

## **EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIC NATIONALISTIC ADVERTISING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There are several factors that influence consumer behaviour when it comes to spending their limited disposable income. This behaviour is influenced by a complex environment that includes psychological, sociocultural, personal, economic, and, more often than not, marketing mix variables, as well as other microenvironment and macroenvironment factors. Corporates, in turn, tailor their strategies, operations, and, in some cases, the core business itself, to align with these variables. In recent years, strategic advertising, a branch of marketing communications concerned with developing strategies that efficiently and effectively target consumers, has emerged as a critical tool that businesses can use to stay abreast of changes in target audiences and proactively increase their brand salience among them. The identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially above the interest of other nations, largely remains a potent source of inspiration for many strategic marketing campaigns for foreign and domestic firms alike. Such nationalistic advertisements give a company a distinct competitive edge over others when it comes to capturing consumer attention. Hence, this research aims to investigate if advertisers' use of nationalistic communication could prove effective in influencing consumer affinity, attitudes, perceptions and purchasing decisions.

**Keywords:** Advertising, Nationalism, Consumer behaviour

### **INTRODUCTION**

Growing nationalism has paved the way for strategic nationalistic advertising to emerge as a major force in the marketing world. The current behaviour of Indian consumers can be traced back through the years to the entrenched ideology of swadeshi, indicating that consumer nationalism in India is not a new phenomenon, but has gained renewed vigour in light of the current circumstances. Companies are adapting to changing consumer attitudes, resulting in a dynamic shift in their advertising strategies. Alongside Digital India, Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently urged Indians to be 'vocal about local.' In response, many indigenous brands started rolling out creative advertisements.

From using phrases like "Proudly Made in India" and traditional Indian art for graphic design aesthetics to symbolising farmers, soldiers, and artisans in their advertisements, efforts are being made to rethink existing marketing strategy. While domestic companies aggressively highlight this feature in their promotional campaigns, others are jumping on the nationalism bandwagon to account for the shift in Indian consumers' purchasing habits. While some of these strategic campaigns have sparked controversy and received unfavourable political and media attention, the majority of them have had a significant impact. Engaging this segment of the population is a make-or-break deal for marketers.

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of strategic nationalistic advertising in order to forecast the potential marketing implications for corporations and marketers. A random sample of 500 respondents was chosen for the study, and the data analysis performed is primarily descriptive in

nature. The primary data for this study was collected via a questionnaire and was then analysed using the chi-square test of independence between the questionnaire attributes. The study's findings reveal the persuasive power of strategic nationalistic elements in inducing consumer nationalism sentiments, as well as the significant influence of such sentiments on consumer affinity, attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing decisions. This is of interest to marketers and corporates alike as it encourages the use of strategic nationalistic advertising to improve their bottom-line.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To assess the magnitude of nationalism among Indian consumers in view of the current scenario.
2. To determine the impact of integration of nationalistic elements into advertising strategy and communications on consumer perceptions.
3. To study the impact of nationalistic sentiment on consumer purchasing decisions.
4. To forecast the implications that the effectiveness of strategic nationalistic advertising will have for corporates.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Castelló E. and Mihelj S. (2017)** in their research paper “**Selling and consuming the nation: Understanding consumer nationalism**” defined consumer nationalism as “a set of discourses and practices that attach national significance to consumer objects.” According to their research, while consumer nationalism is primarily centred around individual consumers, it also involves commercial actors like retailers, marketers, etc., who use various discursive means to encourage consumption. These discursive means can take various forms like adverts, packaging, product design, etc., and range from explicitly displaying national symbols like flags to more subtle national references like national landmarks. They proposed that consumers participate in consumer nationalism by consuming such “nationalized goods”. The theoretical framework of corporate nationalism offered by this paper has provided us with a conceptual understanding and formed the basis of our further investigations into its effects on consumer purchasing behaviour.

**Varman R. and Belk R. W. (2009)** in their research paper “**Nationalism and Ideology in an Anticonsumption Movement**” emphasized the integral part that the nationalist ideology of swadeshi played in the anticonsumption movement that Coca-Cola encountered in Mehdiganj, India. Their research explored the ideology's historical roots and implications to shed light on the relationship between consumer resistance to certain goods and brands, and notions of nationhood and ethnic identity. They emphasised the threat that nationalist ideology poses to global brands and demonstrated how swadeshi ideology continues to shape consumption in contemporary India. The study observed that local consumption was constantly remodelled in response to globalisation as competitors tried to "outlocal" each other to gain an advantage. Given our country's growing nationalism, it will be of interest to understand if Indian consumers' resistance to foreign goods in the current circumstances can be traced to the entrenched ideology of swadeshi.

**Kobayashi K. (2012)** in his research paper “**Globalisation, Corporate Nationalism and Japanese Identity: Advertising Production and Signifying Practices of Nike and Asics**” conducted case studies to examine how sports brands incorporated elements of Japanese culture in their promotional campaigns to appeal to Japanese consumers. The study demonstrated how in today's consumer society, even national culture and identity are commodified. Modern advertisers attempt to incorporate elements with which the consumer can strongly identify and, since one's nation remains a

potent source of identification for many people, it stands to reason that advertisers' use of nationalistic elements prove effective in influencing consumer affinity to a brand. While the study demonstrated the effectiveness of nationalist advertising strategies in the Japanese context, we aim to investigate whether the same can be observed in the Indian market.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Sources of data: Primary data was collected from a random sample of 500 respondents through an online questionnaire while secondary data was collected from articles and research papers published online.

Scope: The data for the questionnaire was restricted to responses from within India and was collected during the period of August to September 2020.

Statistical tools and measures: Microsoft Excel and SPSS have been used to represent the data in a tabular form. Chi Square Test for independence of attributes has been used to test the association between variables.

Test Statistics:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$\chi^2$  = chi squared

$O_i$  = observed value

$E_i$  = expected value

p-level: The p-level represents the probability of error that is involved in accepting our observed result as valid. If  $p < 0.05$ , the p is significant, and we reject our null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. The Indian government recently urged Indians to be 'vocal for local' by consuming more domestically produced items. It is our responsibility as Indians to support local products over foreign products.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	454	90.8
(B) No	16	3.2
(C) I have not thought about it yet	30	6.0
TOTAL	500	100.0

2. Nationalism can be defined as the identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially above the interests of other nations. I consider myself to be a nationalist and being Indian is an important part of my identity.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	444	88.8
(B) No	56	11.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

3. Indians should prefer domestic products because it: (check all that apply)

Options	Selected		Not Selected	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Indians should prefer domestic products because it:				
(A) Helps Indian businesses and artisans	426	85.2	74	14.8
(B) Generates employment	411	82.2	89	17.8
(C) Helps in improving GDP	322	64.4	178	35.6
(D) Aligns with “Vocal for Local” & “Make in India” campaigns	263	52.6	237	47.4
(E) Money stays within the country	276	55.2	224	44.8
(F) Increases tax revenue for government	207	41.4	293	58.6
(G) Makes India more self-reliant	426	85.2	74	14.8

4. Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	325	65.0
(B) No	175	35.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

5. Have you consciously checked for products that are “Made in India” while making a purchase?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Never	37	7.4
(B) Rarely	85	17.0
(C) Sometimes	211	42.2
(D) Often	119	23.8
(E) Always	48	9.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

6. (If you answered “Never” or “Rarely” for the previous question-) Although I do not consciously check for products that are “Made in India” while making a purchase, I would like to do so in the future.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	63	12.6
(B) No	16	3.2
(C) Maybe	43	8.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	122	24.4

7. As an Indian, I feel proud when I choose a domestic product over a foreign product.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	428	85.6
(B) No	72	14.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

8. In a situation where there are two similar products, but one is domestic and the other is foreign, I would choose the

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Domestic Product	458	91.6
(B) Foreign Product	42	8.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

9. Rate the influence advertisements have on your purchasing decisions.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Least influence	28	5.6
(B) Little influence	58	11.6
(C) Moderate influence	180	36
(D) More influence	175	35
(E) Most influence	59	11.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

10. Rate the influence advertisements have on your perception of the brand.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Least influence	30	6
(B) Little influence	58	11.6
(C) Moderate influence	171	34.2
(D) More influence	172	34.4
(E) Most influence	69	13.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100.0

11. Some advertisements focus on relating to an emotion that the consumer can strongly identify with rather than elaborating on the features of their offering. Do you get influenced by advertisements that evoke an emotion in you?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	179	35.8
(B) No	139	27.8
(C) Maybe	182	36.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>

12. Do the claims in an advertisement that show that the company produces locally and creates more jobs in the country make you view the company and its products more favourably?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	403	80.6
(B) No	97	19.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>

13. If a company's advertisements associate itself with nationalistic elements (farmers, soldiers, freedom fighters, National Flag, etc), do they tend to influence you more by the virtue of being an Indian?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Yes	372	74.4
(B) No	128	25.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>

14. In the following question, we are going to present two advertisements of the same company. Option (1) is their conventional approach to advertising. Option (2) is their nationalistic approach to advertising. As a consumer, which advertisement is more influential to you?

#### **i. ACER**



(A) Option 1



(B) Option 2

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Option 1	98	19.6
(B) Option 2	402	80.4
TOTAL	500	100.0

## ii. B Natural



(A) Option 1

(B) Option 2

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Option 1	135	27.0
(B) Option 2	365	73.0
TOTAL	500	100.0

## iii. TATA Salt



(A) Option 1

(B) Option 2

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Option 1	156	31.2
(B) Option 2	344	68.8
TOTAL	500	100.0

## iv. Kajaria Tiles





(A) Option 1

(B) Option 2

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Option 1	108	21.6
(B) Option 2	392	78.4
TOTAL	500	100.0

#### v. Minute Maid



(A) Option 1

(B) Option 2

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Option 1	156	31.2
(B) Option 2	344	68.8
TOTAL	500	100.0

15. What gender do you identify as?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Male	215	43.0
(B) Female	276	55.2
(C) Prefer not to say	9	1.8
TOTAL	500	100.0

16. What is your age?



Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Under 18 years	56	11.2
(B) 18-24 years	128	25.6
(C) 25-34 years	131	26.2
(D) 35-44 years	96	19.2
(E) 45-54 years	51	10.2
(F) 55 years and above	38	7.6
TOTAL	500	100.0

17. What is your current occupation?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Student	179	35.8
(B) Employed	174	34.8
(C) Homemaker	51	10.2
(D) Unemployed	8	1.6
(E) Entrepreneur	51	10.2
(F) Retired	37	7.4
TOTAL	500	100.0

18. What is your annual family income?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(A) Below 10 lakhs	165	33.0
(B) 10 lakhs to 20 lakhs	137	27.4
(C) 20 lakhs to 30 lakhs	68	13.6
(D) 30 lakhs to 40 lakhs	40	8.0
(E) 40 lakhs to 50 lakhs	24	4.8
(F) 50 lakhs and above	66	13.2
TOTAL	500	100.0

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, TABULATIONS AND CHI SQUARE TESTS

### Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>): There is no significant association between gender and the belief that it is one's responsibility to support local products over foreign products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>): There is a significant association between gender and the belief that it is one's responsibility to support local products over foreign products.

			It is our responsibility as Indians to support local products over foreign products.			Total
			No	Yes	Maybe	
Gender	Male	Count	12	185	18	215
		Expected Count	6.9	195.2	12.9	215.0
	Female	Count	3	263	10	276
		Expected Count	8.8	250.6	16.6	276.0
	Prefer not to say	Count	1	6	2	9
		Expected Count	.3	8.2	.5	9.0
Total		Count	16	454	30	500
		Expected Count	16.0	454.0	30.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.709 <sup>a</sup>	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	18.288	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.046	1	.829
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is a significant association between gender and the belief that it is one's responsibility to support local products over foreign products.

## Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between age and the belief that Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between age and the belief that Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences.

			Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences.		Total
			No	Yes	
Age	Under 18	Count	16	40	56
		Expected Count	19.6	36.4	56.0
	18-24 years	Count	62	66	128
		Expected Count	44.8	83.2	128.0
	25-34 years	Count	57	74	131
		Expected Count	45.9	85.2	131.0
	35-44 years	Count	22	74	96
		Expected Count	33.6	62.4	96.0
	45-54 years	Count	11	40	51
		Expected Count	17.9	33.2	51.0
	55 years and above	Count	7	31	38
		Expected Count	13.3	24.7	38.0
Total		Count	175	325	500
		Expected Count	175.0	325.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.145 <sup>a</sup>	5	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.891	5	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.101	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is a significant association between age and the belief that Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences.

### Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between gender and choice between domestic and foreign products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between gender and choice between domestic and foreign products.

			In a situation where there are two similar products but one is domestic and the other is foreign, I would choose the		Total
			Domestic Product	Foreign Product	
Gender	Male	Count	188	27	215
		Expected Count	196.9	18.1	215.0
	Female	Count	261	15	276
		Expected Count	252.8	23.2	276.0
	Prefer not to say	Count	9	0	9
		Expected Count	8.2	0.8	9.0
Total		Count	458	42	500
		Expected Count	458.0	42.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.810 <sup>a</sup>	2	0.012
Likelihood Ratio	9.395	2	0.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.764	1	0.003
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is a significant association between gender and choice between domestic and foreign products.

### Hypothesis 4

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between annual income and choice between domestic and foreign products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between annual income and choice between domestic and foreign products.

			In a situation where there are two similar products but one is domestic and the other is foreign, I would choose the		Total
			Domestic Product	Foreign Product	
Annual Income	Under 10 lakh	Count	149	16	165
		Expected Count	151.1	13.9	165
	10-20 lakh	Count	127	10	137
		Expected Count	125.5	11.5	137
	20-30 lakh	Count	61	7	68
		Expected Count	62.3	5.7	68
	30-40 lakh	Count	37	3	40
		Expected Count	38.6	1.4	40
	40-50 lakh	Count	21	3	24
		Expected Count	22.0	2.0	24
	50 lakh and above	Count	63	3	66
		Expected Count	60.5	5.5	66
Total		Count	458	42	500
		Expected Count	458.0	42.0	500

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.734 <sup>a</sup>	5	0.741
Likelihood Ratio	2.882	5	0.718
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.687	1	0.407
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is no significant association between annual income and choice between domestic and foreign products.

## Hypothesis 5

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between age and choice between domestic and foreign products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between age and choice between domestic and foreign products.

			In a situation where there are two similar products but one is domestic and the other is foreign, I would choose the		
			Domestic Product	Foreign Product	Total
Age	Under 18	Count	52	4	56
		Expected Count	51.3	4.7	56.0
	18-24 years	Count	110	18	128
		Expected Count	117.2	10.8	128.0
	25-34 years	Count	115	16	131
		Expected Count	120.0	11.0	131.0
	35-44 years	Count	96	0	96
		Expected Count	87.9	8.1	96.0
	45-54 years	Count	50	1	51
		Expected Count	46.7	4.3	51.0
	55 years and above	Count	35	3	38
		Expected Count	34.8	3.2	38.0
	Total	Count	458	42	500
		Expected Count	458.0	42.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.490 <sup>a</sup>	5	0.002
Likelihood Ratio	27.572	5	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.842	1	0.016
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is a significant association between age and choice between domestic and foreign products.

## Hypothesis 6

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between age and influence of advertisements with nationalistic elements.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between age and influence of advertisements with nationalistic elements.

			Do ads with nationalistic elements tend to influence you more by the virtue of being an Indian?		
			No	Yes	Total
Age	Under 18	Count	9	47	56
		Expected Count	14.3	41.7	56.0
	18-24 years	Count	47	81	128
		Expected Count	52.8	95.2	128.0
	25-34 years	Count	38	93	131
		Expected Count	33.5	97.5	131.0
	35-44 years	Count	26	70	96
		Expected Count	24.6	71.4	96.0
	45-54 years	Count	5	46	51
		Expected Count	13.1	37.9	51.0
	55 years and above	Count	3	35	38
		Expected Count	9.7	28.3	38.0
	Total	Count	128	372	500
		Expected Count	128.0	372.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.823 <sup>a</sup>	5	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.517	5	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.866	1	0.005
N of Valid Cases	500		

Conclusion: There is a significant association between age and influence of advertisements with nationalistic elements.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed the underlying preference of Indian consumers with respect to the choice between domestic goods and foreign goods, under the purview of various microenvironment and macroenvironment factors. It further demonstrated the prevalence of nationalistic sentiment among consumers in India. It is observed that such a sentiment is influential in Indian consumers' buying decisions as well.

We drew the following major conclusions from the survey and its analysis:

1. 90.8% of the respondents believed it is their responsibility as Indians to support local over foreign products. 88.8% of the respondents considered themselves to be nationalists and being Indian as an important part of their identity.
2. When asked about why Indians should prefer domestic products, 85.2% of the respondents believed that they should because it helps Indian businesses and artisans and makes India more self-reliant and 82.2% said that they should because it generates employment. 64.4% believed that they should because it helps in improving GDP, 55.2% said that they should because money stays within the country and 52.6% believed they should because it aligns with "Vocal for Local" and "Make in India" campaigns. Finally, 41.4% said that Indians should prefer domestic products because it increases tax revenue for the government.
3. 65% of the respondents believed that Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences. When given a choice, 91.6% of the respondents would choose a domestic over a foreign product, while 85.6% of the respondents feel proud as Indians when they do so.
4. 42.2% of the respondents have consciously checked for products that are "Made in India" while making a purchase. Half of the respondents who rarely or never check for such products said that they are willing to do so in the future.

5. 46.8% of the respondents reported that their purchasing decisions were significantly influenced by advertisements, 36% reported that they were moderately influenced, and 17.2% reported that advertisements had a relatively less influence on their purchasing decisions.
6. 48.2% of the respondents reported that their brand perception was significantly influenced by advertisements, 34.2% reported that it was moderately influenced, and 17.6% reported that there was relatively less influence.
7. 36.4% of the respondents believed that they might get influenced by advertisements that evoke an emotion in them, 35.8% believed that they do get influenced by such advertisements and 27.8% believed that they do not.
8. 74.4% of the respondents believe that when advertising campaigns associate themselves with nationalistic elements such as farmers, soldiers, freedom fighters, the National Flag, etc. they tend to influence them.
9. 80.6% of the respondents view a company and its products more favourably when it claims in its advertisement that it produces locally and creates more jobs in the country.
10. When asked to choose between two advertisements of the same company, with one showcasing their conventional approach to advertising and the other their nationalistic approach, majority of respondents found the nationalistic advertisements more influential.
11. Gender as a demographic factor was found to have a significant association with the belief that it is one's responsibility to support local over foreign products, and with the influence of advertisements with nationalistic elements. Thus, it is the most prominent variable for market segmentation in this context.
12. Unlike income and occupation, age was found to have a significant association with the choice that a consumer makes between domestic and foreign products. Age was also found to have a significant association with the belief that Indians should boycott foreign products in cases of political and diplomatic differences. This has major implications for marketers and corporates alike as it recommends emphasis on certain demographic factors that are instrumental in the market segmentation process and thereby act as profitable target audiences for strategic nationalistic advertisement campaigns.

Therefore, it can be concluded that strategic nationalistic advertising is effective in channelling certain prominent sentiments of Indian consumers, and, correspondingly, has a significant impact on consumer affinity, attitudes and purchasing decisions, thus proving to serve as a promising competitive advantage.

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