

Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior in Rohilkhand: An Empirical Analysis of Traditions, Values, and Social Norms

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Abstract:

This study examines cultural factors such as customs, social norms, and values, and their influence on consumer buying behavior in Rohilkhand. It aims to explore how culture affects consumers' purchasing decisions and preferences within this specific context. Data were collected and analyzed from 399 consumers living in Rohilkhand, focusing on key aspects of culture: festivals, social norms that shape community beliefs, personal values, and family that influence their buying behavior.

To examine the relationship between culture and consumer behavior, a chi-square test was conducted. The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between customs, social norms, and values and consumer buying behavior in Rohilkhand.

By identifying the unique cultural elements that impact purchasing behavior in local markets like Rohilkhand, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior. It also provides a clear understanding of the cultural dynamics in the region and offers practical insights for organizations and marketers looking to tailor their strategies to the distinctive cultural environment of Rohilkhand.

Keywords: Cultural factors, Consumer buying behavior, Customs, Social norms, Community beliefs

Introduction

Consumer behavior is influenced by a variety of factors, and culture plays an important role in shaping attitudes, preferences and purchasing decisions. Studying consumer behavior is a complex process because consumer behavior is influenced by various factors such as psychological, social and cultural elements. In these, cultural factors play an important role in influencing the behavior of a consumer as they are deeply rooted in the traditions, values and norms of the society. Culture determines how people perceive products, make purchasing decisions and maintain brand loyalty. In a cultural and diverse region like Rohilkhand, it is important to understand these aspects for companies to adjust their marketing strategies accordingly.

Located in the western part of Uttar Pradesh, India, Rohilkhand is rich in history and culture. In collectivistic cultures, where family values and social ethics take precedence over individual preferences, cultural factors have a profound influence on consumer purchasing behaviors (Triandis, 1994). Traditions, religious beliefs, and collective customs create boundaries that guide consumers in determining whether a product aligns with their cultural requirements. This study will empirically

examine the cultural dimensions influencing consumer behavior in Rohilkhand, particularly in relation to traditions, values, and social norms.

Previous research has also demonstrated the significant impact of cultural factors on consumer choices, especially in regions where traditional values are deeply ingrained in daily life (McCracken, 1986).

In Rohilkhand, consumer preferences are shaped by the interplay of social norms and traditional values. For instance, products that promote environmental awareness and ethical practices, such as organic or cruelty-free goods, are gaining popularity due to the region's inclination toward harmonious and ethical living (Venkatesh, 1995). As global awareness of sustainability issues grows, consumers in culturally rich regions like Rohilkhand increasingly prefer products that reflect both global trends and local cultural values.

The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural factors that influence consumer behavior in Rohilkhand with emphasis on customs, values, beliefs and social norms. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of how culture-informed marketing strategies can be developed to meet the unique needs and preferences of this consumer base. Understanding cultural factors that influence consumer behavior is important for companies and marketers who want to tailor their strategies to local needs and values.

Literature Review

The influence of cultural factors on consumer behavior has long been a subject of interest in the field of marketing and consumer research. Culture, as a set of shared values, beliefs, and practices within a society, plays a critical role in shaping individual behaviors, including consumption patterns. Several theoretical frameworks and empirical studies provide a foundation for understanding how cultural dimensions affect consumer behavior.

Culture and Consumer Behavior

Culture has a significant impact on consumer behavior, especially during family gatherings and religious ceremonies. **Suleman (2018)** found in his study that consumer behavior is influenced by culture, particularly during cultural events. In India, people often spend extra money on traditional items such as ethnic clothes, sweets, and gifts during occasions like Diwali, Holi, and Eid.

Sharma and Sonveni (2014) found that culture in India not only boosts the sales of goods associated with cultural practices but also increases the demand for certain products. These customs play an important role in shaping a region's consumer behavior, often within the context of culture and religion. Additionally, the value of family is especially emphasized during such occasions. For example, festivals and events like weddings significantly increase the demand for traditional goods.

In a collectivistic society like India, values play a very important role in influencing consumer behaviour. **Hofstede's (1980)** cultural theory emphasizes collectivism as a core value in many Asian cultures, including India. Bundling promotes group consensus and preference in decision making, which determines consumer choice. **Hoyer and MacInnis (2010)** did a study on how cultural values influence consumer behavior, discussing influence in the decision-making process and brand loyalty based on cultural norms.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) discussed the influence of cultural factors and social variables on consumer behavior, revealing how different cultural contexts vary preferences and buying decisions.

Khan and Rahman (2015) probed into the role of cultural values on consumer behavior in Pakistan and how the different cultural context makes a difference to market trends.

Tian, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) analyzed the role that cultural values play in influencing customers to purchase locally-made products by examining how attributes of national culture affect consumer preference for home-made products.

Studies by **Hsu and Huang (2012)** show the impact of cultural values on consumer attitudes toward green products, thus underlining the role of cultural values in environmentally friendly product perception.

Consumer Beliefs and Attitudes

According to the study of **Usunier and Lee (2013)**, consumer preferences are determined by strong beliefs, especially the strong religious or cultural identity of an area, which has a significant impact on consumers of that region. In a country like India, where various religious beliefs play an important role in determining consumer preferences for eco-friendly products that are locally produced. For example, Jain and Hindu consumers often prefer vegetarian, cruelty-free, or organic products, which reflect their ethical and religious beliefs (**Sood and Nasu, 1995**).

Social Norms and Purchase Decisions

Social norms related to family and peer influence also play an important role in shaping consumer behavior in collectivistic cultures like India. **Douglas and Craig (2011)** found in their study that in families and communities, purchasing decisions are often made jointly, and the opinions of family members and groups of friends are also important. **Gupta (2019)** states that in Indian families, major purchase decisions (such as buying a house, car, or major household items) are usually made in consultation between family elders and other stakeholders.

In countries like India, families and communities are closely interconnected and purchasing decisions often reflect collective values. **Triandis (1995)** found in his study that socially conscious individuals prefer brands that are associated with traditional and cultural values, resulting in regional brands being preferred over global brands.

Gaps in the Literature

While there is substantial research on cultural influences on consumer behavior in India, there is limited empirical work focused specifically on the Rohilkhand region. Given the region's distinct cultural identity, there is a need for more localized studies that explore how regional traditions, beliefs, and values shape consumer behavior. This study aims to address this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the cultural factors that influence consumer choices in Rohilkhand.

Objectives Of The Study

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand the role of cultural factors, including traditions, social norms, and values, in shaping purchasing decisions.
2. To evaluate consumer preferences for local versus global brands, shaped by community values and cultural identity.

3. To analyze the role of family in decision-making and its connection to brand loyalty, especially for local products.
4. To provide insights for marketers to adapt their strategies to the cultural landscape of Rohilkhand.

Development of Hypothesis

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses have been developed:

1. H1: Cultural factors (traditions, norms, values) significantly influence consumer purchasing decision in Rohilkhand.
2. H2: Preference for local brands over global brands in Rohilkhand is driven by cultural identity and community values.
3. H3: Family influence enhances purchasing decisions and strengthens brand loyalty, especially toward local products.
4. H4: Culturally tailored marketing strategies effectively increase customer engagement and brand loyalty in Rohilkhand.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

The study applies a quantitative research design in examining the cultural factors, family influence, and culturally tailored marketing strategies that influence consumer behavior in Rohilkhand. For this purpose, a cross-sectional survey was conducted on a representative sample of consumers residing within the region. A cross-sectional survey allows for an easy way of conducting comprehensive analysis of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables as described in the hypotheses.

2. Sample Size and Sampling Method

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the demographic diversity of the Rohilkhand population. The target sample size was determined through a power analysis to achieve adequate statistical power for hypothesis testing. A total of 399 respondents were surveyed, representing various age groups, income levels, and educational backgrounds. This sample size is deemed sufficient to provide reliable and generalizable results for the study.

3. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data on the variables of interest. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to assess:

- The influence of cultural factors (traditions, norms, values) on consumer purchasing decisions.
- The role of family influence in enhancing purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.
- The effectiveness of culturally tailored marketing strategies in increasing customer engagement and brand loyalty.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small subset of respondents to ensure validity and reliability before full-scale administration.

The relationships among variables and hypotheses were tested on data through the application of chi-square tests. The chi-square test was applied since it is efficient in the analysis of categorical data and the determination of whether variables are independent or otherwise. Results were interpreted in order to accept or reject each hypothesis depending on the p-values obtained.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	218	54.6
	Female	181	45.4
Age	Under 18	25	6.3
	18-25	120	30.1
	26-35	100	25.1
	36-45	65	16.3
	46 -55	55	13.8
	56 & above	34	8.5
	Education	High School	50
Intermediate		80	20.1
Undergraduate		120	30.1
Postgraduate		85	21.3
PhD		30	7.5
Other		34	8.5
Occupation	Student	140	35.1
	Employed	120	30.1
	Self-employed	55	13.8
	Homemaker	34	8.5
	Retired	25	6.3
	Other	25	6.3
Income level	Less than ₹20,000	130	32.6
	₹20,000 - ₹50,000	150	37.6
	₹50,000 - ₹1,00,000	75	18.8
	More than ₹1,00,000	44	11.0
Family size	1-2 members	45	11.3
	3-4 members	170	42.6
	5-6 members	120	30.1
	More than 6 members	64	16.0

Table 1

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of the 399 respondents in the study. The sample includes a nearly equal distribution of male (54.6%) and female (45.4%) participants, ensuring gender representation in the analysis. The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 18-25 years (30.1%), followed by those aged 26-35 years (25.1%). This age distribution suggests that a significant portion of the sample consists of younger consumers, which may influence preferences for certain products and cultural practices.

Educationally, 30.1% of respondents have completed undergraduate studies, while 21.3% have postgraduate degrees, indicating a relatively well-educated sample. In terms of occupation, 35.1% are students, reflecting a younger, more price-sensitive group, while 30.1% are employed, providing a balance of working and non-working individuals.

Income levels are varied, with 37.6% earning between ₹20,000 and ₹50,000, and 32.6% earning less than ₹20,000, reflecting the economic diversity of the region. Finally, family size is primarily

concentrated in households with 3-4 members (42.6%), which may influence consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in collective purchasing environments during cultural and family-oriented occasions.

4. Results and Hypothesis Testing

H1: Cultural factors (traditions, norms, values) significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions in Rohilkhand.

Influence of Cultural Factors on Purchasing Decisions

Observed and Expected Frequency Tables

The observed and expected frequencies for each category under the three cultural groups are presented below:

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Group 1(Culture & traditions)	170	110	60	30	29	399
Group 2(Social norms)	140	90	80	60	29	399
Group 3(Personal values)	130	95	75	60	39	399
Total	440	295	215	150	97	1197

Table 2 (Observed Frequency Table)

Expected Frequency Table

The expected frequencies are calculated using the formula:

$$E = \frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Overall Total}}$$

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Group 1	146.67	98.33	71.67	50	32.33
Group 2	146.67	98.33	71.67	50	32.33
Group 3	146.67	98.33	71.67	50	32.33

Table 3(Expected Frequency Table)

Methodology: Chi-Square Test

The chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine whether the cultural factors—categorized into various groups such as **traditions**, **norms**, and **values**—are related to consumer purchasing decisions. The test compares the observed frequencies of responses to the expected frequencies, assuming no relationship between the two variables. The expected frequencies were calculated based on the assumption of independence between cultural factors and consumer purchasing decisions.

The formula for calculating the chi-square

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

- O = Observed frequency
- E = Expected frequency

Chi Square Table

Response Category	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Strongly Agree	3.71	0.30	1.89	5.9
Agree	1.38	0.70	0.11	2.19
Neutral	1.90	0.97	0.15	3.02
Disagree	8	2	2	12
Strongly Disagree	0.34	0.34	6.46	7.14
Total	15.33	4.31	10.61	30.25

Table 4. Chi-Square Value Calculation

Degrees of Freedom (df):

The degrees of freedom for the chi-square test are calculated as: $df = (r-1) \times (c-1)$

Where:

- r = number of rows (in this case, groups) = 3
- c = number of columns (categories) = 5

Thus ,

$$df = (3-1) \times (5-1) = 2 \times 4 = 8$$

Chi-Square Value and p-Value

- Chi-Square Value (χ^2): **30.25**
- Df = 8
- p-value: **0.000191** (p-value < 0.05)

Interpretation

The chi-square test results give very strong evidence that there exists a statistically significant relationship between cultural factors (traditions, norms, values) and consumer purchasing decisions in Rohilkhand. The p-value < 0.05, which is significantly small compared with the significance level of 0.05. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected, providing strong evidence to support the claim that there is a statistically significant relationship between cultural factors and consumer purchasing behavior.

H2: Preference for local brands over global brands in Rohilkhand is driven by cultural identity and community values.

Cultural Identity and Preference for Local Brands

Response	Observed Frequencies	Expected Frequencies	(O – E)	(O – E) ²	$\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E$	p-value
Strongly agree	95	79.8	15.2	231.04	2.895238	
agree	85	79.8	5.2	27.04	0.338847	
Agree	80	79.8	0.2	0.04	0.000501	

Neutral	70	79.8	-9.8	96.04	1.203509	5.899749	0.206761
Disagree	69	79.8	-10.8	116.64	1.461654		
Strongly disagree	399						
Total							

Table 3

- **Chi-Square Value:** 5.899749
- **df= 4**
- **p-value:** 0.206761 ($p > 0.05$)

Interpretation:(Table-3):

The chi-square test for hypothesis (H2) gives a chi-square of 5.90 and a p-value >0.21 , above the 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Cultural identity and community values are insignificant in contributing to the choice of local brands over international brands in Rohilkhand. The implications of these results are that cultural factors cannot explain bias and other factors, such as product quality, brand image, and pricing, are likely to be predominant. This finding contests the argument often put forward to suggest that preference for local brands emanates from the reality of cultural alignment and calls for better understanding of factors influencing consumer brand choices in the region.

H3: Family influence enhances purchasing decisions and strengthens brand loyalty, especially toward local products.

Family Influence and Brand Loyalty

Response	Observed Frequencies	Expected Frequencies	(O –E)	(O –E) ²	$\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E$	p-value
Strongly agree	170	79.8	90.2	8136.04	101.9554	2.01E-35
Agree	100	79.8	20.2	408.04	5.113283	
Neutral	65	79.8	-14.8	219.04	2.744862	
Disagree	40	79.8	-39.8	1584.04	19.85013	
Strongly disagree	24	79.8	-55.8	3113.64	39.01805	
Total	399				168.6817	

Table 4

- **Chi-Square Value:** 168.6817
- **df= 4**
- **p-value:** 2.01E-35 ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$)

Interpretation::(Table-4):

The chi-square test for this hypothesis yielded a value of 168.68 with a p-value < 0.05 . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis (H3). This indicates that family significantly influences purchasing decisions and increases brand loyalty, particularly towards local products. This study also suggests that marketers in Rohilkhand should consider the impact of family

and peer groups when developing their marketing messages, as these factors strongly influence consumer behavior.

H4: Culturally tailored marketing strategies effectively increase customer engagement and brand loyalty in Rohilkhand.

Impact of Culturally Tailored Marketing Strategies

Response	Observed Frequencies	Expected Frequencies	(O –E)	(O –E) ²	$\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E$	p-value
Strongly agree	140	79.8	60.2	3624.04	45.41404	4.19E-30
Agree	130	79.8	50.2	2520.04	31.57945	
Neutral	70	79.8	-9.8	96.04	1.203509	
Disagree	39	79.8	-40.8	1664.64	20.86015	
Strongly disagree	20	79.8	-59.8	3576.04	44.81253	
Total	399				143.8697	

Table 5

- **Chi-Square Value:** 143.8697
- **p-value:** 4.19E-30 (p-value < 0.05)

Interpretation:

The chi-square value of 143.8697, accompanied by a p-value < 0.05, indicates a statistically significant relationship between culturally tailored marketing strategies and increased customer engagement and brand loyalty. Since the p-value below 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis (H4), concluding that marketing strategies specifically designed to reflect local cultural nuances have a profound impact on both customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Conclusion

This finding suggests that businesses targeting consumers in Rohilkhand can achieve greater success by adopting marketing approaches that resonate with local cultural values and traditions. Culturally aligned campaigns are likely to foster deeper emotional connections with customers, thereby enhancing brand loyalty.

This study examines the relationship between consumer buying behavior in the Rohilkhand region and cultural characteristics such as customs, norms, and values. By applying chi-square testing to various hypotheses, important insights were revealed regarding the impact of these cultural factors on consumer preferences, brand attachment, and the effectiveness of marketing messages. The key conclusions are as follows:

- **Cultural Factors:** The study demonstrates that customs, beliefs, and social norms significantly influence consumer behavior in Rohilkhand. This finding underscores the importance for marketers to thoroughly understand the cultural environments in which their products are being marketed. Adapting marketing strategies to reflect these cultural nuances is essential for success in such culturally diverse regions.
- **Family Influence:** The results indicate that families have a substantial influence on consumer behavior and tend to show greater loyalty to local businesses. Marketers should consider family as a

crucial decision-making unit, tailoring campaigns to address both individual and family-oriented purchasing behaviors.

- **Preference for Local vs. Global Brands:** The study concluded that cultural identity and community orientation did not significantly affect the preference for local brands over global brands. Instead, factors such as product quality, brand image, and price were found to be more influential. These findings suggest the need for further research to explore the factors driving brand preference beyond cultural considerations.
- **Culturally Tailored Marketing:** The study confirms that culturally tailored marketing strategies can attract more consumers and enhance brand loyalty. Marketing strategies that are aligned with local cultural values and practices are likely to foster strong emotional connections with consumers, thereby increasing consumer loyalty toward the brand.

Limitations

The study acknowledges the limitations inherent in its design, including the cross-sectional nature of the data, which precludes causal inferences. Additionally, the sample, while representative, may not fully capture the complete diversity of consumer behavior across all sub-regions of Rohilkhand.

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