



# **SELF-IMAGE AND CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR LOCAL VS GLOBAL BRANDS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study observes the relationship between self-image of consumers and their preference for local versus global brands. Self-image plays a critical role in determining purchasing behaviour as consumers often select brands that supports their identity, values and social ambitions. The paper discovers how various factors such as cultural identity, perceived social status and globalization influence brand selection. Using existing literature and conceptual analysis, the study highlights that persons with a robust local identity tend to choose domestic brands, while those with global self-images are more persuaded toward international brands. The findings of this paper offer understandings for marketers to adapt their strategies that reverberate with consumers' self-image and preference.

**Key Words: Self-image, Consumer Preference, Brand Marketing, Brand Preference.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

A consumer is an individual or entity that acquires goods or services for personal use or consumption. Consumers play a pivotal role in driving economic activity as their purchasing decisions directly influence market demand, production levels and ultimately, the overall health of the economy. Consumers are the keystone of any economy. Their purchasing decisions, preferences and feedback shape the market, drive innovation and finally determine the success of



businesses. Understanding consumer behaviour and preferences is crucial for businesses to flourish in a competitive marketplace. By effectively meeting the needs and expectations of consumers, businesses can not only achieve their own goals but also contribute to the overall economic well-being of society.

Essentially, a consumer is anyone who purchases goods or services for personal use or consumption rather than for resale or commercial purposes. This encompasses a vast range of individuals from everyday shoppers who buy groceries to those who invest in long-term assets like homes or vehicles. Some definitions of the term 'consumer' are given in the following segment:

A consumer is an individual who seeks to acquire goods and services to satisfy needs and wants (**Philip Kotler**). Consumers are those individuals who are directly involved in obtaining, using and disposing of economic goods and services including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts (**Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard**). A consumer is the ultimate user of a good or service (**American Marketing Association**). A consumer is a person who buys any goods or services for a consideration, which has been paid or promised, partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment (**Indian Consumer Protection Act, 1986**). A consumer is an individual who purchases or receives goods or services for personal, family or household purposes (**U.S. Federal Trade Commission**).

### **SELF IMAGE**

Self-image is closely associated with personality which contributes to a consistent sense of identity. Consumers prefer brands and products that align with this identity to reinforce who they believe they are or who they aspire to become. People have a specific image of themselves. This image is comprised of various perceptions, expectations and satisfaction related to something. It is an important concept for social and humanistic psychology. Self-image can be understood in the terms as "How individuals see themselves." Self-image is also termed as self-image. It is not necessary that the self-image reflects the reality. Self-image of consumers is affected by various



factors. These factors can be perceptions, culture, friend circle, media and social structure etc.

Hence self-image is related to the image that we have of ourselves. Self-image is affected by the social groups in which we are living. It is self-explanation by the individuals like “I am good writer.” Or “I am sincere towards my work.”

According to **Carl Rogers** the self-image includes three components:

- (i) **Self-Concept:** This means the view an individual have of himself. Maximum people have inflated self-image. They believe that they are better than others. A teenage girl may believe that she has whitish complexion while she has fair complexion.
- (ii) **Self Esteem:** It means how much value an individual place on himself. In this situation the individual compare himself to others. The behavior of people with ourselves can affect our self-image either positively or negatively.
- (iii) **Ideal Self:** The concept of ideal self is related to what an individual wish him were really like.

According to a **theory of Social Identity**, the approach of self-image has two components:

- (i) **Personal Identity:** This identity is related to the personal image of any individual. People have their own beliefs and values which determine their attitude and behavior.
- (ii) **Social Identity:** Man is social animal. He has to adjust himself in the social culture. He is affected by the values, beliefs and expectations of society. People are very much affected by the social structure in which they live.

We have studied that the self-image is the knowledge of an individual about himself or herself. Understanding the types of self-image helps the marketer to frame marketing strategy.

Following are the main categories of self-image:

1. **Actual Self-image:** This type of self-image is related to the perception of one’s self. The actual self-image is comprised of status, age, gender and education etc. Form the point of view of consumer behavior, it is very important to know that how the consumer describe himself in his present state with reference to the product. Marketer should



frame its promotional strategy by considering the self-image of the consumers. This concept helps the individual to perceive that how he likes others. Some consumers are influenced by social status too much as the result of which they make excessive expenditure on luxurious products.

2. **Ideal Self-image:** This concept is related with the self-perception. Ideal self is people's perception of themselves they want to be. It is figured by the experience, culture, beliefs and the communication with the society. Some people are the role model of various individuals. Many consumers desire to acquire an ideal lifestyle by purchasing the products that create the feeling of an ideal self-image.
3. **Social Self-image:** People often want to be like other people as smart, intellectual and popular. This concept is based on the social nature concerned with the self. People strive to be famous and attractive as like the celebrities. This concept has important place in the area of consumer behavior. Consumers want to have all those products at any cost that make themselves attractive in the society. Marketing firms should identify all these types of desires and needs so that an effective marketing strategy can be made accordingly.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To inspect the role of self-image in modelling consumer preferences for brands
2. To analyze consumer differences in sensitivity toward local and global brands
3. To identify which proportions of self-image influence consumer choice
4. To provide perceptions for marketers on strategies of consumer targeting

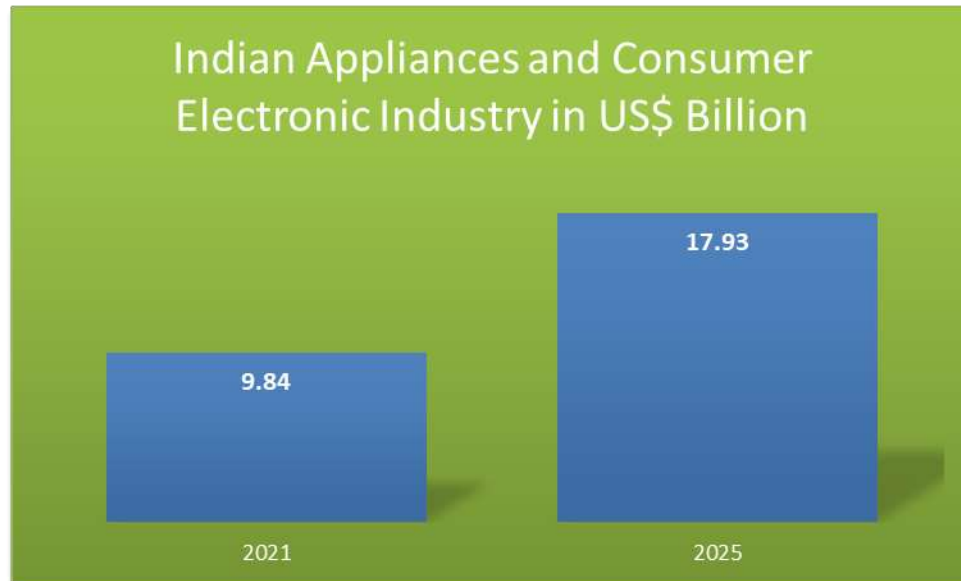
## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is conceptual in nature and based on secondary data from academic journals, books and market research reports. Ending segment includes the analysis and discussion with conclusion which are essential part of this paper.

## LOCAL VERSUS GLOBAL BRANDS



According to data released by IDC, India is projected to become the 4th largest market for consumer durables by 2027 with the sector growing at an 11% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR). Mobile manufacturing is a standout story with production climbing from just two units in 2014 to over 300 by 2024. Domestic production has jumped from Rs. 18,900 crore in 2014 to Rs. 4.22 lakh crore in 2024 with local production now accounting for 99.2% of the market. India's smartphone market shipped 70 million units in H1 2025 by resulting modest 0.9% growth, while Q2 shipments alone rose 7.3% year-on-year to 37 million units. The market size of the country is expected to reach Rs. 3 lakh crore by 2029, driven by increasing affluence, household penetration, premiumization and technology-driven demand for smart and energy-efficient appliances. These products includes local and global brands at large. Local and global brands represent two distinct yet increasingly interconnected magnitudes of modern consumer markets. Local brands are typically entrenched in a specific country or region and are often associated with cultural identity, authenticity and understanding. Consumers may prefer these brands because they reflect local values, traditions and tastes which creates a sense of faith and emotional connection. In contrast, global brands operate across multiple nations and are widely recognized for their consistent quality, innovation and respect. Following figure is showing that the Indian appliances and consumer electronic industry is growing in drastic manner.



Source: IBEF

The growth rate in the market as per above data depicts Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) 21.12%. CAGR is calculated by applying following formula:

$$CAGR = \left( \frac{Final\ Value}{Initial\ Value} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}} - 1$$

Where:

- Final Value = Ending value
- Initial Value = Beginning value
- n = Number of years

As per the data provided by IBEF, between the period of April 2000 to June 2025, electronic goods attracted FDI inflows of Rs. 52,712 crore. Many consumers observe global brands as symbols of status, modernism and a multicultural lifestyle. The preference between local and global brands is influenced by several factors like self-image, income level, cultural orientation and acquaintance to globalization. For example, individuals with a sturdy sense of national identity may favour local brands, while those with ambitious or outward-looking self-concepts may incline toward global brands. Additionally, advancements in technology and communication



have distorted the boundaries between the two by allowing local brands to grow globally and global brands to adapt to local markets. Ultimately, both types of brands coexist and compete by tempting to different psychological, cultural and functional needs of consumers in a dynamic market.

### **INFLUENCE OF SELF-IMAGE ON BRAND PREFERENCE**

The influence of self-image on brand preference is a crucial factor in understanding consumer behaviour. Consumers often select brands that enhance their identity by making purchasing decisions more than just functional because they become symbolic. For instance, individuals with a confident and ambitious self-image may prefer premium or global brands that signal success and status, while those with a sturdy cultural or personal identity may settle toward local brands that support their values and beliefs. This connection between self-image and brand choice is explained by the concept of self-congruence, where consumers are more likely to favour brands whose image matches their own identity. Additionally, social influences such as peer groups and media exposure can shape self-image by impacting brand preferences. As a result, brands that successfully position themselves in a way that reverberates with consumers' self-perception are more likely to form loyalty and emotional attachment. Overall, self-image plays a crucial role in shaping not only what consumers buy but also how they express themselves through their selections.

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Self-image plays a significant role in modelling consumers' brand preferences as individuals often select products that matches with their personal identity and values. Consumers with a robust cultural identity are more likely to prefer local brands because these brands reflect their traditions, beliefs and sense of belonging. Such consumers view local products as reliable and emotionally meaningful by hardening their connection with them. On the other hand, ambitious and status-driven individuals incline toward global brands, as these brands are commonly associated with status, stylishness and higher social stand-up. For these consumers, purchasing



global brands becomes a way to show success and attain a preferred self-image. Emotional attachment further supports the preference for local brands as familiarity and cultural quality create belief and loyalty. In contrast, global brands are often preferred for their perceived loftier quality, innovation and worldwide recognition, which appeal to consumers who seek reliability and status. In today's globalized world, many individuals develop hybrid identities that conglomerate both local and global inspirations. As a result, their brand choices become more choosy and context-dependent; they may select local brands for products knotted to tradition or daily use while opting for global brands in categories associated with luxury. Thus, self-image not only influences brand preference but also creates a vibrant balance between local and global consumption outlines.

## CONCLUSION

Self-image is a powerful element of consumer preference mostly when individuals select between local and global brands. Consumers often select products that matches with their personal identity and reflect how they see themselves or desire to be seen by others. Those with a strong relation to their cultural background incline to prefer local brands as these represent familiarity, legitimacy and shared values. Such brands create emotional connections and reinforce a sense of belonging. In contrast, global brands appeal to consumers who seek a modern, admired and internationally connected lifestyle. These brands are commonly linked with higher status, innovation and global recognition. Therefore, buying behaviour extends beyond practical needs and becomes a means of individualism. In today's interrelated world, many consumers balance both local and global inspirations, which leads to mixed preferences. Recognizing this relationship helps marketers to form strategies that better support with consumer identity and prospects.

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