaspopupshop provide you with everything under one roof. It’s perfect! You are not restricted to one particular brand and so you don’t waste time by going on every site; by just being on one site you can pick a category, the colour you want and the size you want.”

Further, another respondent (female, 24 years) voiced similar views, “If I am to buy a bag and I have a certain budget, I can buy from any luxury brand Coach, Kors or Guess. Online I can compare and see where I am getting a better deal because all three have similar brand equity for me. So if I get a better design or deal for any of them I’ll buy because I don’t think there is a Coach store in the city.”

More importantly, the netnography study found that respondents prefer content which displays the latest trends and comparisons. A respondent (female, 24 years) indicated, “There are so many designers. I don’t know many of them. But I would love to see their work on a good platform.” “I love seeing the lookbooks on the homepage of luxury E-commerce sites. I learn about latest trends and interesting pairing options” (female, 23 years).

Thus, it can be summarized that respondents are driven by different alternatives as they facilitate their decision making process. They use different luxury e-commerce sites that provide them information about new trends and novelty in products. This motivation is derived from the value of stimulation of consumers.

**Insight 6: Consumers are motivated by the varied offerings of numerous luxury brands**

Thus, the motivations of aspirational luxury consumption can be summarized in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>“If I am in Ahmedabad and I want to buy Furla bag, I can get it online. I can also immediately see other different designers that I like and purchase online instead of going to the designer store.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I find it very interesting and I really like the fact that Bvlgari and Louis Vuitton now have their Instagram accounts because earlier they would come across as very inaccessible. The brand would come across as snooty, because I feel even though you are luxury brand’s you need to make potential customers aware of your brand and quality so I am very happy that these brands are now accessible.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Navigation</td>
<td>“The online space is more organized, especially if you are looking for specific things. It is not cluttered. If you know your size well, you can easily purchase online.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety and Product Bundling</td>
<td>“Netaporter, penniaspopupshop provide you with everything under one roof. It’s perfect! You are not restricted to one particular brand and so you don’t waste time by going on every site. By just being on one site you can pick a category, the colour you want and the size you want.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I love seeing the lookbooks on the homepage of luxury E-commerce sites. I learn about latest trends and interesting pairing options.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author

The values, attitudes and motivations impact the behaviour of the respondents regarding aspirational luxury. The next section will focus on the online consumption behaviour of women luxury consumers.
5.5 Behaviour

The netnographic findings indicated that online aspirational luxury consumption behaviour is mainly related to the two elements of information seeking and selective purchase.

5.5.1 Information Seeking

The information seeking behaviour of respondents emerged from the online activities across digital platforms such as brand websites, social media platforms and blogs. Further, a study of this behaviour can be classified into themes - visual imagery and reliability, and digital consumption.

5.5.2 Driver: Visual Imagery and Reliability

The driver of information seeking behaviour is the consumption of reliable visual imagery. Netnography found that many consumers spent several hours following, liking and commenting on aesthetic pictures of aspirational luxury brands.

These individuals actively sought information about the latest trends, collections, fashion shows and brand ambassadors of luxury brands. This knowledge about the brands also facilitated their purchase in the store. Further, the respondents always aimed for positive past experience, authenticity and trust as these elements played an important role during their search for information. A respondent (female, 22 years) stated, “LV had a monogram campaign on Instagram. I followed it and quite liked it. Also most of them upload high quality pictures which are aesthetic and great to look at. It is also very aspirational in value. I have also been following Victoria Secret on Snapchat for the last two months and it’s very interesting because they do different things every day.” More importantly, respondents preferred to follow celebrity stylists. They also focused on brands endorsed by bloggers. A respondent (female, 24 years) explained, “Majority of the fashion bloggers I follow, they don’t smell of Chanel all the time or wear Armani all the time. But I learn about luxury and exclusive brands through them. Some of the people I follow are the stylists of the celebrities. I will follow the link that a celebrity posts of her stylist and then follow them. I feel stylists are a great way to find out about luxury brands. There are some fashion bloggers who are very experienced in the industry like Bombay fashion. I also don’t like the commercial stuff some of the bloggers do. Thus, depending on the brands they endorse, I’ll get to know if I want to follow them or not.”

To summarize, consumers sought information about luxury fashion across digital platforms primarily for voyeuristic purposes.

Insight 7: Consumers actively seek information about aspirational luxury through visual imagery

5.5.3 Digital Media Consumption: Brand Websites, Social Networks, Blogs

The study found that consumers sought information on brand websites, social networks and blogs. The findings also highlight advocacy by consumers as they share interesting content with their friends and family. This creates a cycle of information seeking behaviour. The cycle of learning and sharing has created an informed economy of fashion conscious individuals striving for aspirational luxury. Further, brand websites were considered as a primary source of information for brand and product descriptions.

A respondent explained, “There is this phenomenon called show-rooming where the individuals go to the store, they look at the product, go back home and then research it online and if they find it at a cheaper price,
they would buy it. So for me also, that would hold true. If there is an authentic product, sold on an authentic website and that trust is there and also if I know of some friend or friend of friend who has bought from that website and has had a positive experience then I’ll buy.” Another respondent expressed similar views to brand websites and stated, “The products and the layout of Michael Kors look very luxurious. It reminds me of a marketplace thing like an Amazon. The photos that they have used are quite nice but I wouldn’t call them true luxury. It seems to be affordable luxury even by the casual look of their models and their attire. Their watches section looks luxurious and nice. The rest is casual collection. Let me look at Burberry and compare it. I like the fact that the first thing that came up when I type Burberry was that it is a vintage British brand and established so and so years ago. This didn’t happen with Michael Kors and this helps me. The suggested searches also lend a lot of credibility to the brand. The layout is also better and so is the model. It is very exclusive and unseen of before and it gives me an idea that the brand is different and unique in everything that they do” (female, 24 years). Further, a respondent (female, 25 years) emphasized on detailed information and indicated, “I like the detailing in the Burberry site. The fact that they even have products for children and have advertised it on their homepage, I feel is a great call. Someday I would want to buy that for my child. It helps me become more educated about the brand.”

Subsequently, netnography found that visual based social networks such as Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook were the main sources of visual information consumption. More specifically, Instagram was the most frequently accessed platform with a usage time of three hours daily. Respondents also liked several luxury brand pages on Facebook. Further, they participated by joining online brand communities on receiving interesting updates. Pinterest was heavily used as a sharing platform to pin high end fashion and lifestyle pictures on respective boards. However, consumers used WhatsApp as a personal sharing platform among friends and family. Most of these social networks had interspersed consumption of three to six hours daily. However, some respondents were apprehensive of sharing official brand content on Instagram.

A respondent (female, 24 years) stated, “I wouldn’t ever share an official Burberry photo from its site on Twitter or on Instagram before purchase. I wouldn’t even tag my sister on a Burberry official image on Instagram. I would rather purchase the product first and then upload a picture with it. But to inform my sister I would send her a private WhatsApp message. Because it is so luxurious and so prim and proper so somehow subconsciously I am also aware that I have to be prim and proper when interacting with such a brand.”

Respondents also consumed information provided by bloggers through blog pages or subscriptions from YouTube channels. They perceived bloggers to be relevant and down-to-earth. These individuals could easily advice the respondents about luxury brands.

To summarize, consumers actively followed luxury brands and bloggers on visual social networks. Moreover, consumers prefer personal platforms for sharing information about brands.

**Insight 8: Increased consumption of information on social networks enhances the aspirational value of luxury brands**

The summary of information seeking behaviour can be understood from Table 3 mentioned below.
Table 3: Summary of themes focuses on the information seeking behaviour of aspirational luxury

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Driver            | Visual Imagery and Reliability | “LV had a monogram campaign on Instagram. I followed it and quite liked it. Also most of them upload high quality pictures which are aesthetic and great to look at. It is also very aspirational in value.” 1.1.1  

“Majority of the fashion bloggers I follow, they don’t smell of Chanel all the time or wear Armani all the time. But I learn about luxury and exclusive brands through them.” 1.1.2 |
| Media Consumption | Brand Websites, Social Networks and Blogs | “There is this phenomenon called show-rooming where the individuals go to the store, they look at the product, go back home and then research it online and if they find it at a cheaper price, they would buy it. So for me also, that would hold true.” 1.1.2  

“I wouldn’t ever share an official Burberry photo from its site on Twitter or on Instagram before purchase. I wouldn’t even tag my sister on a Burberry official image on Instagram. I would rather purchase the product first and then upload a picture with it. But to inform my sister I would send her a private WhatsApp message.” |

Source: Author

The following section discusses the other behavioural aspect of aspirational luxury consumption.

5.6 Selective Purchase

Respondents indulge in selective purchases of a few categories of luxury brands. This pattern of purchase is almost similar to the purchase of affordable luxury. The income level determines the level of purchase. The study found that certain respondents seek quality deals to undertake their aspirational luxury purchases. A respondent (female, 24 years) stated, “If I am to buy a bag and the purchase has to be within a certain budget, I can buy from any luxury brand like Coach, Michael Kors or Guess. I can compare online and search for a better deal because anyway all three have similar brand equity for me.” Further, some respondents emphasized on the touch and feel aspects of luxury brands and wanted to go for trials. A respondent (female, 25 years) indicated “I would purchase luxury skin care, make up and bags. But I would not purchase something that I would need to try like apparel. I would want to touch and feel the fabric, fit. Since I am spending a huge amount of money, I would like to experience the products.”

To conclude, respondents exhibited selective purchase behaviour either because of income level or the desire to physically experience luxury.

Further, the marketer’s study acted as data verification of the framework. It also presents an industry perspective to validate the emergence of aspirational luxury.

The interviews with the marketers were thematically analyzed and further grouped into two categories namely, strategies and challenges.
5.7 Strategies

5.7.1 Trading Up
Marketers expressed that a unique opportunity of increasing the sales of luxury brands can be undertaken by the 'trading up' approach. Marketers claim this strategy stems from the trend in the society of 'wanting more'. The demand forces of the luxury market such as rising per capita income, higher education level, increased awareness and globalization have affected the market. Marketers have developed two supply oriented strategies to cope with the increasing demand. One strategy was to make fast fashion available as affordable luxury for premium consumers. Further, the degree of luxuriousness can be increased using better quality visuals, models, videos and films. Additionally, the second strategy that was expressed by the marketers was to provide diffusion lines of luxury brands. They felt that this approach would make products accessible to affordable luxury consumers. Thus, marketers are strategically leveraging aspirational luxury by using the 'trading up' approach.

5.7.2 Content and Social E-Commerce
Marketers have shifted their focus from traditional media platforms to new touch points to communicate to the consumers. Further, marketers and digital marketing professionals defined the strategy of building seamless E-commerce models through content management systems. A digital marketer of a luxury brand stated, “CMS platforms help us create luxurious web experiences. We ensure that our digital content is shareable and commerce friendly.” Another marketer gave the example of the luxury brand Coach that used homepage videos and mobile apps to motivate the consumer while they explored information about the products. More importantly, marketers also emphasized on encapsulating the crowd-sourced content on social media platforms to encourage engagement with consumers. This engagement was further substantiated by a luxury brand manager who said, “We think of social media as a 'spread the word' instrument. It is a long term investment for us in order to acquire potential consumers of the brand. The potential consumers prove to be strong evangelists of the brands.”

5.7.3 Complementary Channel
Several marketers considered the digital medium as a complementary or supportive channel to the offline channel particularly because of the nascent stage of luxury consumption in India. Further, luxury retailers used this medium as a consumer-centric channel. A respondent stated, “Every consumer touch point must be seamlessly weaved together while designing the online customer journey. Every need must be catered to.” Thus, marketers are developing omni-channel strategies to keep up with the changing luxury consumer, thereby even assisting in in-store purchase.

5.7.4 Usage of Sensory Branding
Most of the marketers emphasized on sensory branding of luxury brands to enhance web experience. A luxury brand manager stated, “Luxury brands must stay superlative and appeal to the senses of its consumers to ensure that they feel the illustrious heritage of the brand.” Marketers along with web developers and interface designers are working towards replicating the offline store experience online by adding sensory elements such as visuals, audio and smell.

5.7.5 Technological Advancements
Luxury brand marketers are integrating with 'technology experts' to capitalize on the advancements in technology. The integration of
fashion and technology has become a common phenomenon in the luxury industry. A luxury e-retailer focused on the incorporation of technology in online and offline stores and said, “Some brands have mobile checkout option in-stores, virtual try-on domains, mobile and loyalty apps, responsive web designs, flash technology options, wearable technology and gamification options on social networks.” Thus, luxury brands use technological expertise to enhance their digital customer experience.

5.7.6 Personalized Experience
Personalization and customization are imperative digital strategies for any luxury brand. The digital medium lacks personal contact of sales representative and luxury brand marketers focus on this element. Marketers provide personalized experiences through the options of live chat with and call by expert. Further, big data analysis has helped in tracking the consumer’s history. This approach facilitated customizing experiences according to consumers’ preferences. More importantly, de-cluttered navigation and good quality content are also provided to the information seeking shopper. These elements are further integrated with the ‘Glocalization’ approach. To summarize, personalization of web experiences is important for marketers to build consumer connections and engagement.

Further, the next section discusses the challenges and barriers identified by marketers in the digital ecosystem of these brands.

5.8 Challenges
5.8.1 Inclusive-Exclusive Paradox
The inclusive-exclusive paradox was considered as a consistent challenge by the marketers. They have to maintain the heritage value of luxury brands amidst increasing digitization democratization. Marketers constantly strive to provide superlative online experiences without over-distribution and enhance the brand image. A luxury brand manager stated, “The perception of the society drives the luxury industry. A luxury brand may appear snobbish if it remains inaccessible. Digital presence of the brand allows everyone to grab a piece of the brand. This enhances the brand image in the minds of people.” Thus, to cope with this challenge, marketers have divided the luxury market into specific categories based on the lifestyle of the consumers and accordingly developed the strategies.

5.8.2 Operational Difficulties
Several marketers discussed some operational challenges as a result of digital presence of luxury brands such as counterfeits and copying. A luxury designer expressed that the entire collection of products including the images were blatantly copied and displayed on social media. Additionally, other challenges were fast delivery and returns by the consumers. “The delivery lag discourages consumers from purchasing online. We are trying to incorporate logistic innovations in our organization,” stated a luxury retailer. Hence, luxury marketers in emerging countries are establishing infrastructural amendments to manage these operational challenges.

6. DISCUSSION
Earlier literature defined luxury as something more than that which is necessary (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Mühlmann, 1975; Rittersma, 2010). Some scholars stated that luxury can also be defined through the economic, philosophical, managerial and symbolic perspectives (Nueno & Quelch, 1998; Roux & Floch, 1996). Further luxury was categorized on the basis of price, awareness, availability, consumption, prestige
and degree of luxuriousness (Nueono and Quelch, 1998; Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Okonkwo, 2009; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Vigernon & Johnson, 1999). Based on these elements, only two types of luxury emerged from the literature; true luxury and affordable luxury. However, this present study extends the existing literature on true and affordable by proposing the emergence of a new category of luxury called ‘aspirational luxury’. The research findings of this study indicated that aspirational luxury is characterized by exclusivity, craftsmanship and uniqueness. However, it is available at a reasonable price determined by the income of the consumers.

More importantly, Puddick and Menon (2012) considered Indian luxury consumers as less individualistic and conspicuous in nature. However, the findings from this study contradict the earlier literature as we found that the consumers are self-directed, ambitious and stimulated with individualism. They seek aspirational luxury as something that is exclusive, unique and reasonably priced. In the literature, the motivations were aligned with the characteristics of the internet (Donna, Hoffman & Novak, 1997). Moreover, another study by Neilsen (2000) categorized online shoppers as social, experimental, habitual, ethical, value and convenience oriented. However, this study extended this categorization by adding a new category of information seeking and selective shoppers of aspirational luxury. Further, the online luxury purchase was related to (Mohammed et al., 2003) functionality, familiarity, internalization and evangelism in the literature. However, in this present study, the functionality stage was represented through brand attributes and benefits such as cost, computing and convenience. Subsequently, the familiarity stage and evangelism stage were illustrated through the use of social networks. Finally, visual social networks and blogs were the main sources of information consumption in the familiarity stage and personal social networks have been used in the evangelism stage.

7. Discussions about the Generalisability and Applicability of Insights:

Our study has discovered certain key dimensions of true luxury: personalization, synchronization of visual ensembles and longevity. The first two dimensions have been optimized in physical retail spaces, but there is a greater necessity for the same in the online retail space due to opportunities for creating “non linear sales funnels” that can maximize traffic, repeat visits by customers and achieve robust growth (WBR, 2015). Our study was able to show that consumers highly value aesthetics and personalization, so retailers who achieve this can make the consumers feel that they are offered greater control of their purchase experience (Luxury Outlook, 2015). These aspects were reflected in the context of aspirational luxury through different modalities; self direction and stimulation. Our study was able to demonstrate that these modalities could be concretized and the concretized forms took the shape of independence and personal growth. These two elements need to be effectively translated into making sure that the brand’s experiential offering ensures that the product purchased is the most apt reward for their achievements (Luxury Outlook, 2015). This can be best achieved by ensuring that the brands follow the precepts of agile marketing to ensure instant gratification because the motivation to gift oneself an aspirational brand is directly dependent on the feeling that one has achieved one’s target, whose time period might not be very long (Taylor & Levin, 2014). After
having these elements in place, the next level of alignment and synchronization was discovered by our study. This level required that the product characteristics and the attendant shopping experience be crafted to enhance the self worth of the consumer so that they may transfer the self worth and celebration to the product and the experience (Ye, Liu, & Shi, 2015). Finally, our study was able to discover certain dimensions of luxury and women consumers that allow for ensuring maximum loyalty.

These dimensions were that of a wide range of product options provided under their brand rubric. These options need to be well substantiated by the relevant information about the products. This information, as our study was able to show, needs to be visually appealing and aesthetically wholesome. Both these elements are to be achieved by privileging the need for a hedonistic and narcissistic envelope (Wang, 2015). This envelope needs to be sealed with the guarantee that the consumer can be provided with the opportunity to display that they have privileged themselves with a luxury brand. This can be done by co-creating the right communicative space that allows for visibility without intrusion. Thus, the road forward for luxury brands in terms of their female consumers is to co-opt with them to ensure that the distance and time between the luxury brand’s production and delivery to the consumer is reduced by media optimization, information leveraging and customization.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Academic Implications

The present study has scholarly implications primarily because of a newly emerging category of luxury: aspirational luxury. Scholars are presented with the opportunity of conducting this study on male luxury consumers. The study can also be extended to offline consumption behaviour and other categories of luxury such as hospitality, travel and automobiles. Further, this study was conducted in Mumbai with respondents of socio-economic classes A or A+. Likewise, the respondents with a different socio-economic class and residing in other metros or Tier II cities can also be studied. Another academic implication is the quantitative analysis with a larger sample set to determine the drivers of aspirational luxury.

8.2 Managerial Implications

The proposed framework defines brand attributes, brand benefits, brand tonality and brand symbols of online brand identity of luxury fashion brands. Managers should focus on cost, computing and convenience while developing the functional aspect of online luxury brand identity. To enhance the emotional aspect, luxury marketers should ensure customer franchise, community participation, customization and customer value. The content and communication of luxury brands on digital platforms must be symbolic in nature. Further, the framework of this study provides the marketers with a sound understanding of consumer behaviour enabling consumer-centric marketing strategies. Marketers should focus on providing exclusive luxury products at a comfortable price, especially to independent and self-directed women. The digital presence of luxury brands should also ensure ease of navigation and provide variety to the consumers. The key focus areas for marketers should be fast fashion, social media marketing, influence of bloggers and e-retail. Today, luxury marketers should heavily leverage digital platforms and introduce diffusion lines to increase sales. Thus, this study effectively integrates the need gaps of both the domains into an actionable framework.
References


per annum basis. Most farmers between Rs 5 – 10 lakhs on a Rs 5 lakhs, and 18% borrow farmers (82%) borrow less than

Changes

** p < .01

therefore street cities of India, and

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Role of TV Ads in Transforming the Lifestyle of Consumers: A Study of Rural Punjab

Sukhmani
Mohit Gupta

Abstract
Empirical research indicates evidence of the role of TV advertisements in transforming the lifestyle of consumers. This study provides further evidence in this regard. We added to literature by assessing the role of TV ads on rural consumers. The study was conducted in the rural areas of Punjab among 400 respondents. Factor analysis resulted in extraction of three main factors explaining the construct of the role of TV in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. The factors extracted are namely, change in spending habits, change in psychology and improvement in lifestyle. The respondents were further categorized on the basis of age, gender, education, family and income. Anderson Rubin (AR) factor scores were calculated for each of the extracted factors and were compared among all the categories of respondents. Significant results observed for gender and occupation categories for AR factor scores imply that these demographic variables need to be considered by companies in designing their advertisements.

Key words: TV advertisements, Rural consumer, Factor Analysis
Introduction and Review

Advertising is a measure of the growth of civilization and a sign of the human race’s strife for betterment and perfection. According to Richards and Curran (2002), “Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future.” Advertising is looked upon as a major part of an overall promotional strategy by the marketers, while it is viewed as encompassing all forms of promotional communication by the general public. Most advertising practitioners limit it to paid communications conveyed by a mass medium. Kotler (2013) defines advertising as “Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor.”

Advertising research can be broadly classified into two streams: they may be experimental studies which study the impact of advertising cues on cognition effects or intentions; or they may be econometric studies which study the impact of advertising intensity on purchase behaviour. A variety of advertising cues have been studied - emotional (Singh and Cole 1993); arguments (Etgar and Goodwin 1982); humour (Sternthal and Craig 1973); and music (Park and Young 1986). Econometric studies focus on the role of advertising intensity on consumer behaviour. Many of the researchers measure advertising intensity as advertising expenditure, or in the form of ad exposures. Consumer behaviour is mainly measured as sales, market share or consumer choice (Sethuraman and Gerard 1991; Vakaras and Ambler 1999). Most of the research (Eastlack and Rao 1986; Krishnamurthy and Raj 1986; Tellis and Weiss 1995) done in this context typically stress on modelling of sales response to advertising. Further many researchers have called for an integration of these two research streams (Cook and Kover 1997; Winer 1999).

Advertising is a very important marketing communication tool for sellers. It is a crucial factor in spreading awareness about new products in the market. Many studies have been conducted to understand the credibility of advertising and publicity (Serra 2007). Several pieces of research (Goldsmith and Lefferty 2002; Tan and Chia 2007) have depicted that advertising has played a vital role in creating awareness of products of the organization to potential buyers. Not only does advertising increase awareness, but may also increase the aspirations and consumption desires (Galbraith 1958; Schor 1998) and some evidence also exists in the form of long run persistence of brand preference as an impact of advertising (Bronnenberg et al 2011). Also in one of the research studies, it was depicted that increasing ad exposures affect brand choice by retaining and attracting customers and has an effect on brand preference (Raj 1982).

Considerable research in consumer behaviour suggests that consumer motivation, ability and opportunity to process information from ads affect their responses to those ads (MacInnis and Jaworski 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Even within a particular market, different consumers may respond differently to the same ad (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). In another study, Sharma and Gupta (2015) observed that advertisements are not just a way of sending information about a product but are meant to relate to the sensitivities of consumers they are aimed at.

Attitude towards the ad helps in transforming the consumer’s attitude towards the product or brand (Goldsmith and Lafferty 2002; Mehta 2000); in general, attitude towards advertising is an important
determinant of attitude towards a specific advertisement (Lutz 1985). It has been observed that manufacturers spend substantial sums of money on advertising campaigns to promote sales (Henderson and Kelly 2005) in the belief that exposure to advertising affects behaviour. But these kinds of studies have examined the consumer's attitude towards advertising in general rather than in a particular medium. Tan and Chia (2007) observed that attitude towards advertising in general is an abstract level construct while attitude towards television or some specific medium of advertising are experience based constructs in the consumer's structure of attitude towards advertising.

The growing importance of television as an advertising medium has led to its consolidation to the predominant position among the different mass media channels. Despite technological innovations such as the internet, television remains one of the most powerful sources of communication that the world has (Abbatangelo-Gray et al 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, across the globe, television is still the primary medium used for advertising mainly for consumer products (Eagle et al 2004; Story and French 2004). Highlighting the importance of television, many researchers have studied the extent of exposure to television and the various impacts thereof. The impact has been reported in the form of vote shares (Della Vigna and Kaplan 2007) or voter turnout (Gentzkow 2006; Della Vigna et al 2011) or social outcome variables. Jensen and Oster (2009) depicted how access to cable TV changed the perception of women's status in India. Television influences attitudes, behaviours and values of viewers (Byrd-Bredbenner 2002; Nash et al 2009). Consequently television viewing and the resulting exposure (Hamilton-Ekeke and Thomas 2007; St-Onge et al 2003) and branding (Jaeger 2006; Just and Payne 2009) have been proposed as important factors in influencing purchase decisions. Television advertising is thought to be very effective at building strong brands (Heath 2009).

Hakimi et al (2011) propose the model of relationship of attributes of celebrity endorsement on TV with the positive brand image which, in turn, lead to consumers' positive purchase intentions. Rethans et al (1986) analyze the effects of television commercial repetition and commercial length, and knowledge of the receiver; they found a significant effect on measures like attitude towards the commercial, the product and the company, and purchase intentions. Even the impact on attitude of college students has been documented (Khattak and Khan 2009). Television advertising is found to be even more significant in a country like India where television was introduced as late as in the early 1970s (De Souza 2006).

Growth in the rural market has been the point of focus in the marketing environment of India in recent years. Growth implies a great marketing opportunity as well as a marketing challenge. Today, the rural market of the country accounts for a large share of the expenditure in manufactured and branded consumer goods. The rural market of India offers a large scope on account of its sheer size and potential. Market pioneers are being rewarded by capturing the rural markets. Simultaneously, due to the problems and hurdles posed by rural markets, the firms have to put in a great deal of effort to overcome them and get a sizeable share of the market. It is rightly said that the rural market is a market meant for truly creative marketers (Ramaswamy and Namakumari 1995).

In a study of comparative behaviour between urban...
and rural consumers (Sehrawet and Kundu 2007), it was found that rural consumers found packaging more useful than their urban counterparts and they strongly believed that better packages contain better quality products. Bishnoi and Sharma (2009) found rural consumers to be more interested in TV advertisements of new products against the interest of their urban counterparts who are more interested in TV advertisements of already existing products (Jha 2013). Several other studies have found that advertisements not only provide much knowledge about the product to the rural consumer but also influence in purchasing the product (Lalita and Panchanatham 2013). Still there is a shortfall of research evidence on the role of television advertisement in transforming the lives of rural consumers, which is particularly important in the Indian context as the Indian economy is still predominantly dependent on the rural economy.

Research Methodology

The main objective of the study was to identify the role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. For the completion of this objective, a survey was conducted on consumers residing in rural areas of Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana districts of Punjab state. Multistage sampling technique was applied; from each selected district, three blocks were selected using random sampling and thereafter, from each selected block, two villages were selected on judgment basis. Further, 12 households were selected from each sampled village on judgment-cum-convenience basis. For selection of households, presidents of municipal committees and sarpanches of the villages were contacted to identify the households having adequate income, who possess television sets and are therefore, exposed to TV advertising. Thereafter, from each selected household, two members (one of them being head of the household) were chosen to be part of the study. From each district under survey, 144 respondents were therefore selected making the total sample of 432 respondents. Out of 432 questionnaires that were collected, 32 were found to be incomplete and inappropriate for further analysis; thereby, they were excluded from the analysis. Thereafter, the final sample size achieved was of 400 respondents.

The nature of the study being exploratory, it was kept in mind that the subjects were chosen from a wide cross section of the population. Before interviewing the respondents, at the time of initial contact, it was confirmed that the respondents owned television sets and had exposure to television advertisements. Households, which did not possess a television set, were not included in the study. The FMCG products selected for the study were toiletries. The selection of the toiletry category from FMCG companies for this study was based on the assumption that majority of the television advertisements portray toiletry products and also a significant number of families living in rural areas are influenced by television advertisements and use various toiletry products in their daily life. Moreover, the toiletries selected for this study were such that they are affordable and are used by rural households on a daily basis.

The entire data was collected using a non-disguised structured questionnaire, which was finalized after conducting a pilot survey on 50 respondents and thereafter translated to vernacular language to suit rural respondents. The respondents were asked by referring to advertisements of toiletries. Approximately 60 percent of respondents were between 25 years and 44 years of age; 75 percent were matriculate or below; 50 percent of sampled

References


households had income below Rs 10,000 per month at the time of survey and majority of the respondents (28.5 percent) were in farming occupation at the time of data collection. The agreement to specific scores was asked on a 5-point likert scale. The various statements of the scale were derived from literature and were further modified to suit conditions of the sample. Agreement scale was used in such a manner so that lower score depicted higher agreement. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for each statement comprising the scale. Further, to assess the reliability of the scale, Cronbach alpha was calculated.

The role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers was further assessed by combining various roles into constructs. In order to arrive at various components of the construct under study, factor analysis was applied whose primary aim is data reduction (Field 2005). Factor analysis diagnostics like Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the construct and Bartlett’s test of sphericity to identify the identity matrix have been applied. Various components and factors were extracted using principal component analysis, which is satisfactory when the study is exploratory in nature and the objective is data summarization (Hair et al 2007). For a clearer description of factor structure, factor rotation becomes necessary and in this study, varimax rotation, a form of orthogonal rotation has been applied which produces uncorrelated factors. Varimax rotation maximizes dispersion of loadings within factors and tries to load a smaller number of variables highly onto each factor (Kinnear and Gray 2004).

Further, the study has employed the latent root criteria (Kaiser 1960) for determining the number of factors to be extracted using eigen value > 1.0. Along with eigen values, communalities have also been used and generally accepted communalities range from 0.40 to 0.80 (Hair et al 2007). The study made use of criterion of factor loadings greater than 0.40 (Stevans 1992). Factor analysis was applied on the entire sample of 400 respondents. After naming of the factors on the basis of the meaning and magnitude of factor loadings, scales were generated.

Factor scores for the extracted factors were computed for the respondents using refined method of Anderson-Rubin scores (DiStefano et al, 2009) for further analysis. In the last stage, these scores were compared among various categories of respondents categorized on the basis of age, gender, education, family income and occupation. Anderson Rubin scores being normally distributed, parametric tests namely T-test and F-test were applied to assess the statistical difference between various categories.

Results and Discussion
Cronbach alpha for the entire construct is calculated as 0.797 depicting sufficient reliability. Table 1 depicts the mean agreement regarding the role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. The low mean score depicts higher agreement. The respondents strongly agree on the fact that TV ads have increased their frequency and amount of spending (M =1.49, SD =0.62); rural consumers also agree that they have changed to stereotypes as portrayed in TV ads (M =1.51, SD =0.75); they believe that consumers have become more materialistic (M =1.54, SD =0.79); and rural consumers also consider TV ads as the driving force which makes them yearn for improvement in lifestyle (M= 1.57, SD= 0.68).
Table 1: Agreement regarding role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Statement regarding role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>After watching television advertisements, consumers have become variety seeking</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>Buying behaviour of consumers has shifted from planned purchase to impulsive purchasing after viewing TV ads</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>TV ads have made consumers aware and confident about the product, which, in turn, has reduced the impact of opinion leaders in purchase</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4</td>
<td>Consumers have become all the more materialistic, by TV ads, which has increased the corruption rate in the economy</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>TV advertisements have brought about a change in the concept of quality, from useful and low cost maintenance products to high technology products</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6</td>
<td>TV ads have made the youth brand and trend conscious</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X7</td>
<td>The characters created in television advertising become as much a part of life as other well known fictional characters</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X8</td>
<td>Consumers’ profile has changed and is catching up with urban consumers due to TV advertisements</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X9</td>
<td>Consumers have changed to stereotypes as portrayed in TV advertisements</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X10</td>
<td>Advertisements close to religious sentiments are more authentic and genuine</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X11</td>
<td>TV advertising persuades both the senses of sound and sight</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X12</td>
<td>TV ads have increased the frequency and amount of spending</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X13</td>
<td>Television advertising is the dominant driving force which makes consumers yearn for improvement in their lifestyles</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Lesser mean score means higher agreement)

Source: Computed by authors

To arrive at various factors which transform the lifestyle of rural consumers and in order to further carry out the analysis highlighting differences between various categories, factor analysis was applied. Thirteen variables (X1 to X13) were originally considered and factor analysis was applied on them. The determinant value of correlation matrix is calculated as 0.001 which is higher than the required value of 0.00001 (Field, 2005) depicting enough correlations for the feasibility of factor analysis technique. The case to variable ratio is quite comfortable at 30.77, which depicts that factor
analysis can be easily carried out on the basis of sample size (Hair et al. 2007). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is calculated as 0.8 which is higher than the required value of 0.5 (Kaiser 1974). The test for identifying identity matrix – Bartlett’s test of sphericity has also been found to be highly significant at one per cent level of significance (Chi square = 1188, df = 78, p<0.01) indicating that correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and therefore, useful for conducting factor analytic technique.

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was applied to extract the factors from the construct. Table 2 depicts that the construct of role of TV advertisements in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers is represented by three factors (eigen Value > 1.0) and the extracted factors explain 51.03 percent of the variance of original input variables. All variables which depicted the factor loading of more than 0.40 (after rounding off) have been taken for consideration. The factors have been given appropriate names on the basis of constituent variables. The factor names, constituent variables, their factor loadings and the variance explained by the factors have been summarized in Table 2.

Three factors explain 21.01%, 15.45% and 14.57% of variance respectively. In total, all the three factors explain 51.03% of variance. The first and the most important factor consists of 6 variables namely X1, X2, X3, X5, X6 and X8. The factor loadings range from 0.401 to 0.649. The factor explains 21.01% of variance with the eigen value of 2.73; this depicts that this factor is the foremost factor in explaining the role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. The factor has been named as ‘Change in spending habits’.

Table 2: Factors’ summary for construct of role of TV ads in transforming lifestyle of rural consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Label</th>
<th>Constituent</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Factor Name</th>
<th>Variance explained by the Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>After watching television advertisements, consumers have become variety seeking</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>CHANGE IN SPENDING HABITS</td>
<td>21.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>Buying behaviour of consumers has shifted from planned purchase to impulsive purchasing after viewing TV ads</td>
<td>0.649</td>
<td>(EIGEN VALUE = 2.73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>TV ads have made the consumers aware and confident about the product, which, in turn, has reduced the impact of opinion leaders in purchase</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X8</td>
<td>Rural consumers’ profile has changed and is catching up with urban consumers due to TV advertisements</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>TV advertisements have brought about a change in the concept of quality, from useful and low cost maintenance products to high technology products</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6</td>
<td>TV ads have made the youth brand and trend conscious</td>
<td>0.593</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second factor explains 15.45% of the variance and includes four variables (X12, X4, X9, and X10). The factor loadings range from 0.411 to 0.590. The eigen value of the factors is 2.009 and is therefore an important factor in explaining the role TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. The factor has been named as 'Improvement in lifestyle'. The third factor in terms of importance explains 14.57% of variance and includes 3 variables (X11, X7 and X13). The factor has an eigen value of 1.89. The factor loadings range from 0.554 to 0.642 and the factor has been named as 'Change in psychology'. The construct of the role of TV ads in changing the lifestyle of rural consumers is therefore represented by three components or factors, namely, change in spending habits, change in psychology, and improvement in lifestyle.
Table 3: Comparative agreement of respondents for extracted factors on role of TV ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Anderson Rubin Factor Scores Mean (Standard Deviation)</th>
<th>F value / P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classification Base: Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-24 Years</td>
<td>0.07 (1.06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-34 Years</td>
<td>-0.09 (0.96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-44 Years</td>
<td>-0.02 (0.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-60 Years</td>
<td>0.07 (1.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in spending habits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.01 (1.02)</td>
<td>0.688 (0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.01 (0.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.54 (0.89)</td>
<td>0.273 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.54 (1.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in lifestyle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.03 (1.01)</td>
<td>0.926 (0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.03 (0.98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Classification Base: Education|                      |                   |
| Below Matriculation         | 0.04 (1.03)         |                   |
| Matriculation               | 0.01 (0.94)         |                   |
| Higher Secondary            | 0.03 (1.07)         |                   |
| Graduate                   | -0.19 (1.01)        |                   |
| Post Graduate               | -0.36 (0.85)        |                   |
| Change in spending habits   |                                                        |                   |
| <5000                      | -0.02 (1.05)        | 0.81 (0.51)       |
| 5000-10000                 | 0.11 (1.06)         |                   |
| 10000-15000                | -0.00 (0.94)        |                   |
| 15000-20000                | 0.01 (0.96)         |                   |
| >20000                     | -0.11 (0.89)        |                   |
| Change in psychology       |                                                        |                   |
| <5000                      | -0.09 (0.91)        | 1.44 (0.22)       |
| 5000-10000                 | -0.13 (0.91)        |                   |
| 10000-15000                | 0.13 (1.02)         |                   |
| 15000-20000                | 0.16 (1.24)         |                   |
| >20000                     | 0.01 (0.86)         |                   |
| Improvement in lifestyle   |                                                        |                   |
| <5000                      | 0.09 (0.91)         | 2.11 (0.08)       |
| 5000-10000                 | -0.23 (1.00)        |                   |
| 10000-15000                | -0.14 (1.07)        |                   |
| 15000-20000                | 0.04 (1.11)         |                   |
| >20000                     | 0.22 (0.89)         |                   |

| Classification Base: Occupation|                      |                   |
| Housewife                    | -0.04 (1.08)        |                   |
| Businessman                  | 0.05 (0.99)         |                   |
| Farmer                       | -0.03 (0.91)        |                   |
| Student                      | 0.01 (1.05)         |                   |
| Service man                  | 0.05 (1.01)         |                   |
| Change in spending habits    |                                                        |                   |
| Housewife                    | -0.04 (1.08)        | 0.18 (0.95)       |
| Businessman                  | 0.05 (0.99)         |                   |
| Farmer                       | -0.03 (0.91)        |                   |
| Student                      | 0.01 (1.05)         |                   |
| Service man                  | 0.05 (1.01)         |                   |
| Change in psychology         |                                                        |                   |
| Housewife                    | -0.08 (0.97)        | 1.33 (0.26)       |
| Businessman                  | -0.01 (0.96)        |                   |
| Farmer                       | 0.17 (1.12)         |                   |
| Student                      | -0.09 (0.82)        |                   |
| Service man                  | -0.14 (0.98)        |                   |
| Improvement in lifestyle     |                                                        |                   |
| Housewife                    | 0.14 (0.92)         | 2.51 (0.04)       |
| Businessman                  | -0.18 (1.02)        |                   |
| Farmer                       | -0.06 (1.02)        |                   |
| Student                      | 0.03 (0.90)         |                   |
| Service man                  | 0.35 (1.13)         |                   |

Source: Computed by authors
Respondents were further classified on the basis of age, gender, education, family income in Rs/month and occupation as shown in Table 3. On the basis of age, respondents were classified into four categories namely 14-24 years, 24-34 years, 34-44 years and finally 44-60 years. Attempt was made to study any significant difference in categories towards agreement of extracted factor(s) on the basis of Anderson-Rubin (AR) factor scores. No significant difference was found among different categories when categorized on the basis of age for the extracted factor of 'Change in spending habits' (F = 0.68, p > 0.05). Similar results were obtained for other factors of 'Change in psychology' (F = 0.273, p > 0.05) and improvement in lifestyle (F = 0.926, p > 0.05) wherein also no significant differences were observed between the respondents categorized into different age groups. On the basis of gender, no significant differences were observed between males and females on the basis of factor scores for the various extracted factors of 'Change in spending habits' (t = -0.21, p > 0.05) and 'improvement in lifestyle' ( t = -0.58, p > 0.05) whereas 'change in psychology' (t = -1.09, p < 0.05) was found to differ significantly with gender.

Respondents were further classified on the basis of education into five groups, namely, 'below matriculation'; 'matriculation', 'higher secondary', 'graduate' and 'post graduate'. No significant differences were observed between these categories of respondents on the basis of AR scores assigned to extracted factors of 'change in spending habits' (F = 0.81, p > 0.05); 'change in psychology' (F = 2.07, p > 0.05) and 'improvement in lifestyle' (F = 0.46, p > 0.05). Similarly respondents were classified on the basis of family income in Rs/month in five groups, namely, family income less than Rs.5,000/month; Rs.5,000-10,000 per month; Rs.10,000-15,000 per month; Rs.15,000-20,000 per month; and greater than Rs.20,000 per month. No significant differences were observed in factor scores between various categories created on the basis of income in terms of their agreement scores accorded to the extracted factors. In case when respondents were categorized on the basis of occupation into five different categories of housewife, businessman, farmer, students and serviceman, no significant differences have been observed in factor scores for 'change in spending habits' and 'change in psychology' whereas a significant difference was found between respondents categorized on the basis of occupation on account of extracted factor of 'improvement in lifestyle' (F = 2.51, p>0.05).

Conclusions:
The present study attempted to identify the role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. For the completion of objectives, a survey was conducted in the rural areas of Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana, and data was collected from 400 respondents belonging to households having TV sets. The typical respondent was between 25-44 years of age, matriculate and belonging to household with income of below Rs 10,000/- per month and primarily being in the farming occupation. Review of literature helped in generating thirteen statements regarding the role of TV ads in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. Respondents agreed that TV ads have increased the frequency of their expenditures and the amount they spent; they have changed to stereotypes as portrayed in TV ads; consumers have become more materialistic and TV ads are the driving force which makes them yearn for improvement in lifestyle.

Factor analysis was further applied on the statements resulting in extraction of three main factors explaining
the construct of the role of TV in transforming the lifestyle of rural consumers. The factors extracted were—change in spending habits, change in psychology and improvement in lifestyle. All the three factors collectively explained 51.03 percent of variance. The respondents were further classified into various categories on the basis of age, gender, education, family income in Rs/month and occupation. Significant differences at 5% level of significance were found with respect to gender for the factor scores attributed to the extracted factors of 'change in psychology'. Similarly a significant difference at 5% level of significance was found between various categories of occupation and for the factor score attributed to the extracted factor of improvement in lifestyle. For all other categories, no significant difference was found for any of the extracted factors on agreement towards role of TV ads in transforming rural consumers. It is thus implied that the competitive players penetrating rural markets should focus on occupation and gender while devising advertising strategies for rural consumers.

The research demonstrates that life of rural consumers can be transformed as a result of viewing TV advertisements with respect to change in spending habits, change in psychology and improvement in lifestyle. This is of immense importance to marketing and advertising managers as now they can design their advertising cues in the context of the obtained results. They can depict the advertising appeal in terms of improvement in lifestyle and focus on psychological and behavioural aspects of advertising cues. In addition, they have now the evidence of gender and occupation playing an important determinant in creating differentiating impact with respect to change in psychology and improvement in lifestyle.

References


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The Changing Paradigm of Modern-day Politics: A Case of Political Branding and its Indian Connect

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Abstract
Brands are omnipresent. Politics is no exception to the same in the sense that contemporary politics is characterized by the emergence of many a successful (and failed) political brands. A layman might not associate politics with the field of branding but with time, thanks to the changing paradigms, this aspect of modern-day democracy has become synonymous with branding. The contemporary voter behaves more like a customer who is out to purchase into the ideology of the candidates and, on being convinced, purchases (read votes for that party) a particular product (read candidate or party) based on the promises made (read manifesto). A successful political brand helps the candidate/party connect better with the electorate as compared to its rivals. The reverse also holds true for a failed political brand. Western democracies have seen the ascendancy of political branding for quite some time. Indian democracy has been home to this concept in the past few years. The last general election in particular put the concept of political branding at the forefront.

Through this paper, the authors have attempted to explore the concept of branding and then political branding and related concepts such as emotional branding and political marketing. An attempt has been made to connect political branding with the last general election. To conclude, they would veer towards female participation in the election to drive the point further home.

Key Words: Branding, Emotional Branding, Political Branding, Political Marketing, General Election, Women Participation.
Introduction to Brands
Brands have been around us since “the dawn of history” existing as trademarks (Danesi, 2006, p 10). Brands are described as any visual symbols that identify a product or service (Danesi, 2006).

As per Scammell (2007), consumer activism and branding have been synonymous with each other in the modern world. The rise of consumer awareness and branding has created new paradigms. Further he opines that branding has developed on the lines of being a theory wherein it applies to such diverse concepts as nations, cities, places and politicians. Gertner (2011) states how branding has been extensively used in the context of places thus highlighting its significance. Mayes (2008) opines that place branding is an ongoing process of competitive differentiation. As per Scammell (2007), politicians are increasingly considered as brands who appeal to the electorate with the help of appropriate public relation strategies.

As per Jevons (2005), just as marketing is much more than sales, branding is not restricted to advertising alone. Scammell (2007) further argues that having a good brand name for a political outfit or candidate is imperative.

Early discussions of the way people felt about brands focused on assigning human characteristics and personalities, and brands were seen as relationship partners (Fetscherin, Michele, Cid Goncalves, & Souki, 2014).

A brand is any combination of names, slogans, logos, symbols, shapes, colours, letters, signatures, product design, packaging, advertising, and marketing that together give particular products or services a physical, recognizable form that is visually distinctive (Williams, 2000; Clifton et al., 2009).

As per Chandler & Owen (2002), brands comprise of loosely held impressions as well as associations which make their mark in the human mind in sensory way/s.

As per Jevons (2005), branding is used in developing conscious campaigning aimed towards a positive image. He is of the view that branding is flexible enough to include the field of politics.

Emotional Branding
Emotional connect has come to occupy a position of prominence when one talks about how brands are influencing our day-to-day lives.

Extending on the opinions of Williams (2000) and later propounded by Clifton (2009) that brands are agents of social change, Gobe (2002) further advocated that people are no longer content by merely the functional benefits of a product. Dean, Croft, & Pich (2014) conceptualize the emotional relationship of marketing to political parties. Extending it further, Chandler & Owen (2002) talk about how brands, whether they are products or politicians, need to make their presence felt in sociological and cultural terms thus building a stronger emotional connect.

In politics, brand image enhances emotional connect thus making the product perform well beyond its stated functionality. Rebranding of politicians is done mostly riding on the emotional connect to help him/her improve appeal and ratings (Scammell, 2007).
Understanding Political Branding

When one talks about political branding, it is the manifestation of the perception of a political candidate, party, campaign strategy or other related terms as policy made to a population with the help of both material and immaterial hints as well as language.

As per Clifton et al. (2009), brands have become arbiters of campaigns for social good. A successful campaign results in the electorate holding up voting as a social good.

Jevons (2005) opines that owing to its popularity among politicians, political branding has turned into a 'big business'. He is of the view that the singular consumer context, normally associated with branding, has changed with the advent of political branding. The extensive political campaigns of the present times are hallmarks of the usage of branding in campaigning.

Lieb and Shah (2010) state how the Obama campaign struck the right chord with the electorate on the virtue of it being 'rooted' and understanding the American culture well. This observation is in line with Chandler & Owen (2002) who are of the view that a political brand needs to resonate with the voters culturally. They highlighted the fact that a successful political brand needs to have charismatic appeal.

In line with Young and Rubican's 'brand asset valuator' or Aaker's 'brand identity model, a political brand is directly linked to its ability to influence the electorate's belief in the electoral system of the country and subsequently in that particular political outfit/leader.

Brand equity or brandscendence emanates from the successful management of a brand and the same applies to political branding as well. Positive brand associations equal strong brand equity (Keller, 1993). Building on it, Ahmed, Lodhi, & Ahmad (2015) introduced the political brand equity model (PBE) which talks about the application of brand equity in the arena of political branding.

Speed, Butler, & Collins (2015) observe that political branding is within the area of multidisciplinary research and can be conducted from various perspectives including economics, management, journalism and sociology.

Further, Speed et al., (2015) introduce human branding concept in politics. This is pretty much evident in the connect (or disconnect) which the consumer-citizen develops with the leaders in terms of them being reliable (or unreliable) political brands

Busby & Cronshaw (2015) talk about utilizing participation branding where the consumer-citizen, by the virtue of participation, becomes a part of the political brand.

Winchester, Hall, & Binney (2014) specifically argue that the political environment of today could be seen as the one where branding frameworks and related concepts could be applied.

Holt (2004) discusses how some brands are devoid of any meaning and then there are others who build upon the strong image they have developed over the years.

Neiheisel & Niebler (2013) find that the use of party symbols is effective for candidates and hence, add value to the political brands and should be used with much diligence.
At the same time, White and de Chernatony (2011) observe how political brands get greatly devalued when they don’t live up to the pre-poll tall claims or fall short of the promises on which they ought to deliver. In this context, it becomes all the more relevant to highlight the concept of ‘repeat buy’ as stated by Needham (2006) who pointed out that an incumbent who is seeking re-election should treat it on similar lines as ‘repeat buy’ by a consumer for a brand.

The electorate develops a reciprocal relationship with the political brands in the sense that the way they feel towards a political brand influences the value of the brand (Williams, 2000).

As per Smith and French (2011), the associations which voters develop with a party brand help them avoid any new learning about the political scenario thus creating heuristics or ‘mental shortcuts’ which enable them to avoid complex analysis while deciding the candidate/party to vote for. This builds upon the views of Scammell (2007) who propounded that brands act as a shortcut for choices to be made by consumers thanks to differentiating elements such as name and image.

A strong and positive image and an uplifting message characterize a successful political brand as they make the electorate excited and hopeful (Seidman, 2010).

Consistency in the message and performance of the political brand help in building strong political brands (Creamer, 2008).

One of the leading contributors to the field of political branding, Lees Marshment (2009) observes how political branding succeeds in differentiating one politician/party from another thus providing more choice to the voters. However, as political branding has matured over the past years, it has touched new realms rather than acting as a mere differentiator. On similar lines, Serazio (2015) critiques the logic and practices of branding in American political campaigns.

**Political Branding: The Concurrent Aspect of Polity**

Political branding is seen as the study of the composite outlook of a political candidate, campaign, party, policies and the likes. It talks about the policies being made by an incumbent government or the promises of a potential candidate, and reinforces the beliefs which the electorate have from the political candidate/party.

Bennett (2012) observes how declining group affinities, coupled with social fragmentation, have resulted in personalized politics wherein collective actions have been replaced with individual expressions. This holds much relevance in the modern polity as the politician becomes more popular than the party.

It treats voters as consumers and draws heavily from a consumer-oriented approach towards politics. It manifests itself in the form of tangibles such as logos, symbols, colours along with intangibles such as trust, emotional connect, story and visual context. Nielsen (2015a) believes that brand relationships relate to voters’ personal experiences with a party brand.

Contemporary political battles are fought as much in the virtual world (if not more) as they are in the real world. It is for this reason that Rutter, Hanretty, & Lettice (2015) propound that the distinctiveness of the communicated brand personalities of political parties can be measured through their websites.
Personal events related to the candidate, the candidate's image, current events surrounding the process of elections, interest in issues, policies and religious beliefs are factors that influence voting behaviour (Farrag & Shamma, 2014).

Dean et al. (2014) put forth the idea that the internal market plays a crucial role as an intermediary between the party and the voters thus highlighting the aspect that doing a check on the internal environment is as crucial as doing a check on the external one for a political outfit.

Guzmán, Paswan, & Steenburg (2014) in their study concluded that voters see themselves and the candidate as a distinct brand, and associate with such brands which resonate with their own persona.

Scammell (2015) argues that a brand concept is a powerful tool for understanding political images. This lends further credibility to the relevance of political branding in the modern political arena.

In the United States, the presidential process of filing nominations for both the principal parties is still applied. Political party loyalty has been found to have a strong influence on voting behaviour (Schofield & Reeves, 2015) thus playing a crucial role in the process of political branding and eventually on the nomination process.

On an interesting note, Saftoiu & Popescu (2014) have been able to propound that humour can be an important ingredient in the construction and consolidation of political brands. The surging popularity (or notoriety!) towards brand Trump has much to do with his ability to talk in an unorthodox manner among many other things.

The role of social media is something which came into prominence for the first time in the 2008 Presidential election in USA, heralded as the first social media election (Metzgar & Maruggi, 2009). The success of the Obama campaign in harnessing the social media paved the way ahead for it in subsequent years. The 2012 Presidential election in USA, the 2014 elections in India and Brazil, and the impending 2016 Presidential election in USA were/are being fought as much (if not more) on the physical front as they are in the virtual world. At the same time, Seidman (2010) is of the view that television is a prevalent tactic in politics, even with increased use of new media. This particularly holds true in such countries where internet penetration is an issue (like India).

**Political Marketing: The Bedrock for Political Branding**

Political marketing is the bedrock on which political branding finds its origin. It deals with the activities related to the field of politics in the 20th century highlighting the various trends and patterns formed with regard to campaigning, voting and overall elections.

The economic side of campaigning is an integral part of political marketing as it deals with the finances which go into starting and managing political campaigns. The assets which make a political campaign successful such as fliers, ads, rallies, commercials, billboards (mostly tangible in nature) are the ones which characterize the phenomenon of political marketing.

As per Scammell (2007), branding is the new form of political marketing and its manifestation is characterized by the popularity gained by political branding in the current scheme of things in political outfits.
“The ‘inside job’ played by political reporters and commentators in interpreting, changing, and challenging the message of the political marketers is clearly vital in any marketing campaign, as are the interests of media organizations themselves” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1049).

Henneberg (2002) defines political marketing as “seeking to establish, maintain, and enhance long-term political relationships at a profit for society, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organizations involved are met.” Further, he propounds that political marketing becomes instrumental in terms of mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises with regard to the political brand and the consumer-citizen. Lauffer and Paradeise (1990) discuss the transactional and commercial aspects of election which again highlights the essence of political marketing.

Political Branding in the Indian Context: The Last General Election

India witnessed the biggest election exercise in the history of mankind to elect the sixteenth Lok Sabha in 2014. According to EC data, more than 553 million people -- more than South America’s population -- of India’s 834 million eligible voters exercised their franchise. An all-time high of 67.7% voting was recorded as compared to 57.61% in 2009. The high turnout had much to do with the aspirations, the hope of the consumer-citizens with the poll promises made by brand Modi which fought this election on the plank of development, employment opportunities, elimination of corruption and other aspects which resonated well with the electorate.

The last general election saw about 140 million more people turn up at polling stations as compared to 2009. This was about 40 million more than the total number of voters -- 100 million -- added to the electoral rolls in the past five years. Majority of these additional 40 million voters were either the youth or female, or both.

The advent of political branding in the most comprehensive manner in the history of Indian politics was very evident in the last general election when brand Modi trounced all other brands (leaders as well as parties) single-handedly.

This research paper discusses the various aspects which go in the making of a political brand and related concepts; brand Modi definitely fits the bill on majority of these counts. Also, enhanced female participation during the last general election validates the authors’ contention of the significance of a strong political brand in ensuring enhanced political participation and representation.

The 'Branded' Politician

Modern times have seen charismatic leadership at the helm of affairs in many scenarios. Some of the biggest movements in human history have seen ‘branded’ politicians heralding them. Whether it was brand Mahatma in India during the struggle for independence, brand Abraham Lincoln and brand Martin Luther King Jr. in USA speaking against discrimination in the society, all of them were able to put the force of their believers behind them and started movements which received whole-hearted support just because of their credentials among the masses. Later, brand Mao Zedong in China, brand Mandela in South Africa and brand Gorbachev in the erstwhile USSR brought tectonic changes in the political setups of their respective countries and found support among their followers on the virtue of being strong political brands. In current times, brand Angela
Merkel in Germany, brand Putin in Russia, brand Obama in USA and brand Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar have been popular and effective as political brands and introduced such policies which resonated with the masses. As was recently the case with Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, she held to her beliefs on immigration despite strong opposition and still found support owing to her strong image.

Closer to home, the rise of brand Modi during the last general election was a case in point. Party veterans, oppositions, detractors, critics, everyone was sidelined to make way for the brand which triumphed over all else during the election. Even those segments which were traditionally not pro-BJP entrusted brand Modi with their vote. This coincided with rise of such segments like women, first time voters and middle class who considered brand Modi as the panacea for their troubles. In fact, the success of brand Modi was likened to brand Obama, despite India being a multi-party Prime-ministerial democracy and USA two-party Presidential democratic system, due to the fact that his campaign was on similar lines to the Obama campaign, especially the usage of social networking as a medium. The success of brand Obama (twice) and brand Modi in their respective campaigns further illustrates the importance of having a strong political brand which acts as the beacon of light for its supporters. Sonies (2011) observes how in a presidential election, political branding is a tactic for strategically building an image. She is of the view that brand Obama had a great deal to offer in terms of valuable marketing tactics. The brand Modi campaign certainly drew inspiration from the Obama campaign.

Political Branding and the Female Voters: An Illustration

Out of the 397 million female eligible voters, as against their 437 million male counterparts, almost 260 million turned up to vote in the election, which is almost two-third of the total. This was the highest and best-ever turnout of female voters in a Lok Sabha election. What's more, even the two-thirds percentage of eligible female participation recorded was an all-time high. They understood well that without registering their presence, it would be quite difficult to get themselves heard, and they did precisely that. The detractors may point out that 260 million was not a big enough number but what was indeed a landmark here was the highest ever participation of female voters to make it count.

At least 22 of the states showed an increased participation of women as compared to the 2009 general election. Not only was the female voter participation the highest during the last general election, the female contenders also stood at an all-time high of 668 out of whom 62 were elected to the Lok Sabha, again an all-time high.

The big question which needs to be answered from the above discussion is whether the rise in women’s participation in the last general election had anything to do with the charisma of brand Modi. While the naysayers might dismiss this notion as a figment of thought, the larger picture point to the same. It was after a very long time that the country as a whole came out to vote (or at least the majority of the eligible electorate) cutting across the various combinations based on religion, caste, language, region, community and other parameters which had been the driving forces till then.

For long, women have been considered as the ‘other-part’ of the electorate whose voice was considered 'next-to' their male counterparts; because they
wanted to be ‘heard’, they came out to vote in an unprecedented manner. People talked about women empowerment, women reservation, women participation, women representation but most of this was on paper. This angst was reflected well in the increased participation. Female voters were impressed with the way Narendra Modi talked about women empowerment and promised them various opportunities once voted to power. In brand Modi they saw the hope for a better tomorrow and more importantly, they felt that their voice would be heard and they would be given their due share of status and benefits.

Further, 62 female MPs were elected to the Sixteenth Lok Sabha election of 2014. This is the highest number of women members elected to the Lok Sabha in the history of the country, although by a small margin. Fifty-eight (58) women were elected to the Fifteenth Lok Sabha in the 2009 election. Though this may not look like a big number, still it was some progress over the past elections (only 5.5% of the women MPs were part of the first Lok Sabha in 1957). Again, while the time frame (1957 to 2014) and the increase (5.5% to 11.5%) might not sound impressive and convincing for many, still it is progress in the sense that the current Lok Sabha is more representative than ever before.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, this research paper has discussed the concept of branding, its manifestation into the political arena and how it has come to influence voting patterns. Emotional branding and related terms were highlighted in terms of how they play an instrumental role in connecting with the clientele and its relevance was extended to the field of political branding. The paper also discussed how the concept of political branding has evolved with time and found wide acceptance for its prudence and justifiability. The concept of political marketing was also a part of this discussion wherein the authors related it with the central concept of this research paper, namely, political branding.

The application of political branding in the Indian context was another issue which this research paper brought forth by highlighting the rise of brand Modi and how it influenced the intention to vote. The role of female voters and rise in female representativeness in the last general election were highlighted as an illustration in this research paper thus making an attempt to link the rise of a political brand (in the present case, brand Modi) and the increased female participation and representation. The authors brought forth the scenario wherein both these aspects (participation and representation) stood at an all-time high thus highlighting the rise of brand Modi and the efficacy of it. Both first-time voters and female voters were enthusiastic about their right to vote. The sworn-in government at the centre chose seven females to lead various departments thus highlighting the growing prominence which women are getting in every walk of life.
References


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Contents

Majority of the farmers (82%) borrow less than Rs 5 lakhs, and 18% borrow between Rs 5 – 10 lakhs on a per annum basis. Most farmers (65.79%) ar

** p < .01

+ Reliability coefficient

References

Table 23: The Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for DOWJONES Index Daily Returns