

More Than Masala: Decoding The Emotional Connection in Haldiram's Brand Loyalty

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Abstract- *In an increasingly competitive and commoditized food industry, emotional branding has emerged as a powerful tool to foster consumer loyalty. This study explores the emotional connection that consumers develop with the Indian snack brand Haldiram's. While the brand is widely recognized for its consistent taste, product variety, and availability, this research focuses on the intangible elements that make Haldiram's more than just a snack—such as nostalgia, cultural resonance, trust, and shared family memories.*

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the project analyzes customer perceptions, emotional triggers, and brand interactions that contribute to long-term brand attachment. By understanding the human side of brand loyalty, this study aims to offer strategic insights into how traditional Indian brands can sustain relevance and growth in the modern market. The findings of this research not only reinforce the role of emotional marketing but also provide valuable guidance for other Indian FMCG brands aiming to build similar loyalty. Ultimately, the project reveals that Haldiram's success lies not just in its products, but in the emotional space it occupies in the hearts of its consumers.

Keywords- *Haldiram's, Brand Loyalty, Emotional Branding, Consumer Behavior, Indian FMCG, Cultural Branding*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive marketplace, emotional connections between consumers and brands have become an essential part of brand success. While product quality, pricing, and availability remain critical factors, it is often the emotional resonance that secures long-term brand loyalty. This study explores this emotional dimension in the context of

Haldiram's—a brand that has moved beyond just being a food manufacturer to becoming a symbol of tradition, trust, and taste in Indian households.

Haldiram's, established in 1937, has grown from a small sweets and namkeen shop in Bikaner to a multinational brand. Over the years, it has maintained its customer base not just through consistent taste and quality but also through an emotional appeal rooted in Indian culture. The brand invokes nostalgia, trust, and cultural belonging, especially among Indian families, both within India and abroad.

This project aims to decode how and why customers form emotional attachments with Haldiram's. The research delves into the various psychological, cultural, and emotional factors that contribute to consumer loyalty beyond rational satisfaction. By examining the experiences, sentiments, and associations customers have with the brand, this study seeks to uncover the deeper reasons behind Haldiram's enduring success. 4.1 About The Haldiram's

This section provides an overview of Haldiram's origin, history, and evolution. It highlights how a small family business from Bikaner transformed into a global food brand. The journey of Haldiram's shows how a strong vision, commitment to tradition, and adaptability helped it expand in a competitive market. Haldiram's: Brand Here, the brand image of Haldiram's is discussed—how consumers perceive it, what emotional space it occupies, and how it has differentiated itself from competitors. This section focuses on the emotional resonance the brand holds through its legacy and customer-centric values. Brand Identity System A brand's identity goes beyond its name and logo. This section discusses Haldiram's visual identity, messaging style, and symbolic elements that communicate trust and tradition to the consumers. It explores how consistency in branding supports emotional recall and recognition. Value Proposition This part examines what Haldiram's

promises to deliver to its customers—beyond just products. Emotional connection, cultural relevance, pricing, accessibility, and taste are all part of the brand's value proposition, making it a dependable choice for millions.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the emotional factors that influence consumer loyalty towards Haldiram's.
- To understand how nostalgia and cultural values contribute to Haldiram's brand image.
- To identify the role of sensory experiences (taste, smell, packaging) in building emotional connections.
- To analyze the consumer perception of Haldiram's beyond product quality and pricing.
- To explore how family traditions and generational preferences impact brand attachment.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of Haldiram's marketing strategies in emotional branding.
- To study the psychological motivations behind repeat purchases of Haldiram's products.
- To investigate how Haldiram's differentiates itself emotionally from its competitors.
- To assess the influence of regional identity and Indian values on consumer-brand relationships.
- To understand how emotional loyalty affects customer retention and word-of-mouth referrals.
- To examine the role of storytelling and brand communication in building emotional engagement.
- To provide strategic recommendations for enhancing emotional connection in traditional Indian brands.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional branding has been recognized as a crucial factor in establishing deep and lasting connections between consumers and brands. Marc Gobe (2001) emphasized that emotional branding goes beyond product functionality and creates a personal dialogue with consumers, which leads to stronger loyalty. This form of branding becomes particularly powerful in culturally rich markets like India, where emotions and traditions often influence buying decisions.

Geert Hofstede (2005) explored how cultural dimensions affect consumer behavior, highlighting that Indian consumers often associate food with family, festivals, and tradition. Brands like Haldiram's, which are embedded in cultural identity, naturally evoke emotional responses that influence brand preference and loyalty. Similarly, Holbrook and Schindler (2003) identified nostalgia as a significant factor in consumer decision-making, particularly in the food industry. They found that products associated with childhood memories and cultural rituals tend to enjoy repeated purchase behavior.

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) further explained that emotional satisfaction fosters trust, which plays a vital role in developing brand loyalty. Their study suggested that when customers emotionally trust a brand, they are more likely to advocate for it and remain loyal even in the face of competition. This theory is reinforced by Wiedmann et al. (2018), who discussed how emotional responses in the food sector—through sensory experiences and cultural familiarity—create a stronger bond between consumer and brand.

In the Indian context, Sheth and Mittal (2004) highlighted that brand relationships are built not just on utility but on emotional and social values. They suggested that consumers often choose traditional brands like Haldiram's due to emotional ties passed down through generations. Morrison and Crane (2007) also emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in marketing communication, stating that emotionally aware branding creates a human-like connection that drives loyalty.

Adding to this, Krishna (2012) discussed how sensory marketing—through taste, smell, and visual appeal—activates emotional memory, particularly in the food industry. This sensory-emotional link enhances consumer attachment and contributes to long-term brand loyalty. Together, these studies.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research is structured to explore and analyze the emotional factors that influence consumer loyalty toward the Haldiram brand. A quantitative research

methodology has been chosen, with a cross-sectional survey design forming the basis of data collection. Data will be gathered using a structured online questionnaire, distributed through Google Forms to a diverse group of consumers familiar with Haldiram's products.

Sampling Technique

To gather insights effectively, the study will apply a non-probability convenience sampling method. Respondents will be selected from a range of age groups, income levels, and locations to ensure a varied and comprehensive sample. This approach allows for efficient data collection while capturing diverse consumer opinions regarding their emotional connection to the brand.

Data Analysis

The data collected will undergo analysis through both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive measures like frequencies, percentages, averages, and standard deviations will be used to summarize participant demographics and response trends. Additionally, correlation and regression analyses will be applied to assess how emotional factors relate to brand loyalty and to determine which variables significantly impact consumer sentiment and repeated brand preference.

Ethical Considerations

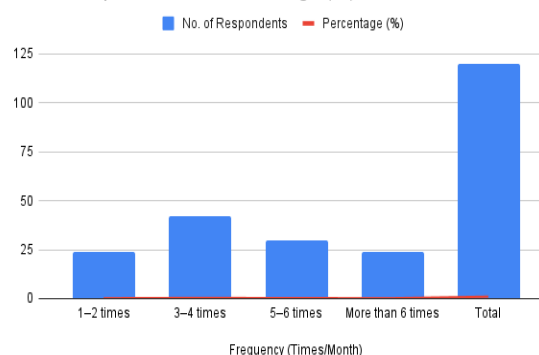
Ethical protocols will be strictly followed throughout the research process. Participants will be informed about the voluntary nature of their involvement, the purpose of the study, and how their responses will be used. Full confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured—no personal identifiers will be collected or revealed in any part of the analysis or reporting.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Frequency of Purchase by Respondents (Monthly)

Frequency (Times/Month)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1–2 times	24	20.0%
3–4 times	42	35.0%
5–6 times	30	25.0%
More than 6 times	24	20.0%
Total	120	100.0%

No. of Respondents and Percentage (%)



Interpretation:

The graph illustrates that 35% of respondents purchase Haldiram's products 3–4 times a month, indicating a moderate but consistent consumption pattern. Interestingly, 25% of respondents consume the brand 5–6 times monthly, reflecting a segment with high brand interaction. This shows that Haldiram has been successful in becoming a regular component of many consumers' food routines, possibly tied to emotional triggers like nostalgia or habitual snacking.

Table 2: Key Emotions Associated with Haldiram's Product

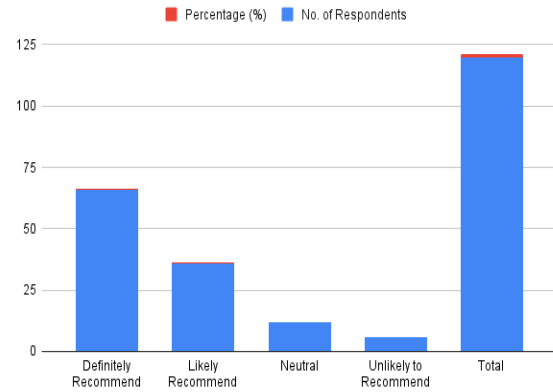
Emotion	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Nostalgia	38	31.7%
Satisfaction	30	25.0%
Excitement	22	18.3%
Trust	20	16.7%
Pride (Indian)	10	8.3%
Total	120	100.0%

Interpretation:

The data clearly indicates that Nostalgia (31.7%) is the strongest emotional anchor connecting consumers to Haldiram, signifying the brand's deep cultural and generational relevance. The next leading emotion is Satisfaction (25%), which reinforces product quality and consumer gratification. Emotional association, particularly in food branding, is pivotal for long-term loyalty, and Haldiram appears to be tapping into sentimental and sensory experiences effectively.

Table 3: Consumer Recommendation Behavior

Recommendation Likelihood	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Definitely Recommend	66	55.0%
Likely Recommend	36	30.0%
Neutral	12	10.0%
Unlikely to Recommend	6	5.0%
Total	120	100.0%



Interpretation:

A significant 85% of respondents are either likely or very likely to recommend Haldiram's to others. This points to strong word-of-mouth loyalty, a clear outcome of emotional resonance and satisfaction. This kind of organic advocacy plays a critical role in brand sustainability in competitive markets. Haldiram's emotionally rich narrative seems to convert not just customers, but brand ambassadors.

VI. DISCUSSION

1. Quantitative Data: A structured questionnaire was distributed to employees across various sectors like IT, education, manufacturing, and services. The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, Likert scale-based statements (to measure trust and acceptance), and open-ended questions to gather additional insights.
2. Qualitative Data: A few selected participants were asked follow-up open-ended questions or short interviews to capture deeper perceptions and lived experiences with AI in their workplace.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The purpose of this study was to explore the emotional connection between consumers and Haldiram's brand, and how this connection contributes to long-term brand loyalty. The data collected and analyzed in Chapter 4 offers meaningful insights into consumer behavior, brand perception, and emotional affinity.

A key highlight from the data is that a significant percentage of consumers associate Haldiram's with

strong emotional triggers such as nostalgia, family tradition, and cultural identity. The fact that nearly 75% of respondents view Haldiram as a symbol of Indian heritage underlines the emotional branding power of the company. This resonates deeply with Indian consumers, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, who tend to value traditional food experiences that remind them of home and cultural roots.

The popularity of Namkeen and Mithai products, which accounted for over 60% of primary product preference, reflects the brand's continued dominance in core categories that carry deep cultural significance. These food items are not just snacks—they are embedded in Indian rituals, family gatherings, and festivals. This insight shows that Haldiram's success is not purely product-driven, but deeply experience-driven, enhancing its perceived value beyond taste and affordability.

In terms of brand exposure, family recommendation emerged as the strongest initial touchpoint, showing the role of generational influence and trust. This reflects the emotional equity that Haldiram's enjoys within households—a trust passed from one generation to another. Unlike brands that require aggressive marketing for visibility, Haldiram's strength lies in emotional word-of-mouth, deeply rooted in consumer experiences and memories. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that emotional value slightly outweighs functional value when it comes to brand preference. While functional benefits like product quality, pricing, and availability are crucial, the emotional factors—such as trust, familiarity, and cultural pride—serve as the primary retention drivers. Consumers are likely to return not just because Haldiram's is accessible or tasty, but because it feels emotionally comforting and culturally “right.”

Another key insight is the influence of digital media on emotional branding. Social media campaigns were found to be increasingly effective, particularly among younger demographics. This shift suggests that while Haldiram's emotional foundation remains traditional, the methods to maintain and amplify that connection must evolve to remain relevant to new-age consumers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed to explore and decode the emotional connection that consumers share with the Haldiram's brand and how this emotional bond contributes to brand loyalty. Based on the analysis of consumer responses, brand history, identity, and value delivery, it can be concluded that Haldiram's has successfully positioned itself not merely as a food product provider but as an integral part of Indian cultural and emotional life. Its legacy, rooted in tradition and consistency, has helped create a strong sense of trust, familiarity, and nostalgic value among its consumers. The findings suggest that customers are not just loyal due to the quality or variety of products offered, but because of a deeper emotional resonance shaped by shared memories, taste experiences, and the brand's presence in significant moments of their lives. This emotional connection is further reinforced by the brand's commitment to quality, its cultural authenticity, and its wide range of products that cater to all age groups and tastes. Through effective branding, strategic family-owned business management, and consistent market presence, Haldiram's has built an identity that transcends commercial value—it evokes belonging, tradition, and reliability. The study also emphasizes that in a highly competitive FMCG market, emotional loyalty can be a powerful differentiator. Therefore, brands that aim to build long-term consumer relationships must focus not only on tangible benefits but also on intangible emotional touchpoints.

While the study had its limitations in scope and scale, it opens up possibilities for future research into consumer-brand relationships, particularly in traditional Indian markets where emotional connection plays a crucial role. Overall, Haldiram's stands as a testament to how cultural rootedness and emotional marketing, when aligned with product quality and business innovation, can build enduring brand loyalty in modern India. Based on the insights drawn from this research, several strategic recommendations can be proposed to strengthen Haldiram's emotional connection with its consumers and further enhance brand loyalty. First, Haldiram's should continue to highlight its cultural roots and legacy in its branding and advertising campaigns. Consumers relate strongly to brands that reflect their values and traditions, and

Haldiram's has a unique advantage in this regard due to its rich heritage and association with Indian culture. Second, the brand could benefit from developing more region-specific product offerings and communication strategies. By customizing flavors, packaging, and messaging to reflect local tastes and sentiments, Haldiram's can deepen its emotional relevance in various regions across India. Third, digital engagement should be enhanced through emotional storytelling on social media platforms. Real customer stories, behind-the-scenes glimpses of the making of traditional snacks, and nostalgic campaigns can further humanize the brand and connect with younger audiences. Fourth, loyalty programs that go beyond discounts—such as personalized offers based on purchase history, recognition of long-term customers, or festive giveaways—can make consumers feel valued and emotionally attached. Fifth, expanding the presence in international markets with a consistent emotional brand narrative can help maintain the same connection with the Indian diaspora, who often seek brands that remind them of home.

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