

## **PATRIOTIC ADVERTISING AND MILLENNIALS IN INDIA: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Patriotic advertising is the most popular tool and method used by managers to attract and lure the millennials to purchase goods and services during the events like Independence Day, Republic Day and other days of national importance. In this study, an attempt has been made to probe how patriotic advertising campaigns will act as stimuli and impact the purchasing behaviour of millennials in India. This paper also ascertains whether Indian millennials demonstrate a positive or negative attitude towards patriotic advertising and will the patriotic advertising campaigns launched by the brands' result in the increased purchasing intention of the consumers. The structural equation modelling (SEM) was used in the study to find out the perception of millennials towards patriotic advertising and millennials, and the results have shown that patriotism was found to be positively significant to patriotic advertising and brand engagement as well as patriotic advertising and purchase intention supporting the hypothesis.

*Keywords: patriotism, ethnocentrism, patriotic brands, advertising campaigns, ethnocentrism*

## **INTRODUCTION**

"Patriotism" is the pride of spirit. Pride in one's own country and determination to protect it. The pride in what a company stands for. It is bravery, it is freedom of expression, it is democracy. It is also termed national pride, which is the love, devotion and feeling of attachment to the homeland with the other citizens. Many different emotions such as the attachment to the country's historical aspects, ethnicity, cultural heritage, and political standings are involved that may make an individual patriotic. In the end, it is a collection of ideals that people respect and that companies can use to better position themselves.

Brand patriotism is a strategy that organisations would like to use to change consumers behaviour towards their products. Although this would have to be a long-term effort, currently, it is used as a communication tool. There has been a resurgence in the patriotic brands due to the launch of the Vocal for Local campaign which has presented organisations with a new opportunity to improve their brand image and increase their brand engagement among the consumers. The Vocal for Local campaign came into existence on May 12th 2020, which emphasised that Indian companies should be Vocal about being Local before going Global. Organisations that are a part of this campaign state that they want to show they are proud to be a Made In India product, by Indians and for Indians while they believe it is in their traditions and pride to highlight the local Indian roots. These thoughts of the organizations are shown through their advertisements to the consumers which brings brand patriotism into the

picture. Brand Patriotism is believed to impact the individuals purchasing decisions as it gives the brands a louder voice and takes them into greater consideration to build the nation jointly. More patriotic consumers tend to be positively influenced by patriotic advertisement campaigns, while less patriotic consumers would not be influenced by the same. Brand politicization has increased, primarily in line with the increasingly divided political climate. Most companies have actively taken sides, usually by the values of their owners, corporate ideals, and consumers – or a combination of all three. It is not that bad if the idea is valid and suits the company's ethos. This brand polarisation has made companies focus on patriotism and influence consumers behaviour as they have started paying more attention to detail and making more informed decisions when it comes to what they are consuming.

This study will bridge the gap between the existing literature in the field of brand patriotism and patriotic advertisements as this study has kept in mind the recent happenings in the world, making countries become more self-sufficient and boycott foreign brands and support their local brand. As managers they need to be aware of their organisation's external environment as that is not within their control. This study will aid the managers in the marketing field to determine how to target their audience and which demographic factors to focus their patriotic campaigns towards to achieve the best results. It will also help the managers understand the perception and attitude of the consumers towards the patriotic-themed advertising campaigns by the patriotic brands. As this study focuses on patriotic brands, it will also help brands debating on the pros and cons to finalise whether they would like to portray themselves as a patriotic brand or not in their respective markets. This can be further supported by this study as this study evaluates the impact

of patriotic advertisements on consumers' purchase intention. Only if the purchase intention of the consumers is high, they would be the brands be for marketing as patriotic brands. Hence, in this study, an attempt was made to understand the consumers' attitude towards brand patriotism, how an organisation's brand image and engagement affect the brand patriotism, and how an individual's national identity affects their purchasing intention.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The following objectives have been set for the present study. They are to

1. Ascertain the perception and attitude of consumers towards the patriotic-themed advertising campaigns by patriotic brands.
2. Probe the impact of patriotic advertising themes on the brand image of patriotic brands?
3. Evaluate the impact of patriotic advertising campaigns by patriotic brands on the purchasing intention of the consumers.
4. Find out the influence of patriotic advertising campaigns on patriotic brands on brand engagement.
5. Offer suggestions for the brand managers for effective and productive management of patriotic brands.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Patriotism is defined as commitment – a readiness to sacrifice for the nation – which entails a people's feelings of attachment to one's nation (Druckman, 1994). Brand Patriotism is a concept that many individuals have used without realizing that it affects their purchase intentions towards various products. Later as time passed and more research was done in ethnocentrism, country of

origins, theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the social identity theory, which led to the idea of brand patriotism. According to Kaynak& Kara (2002), since the customers evaluate products based on all the information available to them, even though such information is very little, the country of origin becomes a critical determinant of a consumer's product evaluation. The Consumer ethnocentric tendency pertains to these patriotic sentiments of responsibility and loyalty. There has been empirical support for a positive relationship between patriotism and consumer ethnocentric tendency (Han, 1988; Sharma et al., 1995; Klein & Ettenson, 1999).

Brand Patriotism has been defined by Yoo, as the use of patriotic advertisements which appeal to the consumers' emotional involvement with their country and promotes their in-group feelings, which is used as a marketing strategy. Patriotic advertising evokes a powerful sense of connectedness with the country and other people in the country (J.Yoo et al., 2014). The authors have attempted to identify the gaps in the field of brand patriotism by critically reviewing the literature of the field.

### **A) Brand Patriotism and Consumer Attitudes**

Blackwell Miniard and Engel (2006) described attitudes as global or overall evaluative judgements. Consumer attitude, as defined by (Oliver.1997), is the deep commitment consumers have towards a particular brand or product that they choose to rebuy and re-patronize products and making the consumers have a repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, regardless of the situation influences and marketing efforts which have the potential to lead to consumers switching behavior. While marketing efforts play a significant role in this switching attitude of consumers, it has also been identified that brand

strength is derived from the brand value, which is accumulated by the consumers brand reference and that the consumer takes less risk when they have a strong brand strength towards a particular brand.(Kesler, 1987; Tauber, 1998; Aaker & Keller, 1990).Consumer Attitude also has a contradicting definition highlighted by Mitchell and Olsen (1981), who contended that consumer attitude is an internal evaluation towards a product or brand. To support this contradicting statement, another study conducted by Kaynak & Kara (2002) shows that regardless of the little information available, customers adhere to the country of origin as the critical determinant of evaluation of Consumers product evaluation. There are also some studies that attempted to measure a customer's intrinsic and extrinsic cues between domestic brands and foreign alternatives.(Akaah & Yaprak, 1993; Klenosky, Benet & Chatraba, 1996).

Sharma et al. (1995) identified a positive relationship and correlation between patriotism and consumer ethnocentrism, demonstrated in many instances where patriotic consumers were more likely to buy domestic products than foreign products compared to non-patriotic consumers. The type of society also plays an important role in the consumers' patriotism and their attitudes towards products where collectivist societies emphasise loyalty, commitment, and attachment to the country even during their purchases. (Balabanis et al., 2001). It drives the pro-social behavior of the consumers who buy domestic products, which highlights the consumer's altruistic characteristics in the form of helping local producers who are endangered by foreign brands Granzin and Olsen (1998). A live example is given by McGovern (1998), and Tsai (2010) expound that factor such as national flags, colors present in the national flags, words defining strong patriotic connotations influences the consumer's

attitude towards patriotic brands. Hence, considering literature review in the field of consumer attitude and brand patriotism, the following hypotheses were suggested and tested for the present study.

**Null Hypothesis:** Consumer Patriotism is not positively related to the positive attitude towards patriotic brands.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Consumer patriotism is positively related to the positive attitude towards patriotic brands.

**Null Hypothesis:** Consumer Patriotism is not positively related to Patriotic advertising campaigns.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Consumer patriotism is positively related to the positive attitude towards patriotic advertising campaigns.

**Null Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands does not emphasize the importance of national identity and are not able to improve the consumer's attitude towards patriotic brands.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands emphasizing the importance of national identity is not able to improve the consumer's attitude towards patriotic brands.

## **B) Brand Patriotism and National Identity:**

National identity can be defined as a collective sense of a nation as a cohesive whole amidst differences in tradition, culture, beliefs, and geography. Some

of the variables that contribute to National Identity are Country of Origin (COO), Theory of Social Identification, and Ethnocentrism of Consumers. According to (Lu and Xu, 2015), the perception of an individual towards the Quality of the Brand, the reason for buying the brand, and the justification given by the consumers to stick to a local brand is primarily influenced by the COO. Other than their outer appearance and quality, a product also represents its national identity through national, economic, and political characteristics, which a businessman or consumer associates with the stereotypes inhibited in their mind regarding the country of origin (Nagashima., 1970). Brand origin and country of origin are used interchangeably. However (Thakor & Kohli, 1996.27) stated that brand origin is the country, region, or place to which the brand is perceived to belong by its customers. Nationalistic consumers' behavior occurs at an individual level when they are biased while rating a product within their own country or a foreign product, and this finding is backed by the social identity theory (Feather, 1981; Doosje et al., 1998). The social identity theory is, also known as the association of social identity, states that the strength of identification of a consumer is strongly influenced by the consumer's attention to social identity-related stimuli, purchase intentions for social identity-related products, and the reaction towards social identity congruent actors in advertising (Deshpandé, Hoyer, and Donthu 1986; Williams and Qualls, 1989). This is false when it comes to consumers who are weak identifiers to social norms (Madrigal, 2001.p.280). This statement is supported by (Tajfel.1982) who says that a feeling of ingroup creates a strong bias in a consumer's decision. This ingroup feeling of an individual leads to the evaluation of other groups (out-groups) based on the cultural standards of the ingroups (Upadhyay & Singh (2006)); this defines ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is likely to affect not only consumers' assessments of quality



(Han & Tepstra (1988), Kinra (2006), Marcoux et al. (1997), Wall et al. (1991), Hamin & Elliot (2006)) and their willingness to buy (Olsen et al. (1993), Yelkar & Chakrabarty et al. (2006)) but also their actual purchase decisions (Herche (1994), Shoham & Brencic (2003)). Ethnocentric consumers prefer domestic products (Rice & Wongtada (2007)). Thus, ethnocentrism and the influence of patriotic advertisements on an individual tend to buy patriotic brands. (Nik-Mat et al., 2015).

Purchasing Involvement is a general measure of the individual's self-relevance of purchasing activities (Slama & Tashchian. 1985. pg73); it is usually described as the situation where a particular consumer expresses constant interest in a particular product category. The nature of purchase involvement is temporary and context-specific, affecting various situational factors. (Clarke and Belk (1979) Global companies had to make decisions on their marketing strategies based on the purchase decision of consumers (Girboveanu et al., 2012, Miron et al., 2009). Consumers' objective of buying a product greatly depends on the local labor market tendency (Marcu et al., 2015). The country's financial stability also plays an important role when companies are marketing the products among the consumers in the local market (Acatrinei et al., 2013).

Hence, considering a literature review in the field of national identity and brand patriotism, the following hypotheses were suggested and tested for the present study.

**Null Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands does not emphasize the importance of national identity can improve the consumer's intention to purchase patriotic brands

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands emphasizing the importance of national identity are not able to improve the consumer's intention to purchase patriotic brands.

**Null Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands does not emphasize the importance of national identity and can improve the brand image of patriotic brands.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands emphasizing the importance of national identity are not able to improve the brand image of patriotic brands.

**Null Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands does not emphasize the importance of national identity and can improve the brand engagement of patriotic brands.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Patriotic advertising by the brands emphasizing the importance of national identity is not able to improve the brand engagement of patriotic brands.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

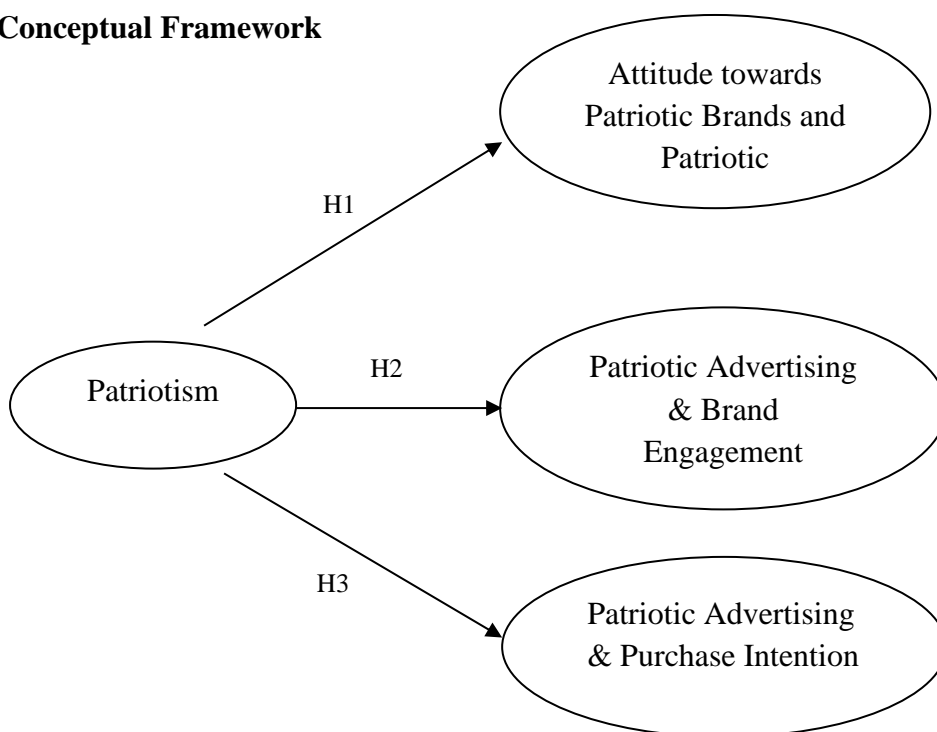
A descriptive study was carried out to explain the influence of patriotism on the three dependent variables: attitude towards patriotic brands and patriotic advertising, patriotic advertising and brand engagement, patriotic advertising and purchase intention of customers in Bangalore. A questionnaire survey was carried out through convenience sampling with sufficient reviews supporting the study. Structured questionnaire was distributed to 385 customers in the Bangalore Urban and Rural districts. Responses were received from 201 respondents attributing to a response rate of 52.2%.

### Hypotheses of the Study

The following objectives have been set for the present study. They are as under,

- H<sub>1</sub>: Patriotism is positively and significantly related to attitude towards patriotic brands and patriotic advertising
- H<sub>2</sub>: Patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and brand engagement
- H<sub>3</sub>: Patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and purchase intention.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Demographic Details of the respondents

Variable		Frequency (n = 206)	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Female	87	43.3
	Male	114	56.7
<b>Age (Years)</b>	Below 18	9	4.5
	19-29 years	118	58.7
	30-39 years	40	19.9
	40-49 years	22	10.9
	50 and above	12	6.0
<b>Education</b>	Matriculation	6	3.0
	Intermediate	22	10.9
	Graduate	85	42.3
	Postgraduate	71	35.3
	Ph.D.	17	8.5
<b>Family Income (Rs.)</b>	Below 5 lakh	36	17.9
	5-10 lakh	62	30.8
	11-15 lakh	39	19.4
	16-20 lakh	33	16.4
	20 lakh and above	31	15.4
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	99	49.3
	Business	28	13.9
	Government Job	23	11.4
	Private Job	51	25.4
<b>Total</b>		201	100

Table 2 shows the validity of the instruments. In order to establish the validity of the instruments used in this study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed, and results indicate satisfactory validity. Three items have factor loadings of more than 0.7, indicating very high validity, while seven items have loadings between 0.6 to 0.7, which are valid and five items have loadings between 0.5 to 0.6, indicating satisfactory validity. However, none of the items has a factor loading of less than 0.5, and hence all the items are retained for further statistical analysis.

**Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>t value</b>
PAT1	Buying Indian goods helps me maintain my Indian identity	.761	3.489
PAT2	I believe that purchasing Indian goods should be a moral duty of every Indian citizen.	.587	3.638
PAT3	It always makes me feel good to support Indian products.	.634	3.107
PAT4	A real Indian should always stand by Indian Products.	.506	3.623
PAT5	Indian people should always consider Indian workers when making purchase decisions.	.605	Fixed
ATPB1	Being patriotic improves the perception of the brand.	.500	7.808
ATPB2	Patriotic advertising can make brands seem selfless instead of chasing profit margins.	.514	5.749
ATPB3	Patriotic advertising and branding can stir patriotic feelings amongst the consumers.	.643	7.789

ATPB4	Patriotic brands offer superior quality and value compared to foreign goods.	.549	Fixed
PABE1	When I see a brand representing the nation, I feel I am able to connect more with the values of the brand.	.702	5.786
PABE2	I have often felt that the sentiments projected in patriotic advertisements directly connect with the brands' sentiments.	.695	5.277
PABE3	I feel more emotionally and psychologically attached to a brand that represents itself through patriotic advertisements.	.643	5.896
PABE4	I feel confident about recommending brands representing themselves through their patriotic advertisements.	.628	Fixed
PAPI1	I am probably going to buy/ use the patriotic brand in the near future.	.753	6.621
PAPI2	I plan to buy/use the patriotic brand on a regular basis.	.643	6.181
PAPI3	I am probably going to recommend the patriotic brand to my companions.	.623	6.402
PAPI4	I would advise the others to buy/ use the patriotic brand.	.694	Fixed

Internal consistency is a necessary but not sufficient for measuring homogeneity or unidimensionality in a sample of test items. Table 3 represents the results of reliability analysis or internal consistency of our research data. Cronbach alpha is used to assess the reliability of the items included in the data collection instrument (Questionnaire). The accepted value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 and above; however, values above 0.6 are also accepted

(Griethuijsen et al., 2015; Taber, 2018). Hence, the instruments included in the study were reliable as the Cronbach’s alpha was above the acceptance and satisfactory level (0.6 to 0.90).

**Table 3: Cronbach Alpha for each of the dependent and independent variables**

Sl. No.	Variable Name	N	No. of items	Cronbach $\alpha$
1	Patriotism	201	5	0.637
2	Attitude towards Patriotic Brands and Patriotic Advertising	201	4	0.750
3	Patriotic Advertising and Brand Engagement	201	4	0.659
4	Patriotic Advertising and Purchase Intention	201	4	0.737

**Table 4 : Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation**

Variables	Me	S.D	1	2	3	4
1) Patriotism	3.2	0.7	1			
2) Attitude towards Patriotic Brands and Patriotic Advertising	13	45		1		
3) Patriotic Advertising and Brand Engagement	3.0	0.8	.19		1	
4) Patriotic Advertising and Purchase Intention	57	50	6**			1
	3.0	0.8	.43	.16		
	40	42	2**	0*		
	3.1	0.8	.26	.14	.0	
	84	31	2**	4*	60	1

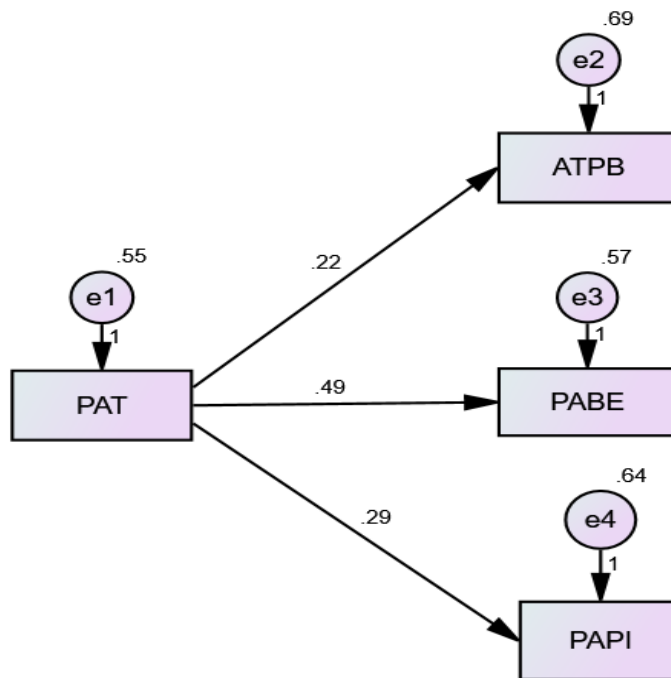
\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis for the variables included in the present study. As shown, the three variables, namely attitude towards patriotic brands and patriotic advertising, brand engagement and purchase intention with the

dependent variable patriotism, reached the significance level of  $p < 0.01$ . Two variables, brand engagement and purchase intention, with the variable attitude towards patriotic brands and advertising, reached the significance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

In order to test the hypotheses, structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS V21 was used. Figure 2 shows the standardized regression weights for the proposed model.



**Figure 2. SEM Model**

Table 5 presents the results of the hypothetical framework along with crucial ratios and the status of the hypotheses tested. The structural equation model with *PAT – Patriotism*, being influenced by *ATPB – Attitude towards Patriotic Brands and Patriotic Advertising*, *PABE – Patriotic Advertising and Brand*



*Engagement, PAPI – Patriotic Advertising and Purchase Intention* showed acceptable fit on three measures, chi-square (4.388, df = 3, p = 0.050), CFI (0.978), and RMSEA (0.048).

**Table 5: SEM Results**

Hypothesis	Standardize d Coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Conclusion
H1: ATPB → PAT	.224	.079	2.826	***	Supported
H2: PABE → PAT	.488	.072	6.769	***	Supported
H3: PAPI → PAT	.293	.076	3.846	***	Supported
$\chi^2/d.f. = 4.388/3=1.463$ ; CFI= .978; IFI= .979; TLI= .955; RMSEA= .048					
*** p < 0.001					

*PAT – Patriotism, ATPB – Attitude towards Patriotic Brands and Patriotic Advertising, PABE – Patriotic Advertising and Brand Engagement, PAPI – Patriotic Advertising and Purchase Intention*

As shown in the SEM results, patriotism and attitude towards patriotic brands have a significant relationship. Further, patriotism was found to be positively significant to patriotic advertising and brand engagement and patriotic advertising and purchase intention supporting the hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that three hypotheses are accepted. Patriotism is positively and significantly related to attitude towards patriotic brands and patriotic advertising. Patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and brand engagement, while Patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and purchase intention

## CONCLUSION

The discussion and results from the analysis suggest a positive correlation between patriotism and millennials and patriotic brands will have a unique appeal for the millennials filled with patriotic fervour. However, as shown in

the SEM results, the patriotism and attitude of millennials towards patriotic brands are not having a significant relationship. Hence, we conclude that three hypotheses are accepted. Patriotism is positively and significantly related to attitude towards patriotic brands and patriotic advertising. Furthermore, patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and brand engagement while Patriotism is significantly and positively related to patriotic advertising and purchase intention.

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