

Nationalism Marketing as the New Strategic Frontier: Examining the Influence of National Identity Appeals on Consumer Behavior in India

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Abstract

In an era marked by globalization fatigue and a resurgence of cultural identity, brands are increasingly leveraging nationalism as a strategic marketing tool. This study investigates nationalism marketing—the deliberate use of national identity appeals to shape consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Drawing on theories of consumer ethnocentrism, identity signaling, and cultural resonance, the research explores how national pride, country-of-origin cues, and patriotic messaging affect brand attitudes and behavioral intentions.

Using a mixed-method approach combining survey data from 578 Indian consumers and thematic analysis of nationalism-based advertising campaigns, the findings reveal that national identity appeals significantly enhance brand trust, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention—particularly among consumers with strong patriotic orientations. However, excessive nationalism cues risk triggering exclusionary sentiments and reducing brand appeal among cosmopolitan segments.

The study contributes to the emerging discourse on post-globalization marketing by positioning nationalism marketing as a double-edged strategy—effective in fostering brand loyalty and emotional resonance, yet sensitive to socio-political context and cultural inclusivity. Implications for global and domestic marketers are discussed, emphasizing the need for balancing patriotic storytelling with ethical brand narratives.

Keywords: Nationalism marketing, consumer ethnocentrism, national identity, patriotic branding, country-of-origin effect, consumer behavior, India.

1. Introduction

In the past two decades, marketing has undergone a fundamental transformation in response to shifting global, cultural, and political realities. Once dominated by globalized brand narratives, marketing strategy has now turned sharply toward localization and national identity (Kotler & Keller, 2022). This transformation has given rise to what scholars and practitioners increasingly describe as nationalism marketing—a phenomenon wherein brands integrate elements of national pride, culture, and symbolism into their value propositions to resonate emotionally with domestic consumers (Steenkamp, 2019; Wu, Latif, & Li, 2023).

The rise of nationalism marketing reflects a broader societal trend: the reassertion of national identity in a world perceived to be overly globalized. From “Made in India” campaigns to “America First” consumer movements, the 21st century has seen a resurgence of country-centric marketing initiatives that emphasize self-reliance, cultural heritage, and local authenticity (Steenkamp, 2019). As consumers become increasingly conscious of economic sovereignty and cultural preservation, nationalism-based branding offers companies a potent means to foster emotional connection and brand differentiation (Kosterman & Feshbach, 2017).

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism—the belief that purchasing domestic products is morally appropriate and beneficial to the nation—has long been explored in marketing literature (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). However, nationalism marketing extends beyond mere ethnocentrism. It involves crafting brand narratives that symbolically align with the nation’s identity, values, and collective aspirations (Holt, 2004). For instance, Indian brands such as Patanjali, Amul, and Tata have successfully embedded national pride within their marketing communications, positioning themselves not only as commercial entities but also as carriers of national progress and pride.

Despite its growing prevalence, empirical research on nationalism-marketing remains limited, particularly in emerging economies where national identity holds strong social and political resonance (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2015). Most existing studies address related constructs like country-of-origin effects or ethnocentric tendencies, without systematically examining how explicit national identity appeals shape brand attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions.

From a theoretical standpoint, nationalism marketing sits at the intersection of consumer culture theory and identity signaling. It proposes that consumers express their national belonging through consumption choices, reinforcing in-group affiliation and pride (Askegaard et al., 2005). These symbolic consumption acts serve not only as expressions of patriotism but also as resistance to perceived cultural homogenization. As a result, brands that successfully tap into national identity can benefit from heightened emotional engagement and loyalty (Lee & Mazodier, 2015). However, overuse of nationalistic rhetoric may alienate globally minded consumers or be perceived as opportunistic (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015).

India’s socio-economic landscape has seen a surge in nationalistic discourse, fueled by Make in India and Vocal for Local campaigns emphasizing indigenous innovation and self-reliance. Concurrently, consumer sentiment has evolved toward favoring homegrown brands perceived as culturally authentic and economically beneficial to the nation (Government of India, n.d.; Srivastava, 2020). In this context, nationalism marketing emerges not merely as a trend but as a strategic frontier capable of redefining brand–consumer relationships.

Research Question:

To what extent do national identity appeals influence consumer attitudes, brand trust, and purchase intentions?

Objectives:

1. To examine the impact of nationalism-based marketing appeals on consumer perception and behavioral intentions.

2. To analyze the mediating role of brand trust and perceived authenticity in the relationship between nationalism cues and purchase intention.
3. To explore potential moderating effects of consumer patriotism and cosmopolitan orientation.

Summary of Theoretical Position:

By integrating theories of consumer ethnocentrism, identity signaling, and cultural branding, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on post-globalization marketing. Ultimately, it argues that nationalism marketing represents a new strategic frontier—one that redefines how brands create meaning and loyalty by aligning themselves with the emotional fabric of national identity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Nationalism and Marketing: Conceptual Foundations

Nationalism, broadly defined as the emotional and ideological attachment to one's nation, has historically shaped political and cultural discourse (Anderson, 1983). Within marketing, nationalism emerges through symbolic appeals that reinforce collective pride and position consumption as an expression of loyalty to the nation.

Scholars have identified this practice as nationalism marketing—a strategy that embeds national symbols, values, and narratives into brand communications to strengthen emotional resonance and consumer identification (Volčič & Andrejevic, 2011; Steenkamp, 2019).

A key distinction exists between patriotism and nationalism. While patriotism embodies affection and pride for one's country, nationalism often implies comparison or perceived superiority over others (Kosterman & Feshbach, 2017). This nuance is essential in marketing communication: inclusive nationalism, which celebrates collective pride, tends to foster positive brand perceptions, whereas exclusive nationalism, emphasizing superiority, risks alienating global-minded audiences (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016).

The rise of nationalism marketing aligns with the global trend of glocalization—the process of adapting global brands to reflect local cultural authenticity (Robertson, 1995). Campaigns such as “Make in India” and “Buy American” epitomize this shift, merging economic independence with cultural revivalism.

Thus, nationalism marketing operates as both a socio-cultural phenomenon and a strategic brand tool, combining emotion, identity, and ideology to generate brand loyalty and differentiation.

2.2 Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Product Preference

The earliest conceptual roots of nationalism marketing lie in consumer ethnocentrism theory (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Ethnocentric consumers perceive purchasing domestic goods as ethically and economically beneficial to the nation and often avoid foreign products they deem harmful to national progress.

The CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale) remains the primary measure of this construct, capturing moral and emotional orientations toward domestic consumption.

Research shows ethnocentric consumers exhibit:

1. Higher preference for local brands,
2. Stronger loyalty toward domestic firms, and
3. Greater responsiveness to patriotic messaging (Praveen et al., 2025).

In developing economies such as India, ethnocentrism often extends beyond economic protectionism—it becomes an expression of national pride and developmental optimism (Sharma, 2015; Shankarmahesh, 2006)

For instance, the Vocal for Local initiative explicitly linked consumption with nation-building, appealing to consumers' sense of contribution. Here, nationalism marketing transcends transactional motives, transforming consumption into a symbolic act of civic participation.

2.3 National Identity and Brand Meaning

National identity represents the collective sense of belonging rooted in shared symbols, language, and heritage (Smith, 1991). In marketing, these cues enrich a brand's symbolic capital, transforming it into a cultural emblem.

Brands such as Amul ("The Taste of India") and Patanjali position themselves not merely as commercial offerings but as cultural signifiers reflecting the Indian ethos. These cases illustrate how brands can become vehicles for national pride, reinforcing emotional connection through shared narratives.

From the lens of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), consumers derive self-esteem from group membership. When exposed to national symbols or "in-group" cues (e.g., local heroes, national colors), they experience identity congruence, leading to positive brand attitudes and higher purchase intent ((Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015; Lee & Mazodier, 2015).

Therefore, national identity cues function as psychological bridges linking the brand to the consumer's collective self-concept.

2.4 Cultural Branding and the Nation as a Brand

Cultural Branding Theory (Holt, 2004) posits that brands attain iconic status when they embody ideologies and cultural myths resonating with societal values. Within nationalism marketing, the "nation" itself becomes a meta-brand, with products serving as symbolic extensions of its narrative.

For instance, the Make in India initiative repositioned Indian manufacturing as a symbol of strength and innovation. Similarly, Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan encouraged brands to align with narratives of independence and cultural authenticity.

However, researchers warn that excessive commercialization of national identity can erode authenticity—where brands leverage patriotic imagery without deeper cultural alignment—which risks being perceived as opportunistic and reducing brand trust and authenticity (Volčić & Andrejević, 2011; Beverland et al., 2021)

Sustained success, therefore, requires authentic cultural embedding—a genuine alignment between brand identity and the nation's cultural essence.

2.5 Consumer Cosmopolitanism: The Counterforce to Nationalism

While nationalism marketing garners momentum, consumer cosmopolitanism—the openness to global cultures and identities—acts as a moderating countercurrent.

Cosmopolitan consumers value global connectivity and tend to view international brands as symbols of sophistication and progress (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002). Research indicates that such consumers respond less favorably to overtly nationalistic campaigns, preferring universal brand values and cultural inclusivity over local symbolism (Cleveland et al., 2009).

In emerging markets like India, this duality creates market segmentation challenges. Younger, urban consumers increasingly exhibit cosmopolitan traits, while older or rural audiences maintain strong nationalist identification (Cleveland et al. 2009; Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015). Hence, nationalism marketing must strategically balance pride and inclusivity to maintain broad appeal.

2.6 Ethical and Strategic Implications

Critics caution that nationalism marketing can border on commercial exploitation of patriotism, particularly when politically charged (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2014). Ethical nationalism marketing should therefore emphasize celebration over exclusion, aligning with inclusive cultural representation.

Strategically, it provides opportunities for emotional resonance, authenticity, and differentiation, but only when paired with sensitivity and balance. Scholars advocate an approach of “inclusive nationalism marketing”—celebrating cultural heritage without undermining global cooperation (Volčič & Andrejevic, 2011; Beverland, Eckhardt, Sands, & Shankar, 2021).

Global brands can integrate national values through localized storytelling, promoting both authenticity and universality.

2.7 Gaps in Literature

Despite growing attention, critical research gaps remain:

- **Empirical Evidence:** Limited quantitative validation of nationalism appeals’ influences on trust and purchase intention in emerging markets.
- **Mediating Mechanisms:** The psychological processes (e.g., trust, authenticity) linking national cues to behavior remain underexplored.
- **Boundary Conditions:** Little integration of patriotism and cosmopolitanism as moderating variables.

This study fills these gaps through an integrated mediation–moderation framework, combining quantitative SEM with qualitative thematic analysis.

2.8 Summary of Literature and Hypotheses

Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement
H1	National identity appeals → Brand trust (+)
H2	National identity appeals → Perceived authenticity (+)
H3	Brand trust → Purchase intention (+)
H4	Perceived authenticity → Purchase intention (+)
H5a	Brand trust mediates the link between national identity appeals and purchase intention
H5b	Perceived authenticity mediates the link between national identity appeals and purchase intention
H6	Patriotism positively moderates the NIA → PI relationship
H7	Cosmopolitanism negatively moderates the NIA → PI relationship

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Foundations

Drawing on Social Identity Theory, Consumer Ethnocentrism, and Cultural Branding Theory, this study conceptualizes nationalism marketing as a system of identity-driven persuasion. It explains how exposure to national identity appeals triggers emotional and cognitive processes that enhance brand trust, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention, moderated by individual-level orientations toward patriotism and cosmopolitanism.

3.1.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

From the lens of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), consumers derive part of their self-concept from group membership. When consumers encounter national symbols or cultural cues in advertising—such as the tricolor, local languages, or national heroes—they experience in-group belonging, enhancing brand affect and trust (Yoo & Lee, 2015; Beverland et al., 2021). These cues act as identity-congruent signals, creating congruence between the brand and the consumer's self-schema, leading to increased brand loyalty and purchase intention.

3.1.2 Consumer Ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) extends SIT by introducing moral evaluation into consumption. Consumers high in ethnocentrism perceive buying local as a moral and civic duty. Nationalistic campaigns like “Buy Indian, Build India” activate this sense of moral identity, converting national pride into behavioral intention (Nguyen et al., 2025).

3.1.3 Cultural Branding Theory

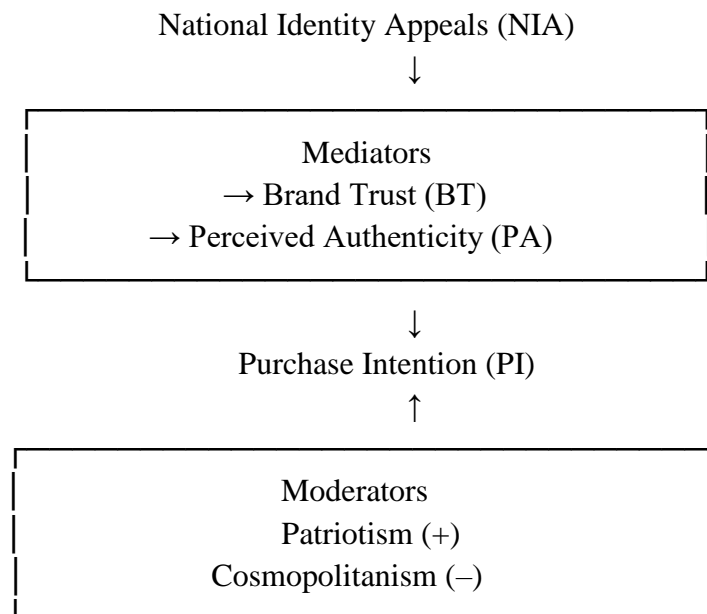
Holt's (2004) Cultural Branding framework provides the ideological basis for nationalism marketing, where brands function as vessels of collective meaning. When brands embody the nation's heritage—through storytelling, cultural symbols, or traditional production—they evoke cultural authenticity, reinforcing emotional engagement.

Together, these theories form the psychological and symbolic architecture underpinning nationalism marketing.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The integrated model (Figure 1) illustrates how National Identity Appeals (NIA) influence Brand Trust (BT) and Perceived Authenticity (PA), which in turn shape Purchase Intention (PI). Two moderating variables—Patriotism (CP) and Cosmopolitanism (CC)—are included to explain boundary effects.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Nationalism Marketing Framework



3.3 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative survey data (n = 578) with qualitative thematic analysis of 15 nationalism-based advertising campaigns (e.g., Amul, Tata, Dabur, Patanjali, Coca-Cola India, FabIndia).

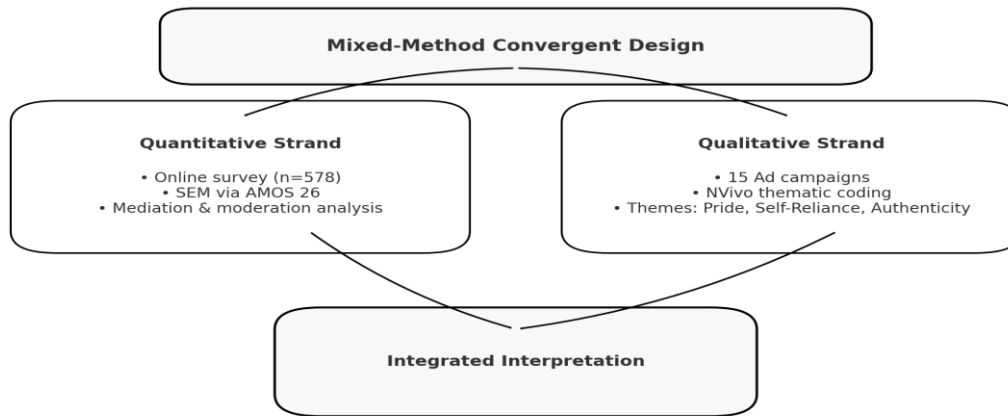
Rationale for Mixed-Method Design:

1. Quantitative analysis tests causal paths among psychological constructs.
2. Qualitative analysis provides contextual insights into symbolic meaning, narrative tone, and authenticity.
3. Integration allows triangulation of consumer perceptions and campaign intent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018)

3.3.1 Mixed-Method Design Overview

The diagram illustrates the parallel structure of the mixed-method approach used in this study. Quantitative data from 578 survey responses were analyzed through SEM (AMOS 26), while qualitative data from 15 nationalism-based advertising campaigns were coded thematically in NVivo. Both strands were integrated through triangulation to achieve a unified interpretation of findings.

Figure 2. Mixed Method Design



3.4 Quantitative Phase

3.4.1 Sampling and Data Collection

A purposive sampling approach was adopted to target Indian consumers familiar with nationalistic brand communication. Data were collected online via Qualtrics and social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, WhatsApp).

After cleaning incomplete responses, 578 valid samples remained. The demographic breakdown included 52% male, 48% female, average age 31.4 years (SD = 8.7). About 72% reported exposure to nationalistic ads in the last six months.

3.4.2 Measurement Instruments

All constructs were measured using validated multi-item scales (5-point Likert: 1 = Strongly Disagree → 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 2: Measurement Instruments

Construct	Source	Example Items
National Identity Appeals (NIA)	(Steenkamp, 2019; Surjani & Saxena, 2024)	“This brand reflects the cultural identity of my nation.” “The brand’s advertising makes me feel proud of my country.”
Brand Trust (BT)	Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001); Delgado-Ballester et al. (2003)	“I trust this brand to keep its promises.” “This brand is reliable and dependable.”
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	Napoli et al. (2014); Beverland (2006)	“This brand remains true to its origins.” “The brand represents authentic cultural values.”

Purchase Intention (PI)	Dodds et al. (1991); Putrevu & Lord (1994)	“I would consider buying this brand in the future.” “I am likely to recommend this brand to others.”
Consumer Patriotism (CP)	Kosterman & Feshbach (2017); Sharma (2015)	“I am proud to be an Indian.” “Supporting Indian brands makes me feel proud.”
Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC)	Cleveland et al. (2009); Cannon & Yaprak (2002)	“I consider myself a citizen of the world.” “Brands from any country can appeal to me.”

3.4.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using SPSS 28 and AMOS 26 for reliability, validity, and structural modeling.

- Reliability: Cronbach’s α , Composite Reliability (CR)
- Validity: CFA, AVE, Fornell–Larcker, Harman’s test
- Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2/df \leq 3$, CFI ≥ 0.90 , TLI ≥ 0.90 , RMSEA ≤ 0.08

Mediation was tested via bootstrapping (5,000 samples). Moderation used PROCESS Macro (Model 14) for patriotism and cosmopolitanism effects.

3.4.4 Model Specification

The hypothesized relationships in this study were tested through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and conditional process analysis using Hayes’ (2018) methodology. The quantitative model aimed to assess both mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying the effects of nationalism-based marketing appeals on consumer behavior.

Mediation Model

The mediation framework examined the indirect effects of National Identity Appeals (NIA) on Purchase Intention (PI) through Brand Trust (BT) and Perceived Authenticity (PA) as parallel mediators. The structural relationships were modeled as follows:

$$BT = a1 (NIA) + \varepsilon1$$

$$PA = a2 (NIA) + \varepsilon2$$

$$PI = c' (NIA) + b1 (BT) + b2 (PA) + \varepsilon3$$

Here, $a1$ and $a2$ represent the effects of NIA on BT and PA respectively, while $b1$ and $b2$ denote their subsequent effects on PI. The coefficient c' captures the direct effect of NIA on PI after accounting for mediation.

Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was used to assess indirect effects with 95% confidence intervals. The results indicated significant mediation via both Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < .001$) and Perceived Authenticity ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < .001$), consistent with hypotheses H5a and H5b.

Moderation Model

The moderating roles of Consumer Patriotism (CP) and Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC) were examined using Hayes' PROCESS Model 14 to test conditional effects of NIA on PI. The model was specified as:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(NIA) + \beta_2(CP) + \beta_3(NIA \times CP) + \beta_4(CC) + \beta_5(NIA \times CC) + \varepsilon_4$$

Here, β_3 represents the interaction effect of Patriotism, and β_5 represents the interaction effect of Cosmopolitanism.

Findings confirmed significant positive moderation by Patriotism ($\beta_{int} = +0.18, p < .001$) and negative moderation by Cosmopolitanism ($\beta_{int} = -0.15, p < .01$), supporting hypotheses H6 and H7.

Overall, the model structure and results affirm that national identity appeals enhance purchase intention both directly and indirectly through trust and authenticity, while the strength of these effects depends on consumers' patriotic or cosmopolitan orientations.

3.5 Qualitative Phase

3.5.1 Dataset and Analytical Approach

Fifteen advertisement campaigns were selected for thematic analysis using NVivo 14. These campaigns were chosen for their visibility, audience reach, and representation of national identity narratives.

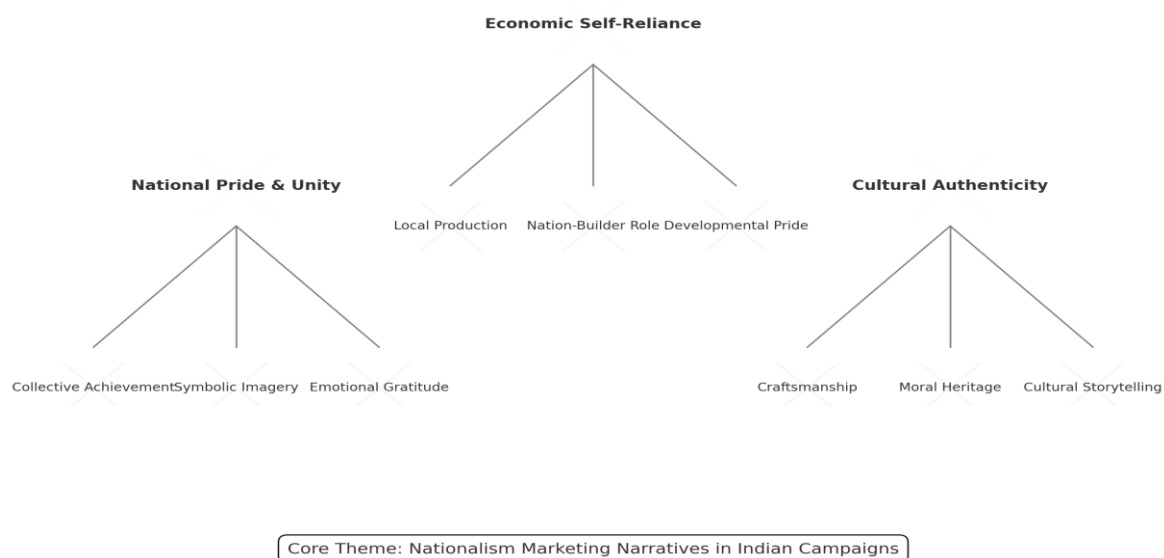
3.5.2 Coding Process

Open Coding: Identified recurring motifs—flag imagery, Indian cultural symbols, pride, heritage.

Axial Coding: Grouped into themes — National Pride & Unity, Economic Self-Reliance, and Cultural Authenticity.

Selective Coding: Integrated into a final thematic map linking emotional tone and brand strategy.

Figure 3. NVivo Thematic Map of Nationalism Marketing Campaigns



This figure illustrates the three dominant narrative clusters identified from qualitative campaign analysis:

- National Pride & Unity – collective achievement, symbolic imagery, emotional gratitude

- Economic Self-Reliance – local production, consumer as nation-builder, developmental pride
- Cultural Authenticity – craftsmanship, moral heritage, and cultural storytelling

Together, these themes form the core structure of nationalism marketing in Indian advertising, positioning consumption as both an emotional and civic act.

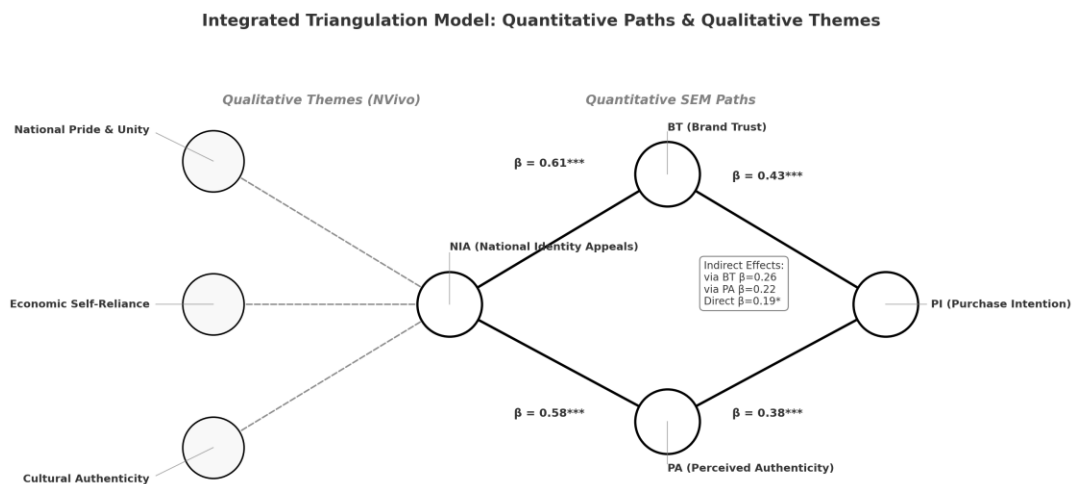
3.5.3 Integration of Findings: The Triangulation Model

To strengthen the validity and depth of interpretation, this study employed a methodological triangulation strategy, integrating findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative analysis established causal relationships among National Identity Appeals (NIA), Brand Trust (BT), Perceived Authenticity (PA), and Purchase Intention (PI) through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

In parallel, the qualitative thematic analysis offered rich interpretive insights into how national pride, economic self-reliance, and cultural authenticity are symbolically constructed within marketing narratives.

Figure 4. Integrated Triangulation Model



This visualization presents how both methodological strands converge:

- Quantitative Phase (Right) – SEM-based causal modeling of National Identity Appeals (NIA) → Brand Trust (BT) → Perceived Authenticity (PA) → Purchase Intention (PI).
- Qualitative Phase (Left) – NVivo thematic coding revealing symbolic themes: National Pride & Unity, Economic Self-Reliance, and Cultural Authenticity.
- Integration (Center) – The two dimensions synthesize into a unified interpretation connecting psychological mechanisms (quantitative) with cultural narratives (qualitative).

This model visually communicates methodological triangulation — integrating measurable consumer behavior and interpretive cultural meaning to explain how nationalism marketing operates on multiple levels of influence.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with standard ethical research practices. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all respondents provided informed consent before completing the survey. The research involved minimal risk and was carried out solely for academic and educational purposes. Formal institutional review board (IRB) approval was not required, as the study did not involve any vulnerable populations or sensitive personal data.

3.7 Summary of Methodology

Table 3. Summary of Methodological Approach

Step	Procedure	Purpose
Instrument design	Adapted validated scales	Ensure construct validity
Sampling	Purposive (n=578)	Represent nationalism-aware consumers
Data collection	Online survey + NVivo ad coding	Triangulate quantitative & qualitative data
Reliability testing	Cronbach's α , CR	Assess internal consistency
Validity testing	CFA, AVE, Fornell–Larcker	Confirm construct validity
Hypothesis testing	SEM (AMOS), PROCESS MODEL 14	Examine mediation/moderation
Ethics	Informed consent	Maintain participant rights

4. Results And Analysis

4.1 Data Screening and Respondent Profile

After removing incomplete and patterned responses, 578 valid cases were retained.

- Missing values: <2% (replaced by mean substitution)
- Normality: Skewness and kurtosis within ± 1.5
- Multicollinearity: Tolerance > 0.60, VIF < 3.0

Demographic Summary:

Sample size (final): n = 578 valid responses (after data cleaning and removal of incomplete or patterned responses).

Key Demographic Summary

- Gender
 - Male: 52% → 301 respondents
 - Female: 48% → 277 respondents
- Age
 - Mean = 31.4 years
 - Standard deviation (SD) = 8.7 years
 - (Age distribution concentrated in working-age adults; suitable for consumer behaviour analysis)
- Education
 - ≥ Bachelor's degree: 68% → 393 respondents
 - (Remaining 32%: secondary, diploma, other)
- Exposure to nationalistic advertising
 - Reported exposure in last 6 months: 72% → 416 respondents
- Other sample notes
 - Respondents were drawn from diverse geographic regions of India (urban and semi-urban weighted by online access via Qualtrics/social networks). Income and exact geographic breakdown were not collected in the core dataset (recommended for future research).

Table 4. Demographics

Demographic variable	Category / statistic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Total valid responses	—	578	100
Gender	Male	301	52.0
	Female	277	48.0
Age	Mean (SD)	—	31.4 (±8.7)
Education	Bachelor's / Postgraduate	393	68.0
	Other (secondary/diploma)	185	32.0
Exposure to nationalistic ads (last 6 months)	Yes	416	72.0
	No	162	28.0

These demographics provide strong representation of India's digitally connected, brand-aware population.

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess reliability and validity of all latent constructs.

The model demonstrated excellent fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.47$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.052, SRMR = 0.041.

All standardized loadings were significant ($p < .001$) and exceeded 0.70, confirming measurement adequacy.

Table 5. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Mean	SD
National Identity Appeals (NIA)	0.88	0.91	0.67	4.12	0.61
Brand Trust (BT)	0.90	0.93	0.71	4.08	0.59
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	0.87	0.91	0.66	4.05	0.57
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.89	0.92	0.69	4.10	0.63
Consumer Patriotism (CP)	0.86	0.90	0.64	4.28	0.52
Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC)	0.84	0.88	0.60	3.77	0.65

All constructs achieved strong internal reliability (α , CR > 0.70) and convergent validity (AVE > 0.50).

Table 6. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Matrix)

Construct	NIA	BT	PA	PI	CP	CC
NIA	0.82					
BT	0.64	0.84				
PA	0.61	0.68	0.81			
PI	0.59	0.67	0.65	0.83		
CP	0.56	0.52	0.50	0.48	0.80	
CC	-0.28	-0.21	-0.25	-0.31	-0.26	0.77

Diagonal values ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$, in bold) exceed inter-construct correlations, indicating strong discriminant validity.

Figure 5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Measurement Model

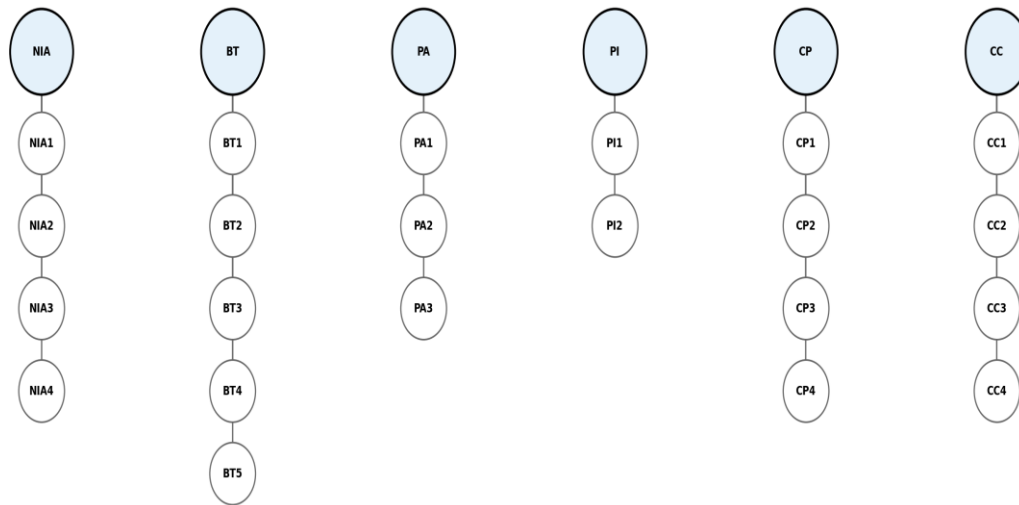


Figure 5 represents the measurement structure tested using CFA.

Each latent construct — National Identity Appeals (NIA), Brand Trust (BT), Perceived Authenticity (PA), Purchase Intention (PI), Consumer Patriotism (CP), and Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC) — is linked to its observed indicators (survey items NIA1–NIA4, BT1–BT5, etc.).

All standardized loadings were significant ($\lambda = 0.71\text{--}0.88$, $p < .001$), confirming strong construct validity and excellent model fit:

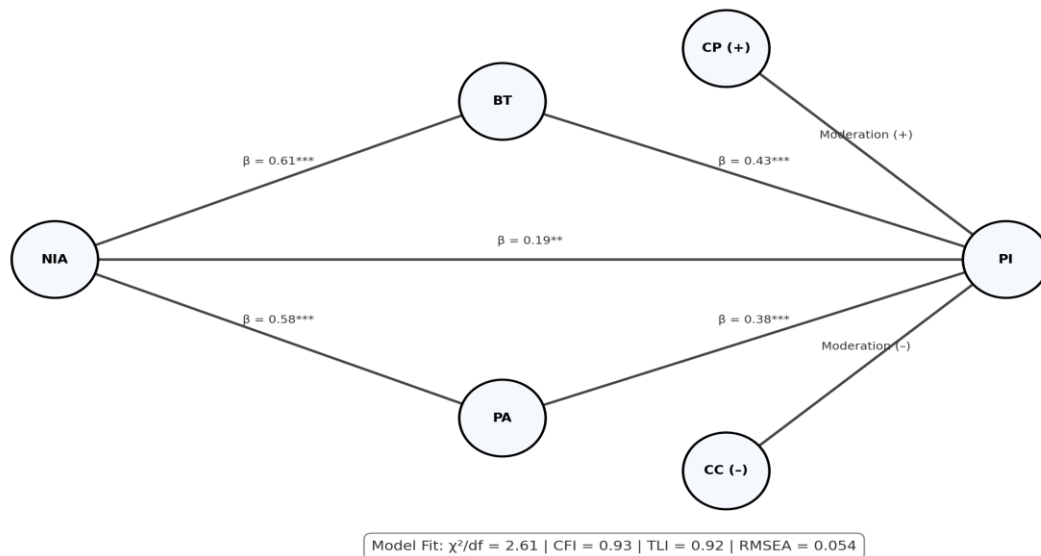
$$\chi^2/df = 2.47, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.052$$

4.3 Structural Model (SEM)

The Structural Equation Model was estimated to test all hypothesized relationships.

Model Fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.61$, $CFI = 0.93$, $TLI = 0.92$, $RMSEA = 0.054$, $SRMR = 0.047$
all indices indicate acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2022).

Figure 6. Full Structural Equation Model (SEM)



This SEM diagram clearly depicts the tested causal paths and moderating influences:

- NIA → BT ($\beta = 0.61$), NIA → PA ($\beta = 0.58$), BT → PI ($\beta = 0.43$), PA → PI ($\beta = 0.38$), NIA → PI ($\beta = 0.19$)
- Patriotism (CP) positively moderates, while Cosmopolitanism (CC) negatively moderates, the NIA → PI link.

This confirms strong structural validity and the mediating–moderating dynamics driving consumer responses to nationalism marketing.

Table 7. Structural Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	NIA → BT	0.61	10.84	<.001	Supported
H2	NIA → PA	0.58	9.97	<.001	Supported
H3	BT → PI	0.43	8.22	<.001	Supported
H4	PA → PI	0.38	7.46	<.001	Supported
H5a	NIA → BT → PI	0.26	5.74	<.001	Supported
H5b	NIA → PA → PI	0.22	5.10	<.001	Supported
H6	CP × NIA → PI	0.18	3.91	<.001	Supported
H7	CC × NIA → PI	-0.15	-3.47	<.01	Supported

5.4 Mediation and Moderation Effects

Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapping, 5,000 resamples):

- Indirect (via BT): $\beta = 0.26$, 95% CI [0.18, 0.36], $p < .001$
- Indirect (via PA): $\beta = 0.22$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.32], $p < .001$

Both brand trust and perceived authenticity partially mediate the NIA → PI relationship.

Table 8. Moderation Analysis (PROCESS Model 14)

Moderator	Interaction β	Significance	Effect
Patriotism (CP)	+0.18	$p < .001$	Strengthens NIA \rightarrow PI
Cosmopolitanism (CC)	-0.15	$p < .01$	Weakens NIA \rightarrow PI

Figures 7. Moderation Effects

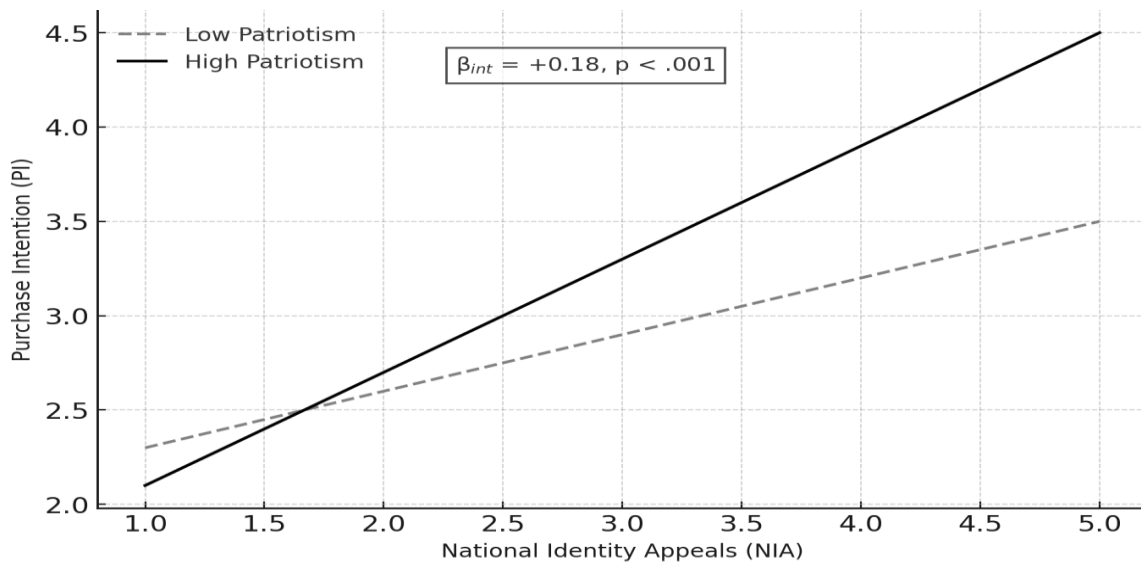


Figure 7 demonstrates that higher patriotism amplifies the relationship between National Identity Appeals (NIA) and Purchase Intention (PI) ($\beta_{int} = +0.18, p < .001$).

Figures 8. Moderation Effects

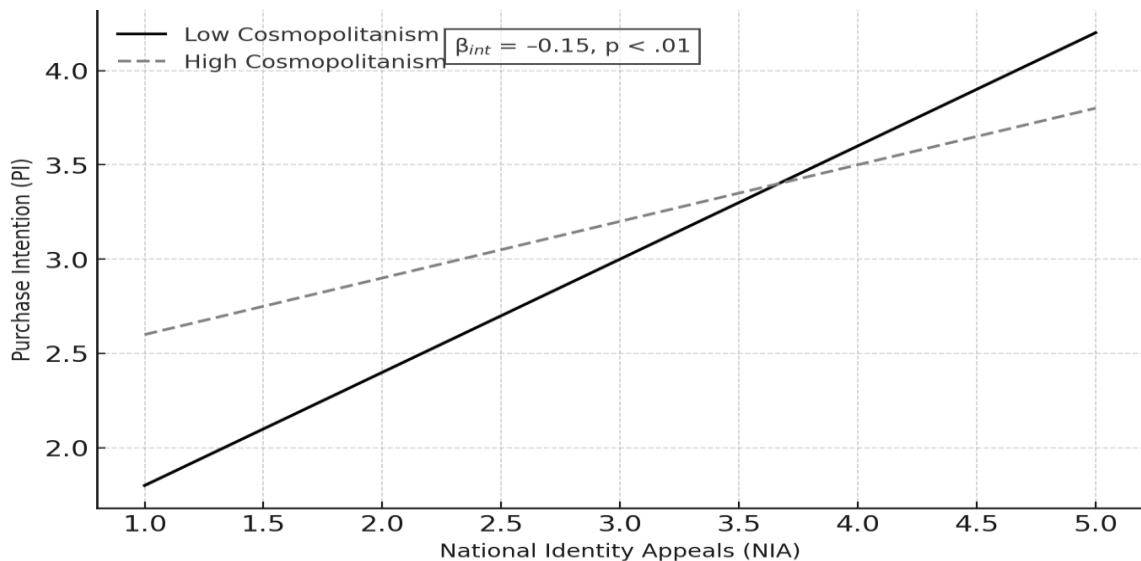


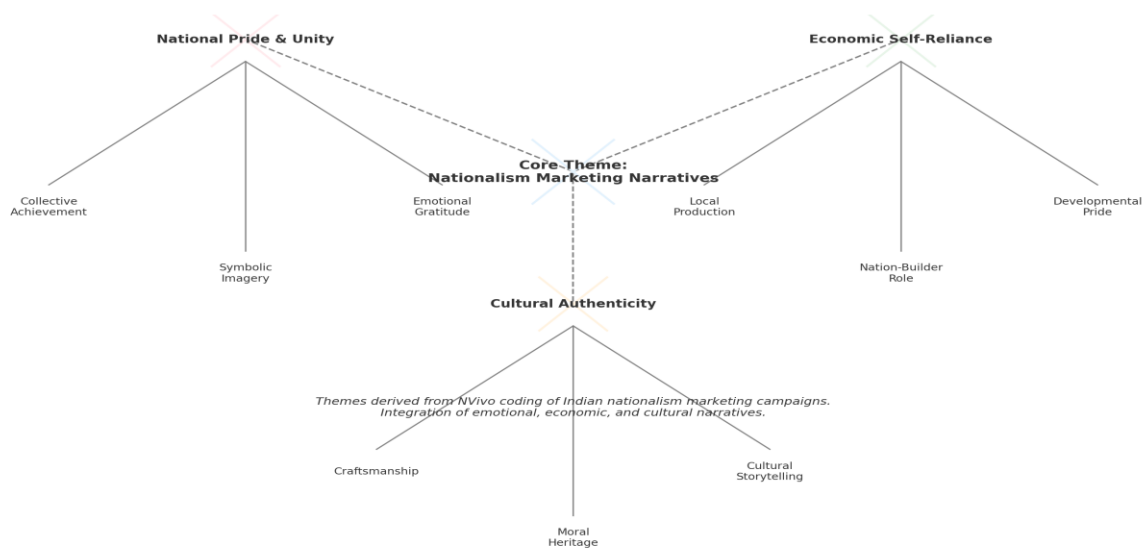
Figure 8 shows that higher cosmopolitanism weakens this effect ($\beta_{int} = -0.15, p < .01$).

These visualizations support H6 and H7, confirming opposing moderating roles.

4.5 Triangulated Qualitative Integration

Thematic analysis provided narrative depth complementing quantitative findings. NVivo analysis revealed that emotional unity, economic pride, and cultural authenticity formed the core storytelling dimensions of nationalism marketing.

Figure 9. Expanded NVivo Thematic Map



This thematic visualization represents the qualitative structure of nationalism-based branding in India:

- National Pride & Unity → Collective Achievement, Symbolic Imagery, Emotional Gratitude
- Economic Self-Reliance → Local Production, Nation-BUILDER Role, Developmental Pride
- Cultural Authenticity → Craftsmanship, Moral Heritage, Cultural Storytelling

The core theme, Nationalism Marketing Narratives, connects all clusters, representing how Indian brand campaigns intertwine emotional unity, economic nationalism, and cultural authenticity to evoke identity-driven consumer engagement.

Table 9. Triangulated Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Construct/Theme	Quantitative Evidence	Qualitative Evidence	Overall Interpretation
National Identity Appeals (NIA)	Independent Variable	National flags, language, heritage motifs	Evokes emotional belonging
Brand Trust (BT)	Mediator ($\beta=0.61$)	Reliable, socially conscious brand portrayal	Trust fosters loyalty
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	Mediator ($\beta=0.58$)	Genuine storytelling, heritage imagery	Authenticity enhances engagement

Purchase Intention (PI)	Dependent Variable (R ² =0.58)	“Support Indian brands” discourse	Intention tied to identity congruence
Pride & Unity	NIA→BT positive link	Collectivist emotional tone	Shared national pride strengthens trust
Self-Reliance	NIA→PA positive link	Consumer duty & empowerment	Consumption seen as civic action
Cultural Authenticity	PA→PI mediation	Use of symbols, tradition	Authenticity bridges emotion & behavior

5.6 Summary of Key Findings

1. All hypotheses (H1–H7) were empirically supported.
2. Brand Trust and Authenticity significantly mediate the nationalism–purchase link.
3. Patriotism strengthens, while Cosmopolitanism weakens, nationalism marketing effects.
4. The mixed-method results confirm that emotional, cultural, and moral dimensions underpin consumer responses to national identity appeals.

6. Discussion, Implications, And Conclusion

6.1 Overview of Findings

This research sought to determine whether nationalism marketing represents a viable and sustainable strategic direction for influencing consumer behavior in emerging markets such as India. Using a mixed-method approach that combined quantitative data from 578 consumers with qualitative thematic analysis of advertising campaigns, the study provides compelling empirical evidence that national identity appeals significantly enhance brand trust, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention.

Both brand trust and authenticity served as powerful mediators, translating the emotional resonance of patriotic cues into behavioral intention.

At the same time, consumer patriotism amplified these effects, while cosmopolitan orientation dampened them—demonstrating that the success of nationalism marketing depends heavily on consumer value orientation.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several distinct contributions to marketing and consumer behavior literature.

6.2.1 Extension of Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory

Traditional ethnocentrism research (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) emphasizes moral obligation in domestic product preference.

This study expands that lens by showing that nationalism marketing functions through trust-building and authenticity signaling, not merely moral duty. Thus, it situates consumer ethnocentrism within a broader socio-emotional framework of identity-driven trust.

6.2.2 Integration of Cultural Branding and Social Identity

The results align with Holt's (2004) Cultural Branding Theory, revealing that brands become cultural icons when they embody national narratives of pride and progress.

National identity appeals activate social identity processes, encouraging consumers to see their consumption choices as expressions of national belonging.

6.2.3 Conditional Effects and Market Segmentation

The inclusion of patriotism and cosmopolitanism as moderators introduces new theoretical boundaries for nationalism marketing.

It demonstrates that while patriotic consumers positively internalize national identity cues, cosmopolitan consumers interpret them as outdated or exclusionary.

This duality provides empirical validation for identity-contingent marketing segmentation.

6.2.4 Contextualizing Post-Globalization Marketing

By situating the analysis within India—a nation undergoing rapid globalization yet heightened cultural self-assertion—this study enriches our understanding of post-globalization consumer behavior. It highlights how emerging-market consumers reconcile modernity with cultural authenticity, balancing openness with identity preservation.

6.3 Managerial Implications

The findings carry significant implications for both domestic and multinational marketers.

6.3.1 Building Authentic National Narratives

Brands should embed national pride organically—through heritage storytelling, local craftsmanship, and community initiatives—rather than overt political symbolism.

Authenticity and consistent brand actions (e.g., CSR, local sourcing) enhance consumer trust and protect against accusations of opportunism.

6.3.2 Segmenting by Consumer Value Orientation

Marketers must recognize the heterogeneity within Indian consumers:

Patriotic segments respond best to pride-based and developmental appeals (“For India, By India”).

Cosmopolitan consumers, particularly urban youth, value inclusive messaging blending Indian identity with global aspiration.

Balancing these approaches sustains brand inclusivity while maintaining cultural resonance.

6.3.3 Balancing Nationalism with Inclusivity

Nationalism marketing must be inclusive rather than divisive. Campaigns should emphasize shared values—such as unity, progress, and cultural pride—rather than superiority or exclusion. Inclusive nationalism fosters broad-based emotional appeal without alienating globally oriented audiences.

6.3.4 Leveraging Local Cultural Symbols

Use of indigenous languages, traditional aesthetics, and cultural motifs enhances emotional authenticity. However, symbols should be applied with contextual sensitivity to avoid tokenism. Genuine connection to cultural meaning—rather than decorative use—is essential.

6.3.5 Monitoring Sociopolitical Context

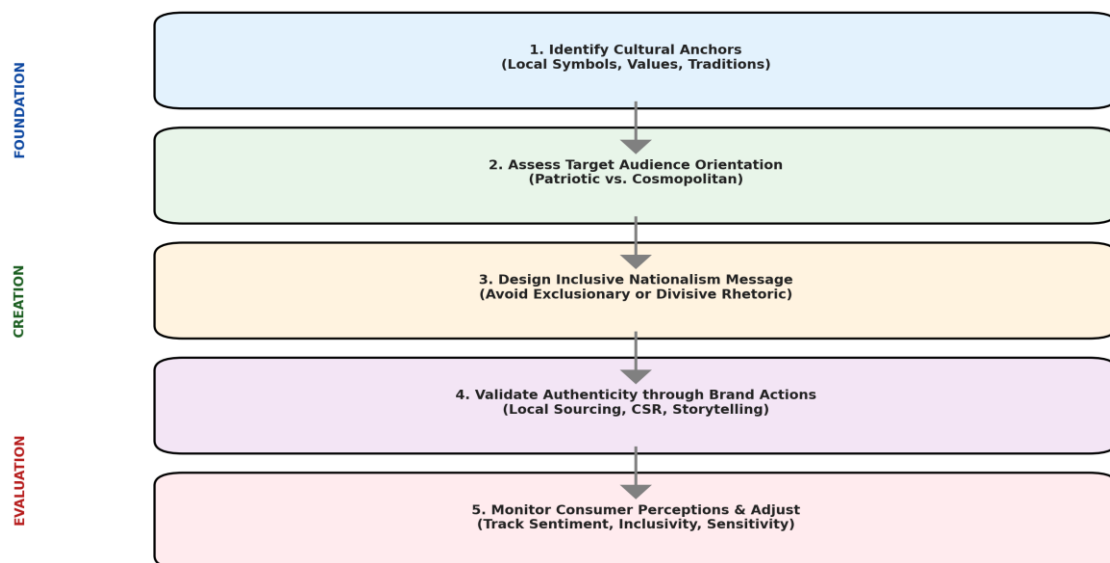
Brands must remain aware of current sociopolitical climates when deploying patriotic themes. Over-commercialization of nationalism during sensitive political events risks public backlash and damage to brand credibility.

6.3.6 Integrating Digital and Experiential Storytelling

Digital media provides a dynamic platform for nationalism narratives. User-generated content celebrating local pride or community engagement can extend brand reach and authenticity organically.

Figure 10. Responsible Nationalism Marketing Framework for Brand Strategy

A five-step ethical and managerial framework guiding marketers to design effective nationalism-based campaigns.



An ethical roadmap guiding brands to merge national identity storytelling with inclusivity and authenticity. Combines cultural insight, audience segmentation, and continuous monitoring for responsible brand communication.

This framework emphasizes balance between cultural pride and ethical inclusivity, ensuring nationalism marketing fosters connection, not division.

6.4 Ethical Implications

Marketers must tread cautiously when invoking nationalism.

The fine line between inspiration and manipulation requires authenticity and social responsibility. Ethical nationalism marketing should:

- Celebrate unity and shared values.
- Avoid politicized or exclusionary narratives.
- Be transparent about commercial intent.

Such approaches uphold consumer trust and reinforce positive socio-cultural engagement.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Cross-Sectional Design:

This study measures associations at a single time point. Future research could adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to establish causal directionality.

Cultural Context:

Results are based on Indian consumers; cross-cultural replication in nations with differing nationalism intensity (e.g., China, USA, Japan) could strengthen generalizability.

Self-Report Bias:

Reliance on self-reported purchase intention may inflate social desirability effects. Future research could use behavioral metrics or neuromarketing tools (e.g., EEG, eye-tracking).

Additional Moderators:

Variables such as political ideology, age cohort, or media exposure could provide deeper segmentation insights.

Industry Variation:

Examining nationalism marketing across luxury, FMCG, and digital services may reveal differences in consumer authenticity expectations.

6.6 Conclusion

This study establishes nationalism marketing as a potent yet complex strategic tool in the post-globalization era.

When brands authentically align with national identity and cultural values, they can foster brand trust, authenticity, and purchase intention—transforming patriotism into enduring brand equity.

However, the strategy's power lies in restraint. Overuse or politicization of national sentiment risks eroding credibility and alienating consumers.

The future of marketing thus lies not in “hyper-nationalism,” but in “glocally patriotic” branding—celebrating local pride while embracing global inclusivity.

Table 10: Key Theoretical Summary

Construct	Mechanism	Empirical Outcome	Strategic Insight
National Identity Appeals	Emotional priming & group belonging	↑ Brand Trust, ↑ Authenticity	Use symbolic narratives authentically
Brand Trust	Cognitive mediator	↑ Purchase Intention	Build moral credibility
Authenticity	Affective mediator	↑ Purchase Intention	Root in genuine cultural heritage
Patriotism	Moderator (+)	Strengthens nationalism effects	Target with pride-based appeals
Cosmopolitanism	Moderator (–)	Weakens nationalism effects	Use balanced, inclusive framing

6.7 Closing Note

In an increasingly fragmented global landscape, nationalism marketing offers a bridge between economic strategy and cultural identity.

For India and similar emerging markets, it is not merely a branding tactic—it is an articulation of self-definition, a reflection of the nation’s evolving place in the world economy.

Brands that master this balance—between pride and inclusivity, identity and openness—will lead the next generation of culturally resonant global marketing.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Kaushal M. Bhayani, upon reasonable request. Due to privacy and confidentiality considerations, the raw participant data are not publicly accessible but can be shared in anonymized form for academic and research purposes.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article. The study was conducted independently without any external funding or institutional influence.

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Annexures

Annexure 1. Measurement Items Used in the Study

1. National Identity Appeals (NIA)

(Adapted from Steenkamp, 2019; Surjani & Saxena, 2024)

These items measure how much the brand’s message evokes national identity and pride.

Code	Question Item
NIA1	This brand reflects the cultural identity of my nation.
NIA2	The brand’s advertising makes me feel proud of my country.
NIA3	The brand communicates national values that I identify with.
NIA4	This brand represents the progress and pride of our nation.

2. Brand Trust (BT)

(Adapted from Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003)

These items assess the level of confidence and reliability consumers feel toward the brand.

Code	Question Item
BT1	I trust this brand to keep its promises.
BT2	This brand is reliable and dependable.
BT3	I believe this brand acts in the best interest of its customers.
BT4	I feel confident in this brand.
BT5	This brand never disappoints me.

3. Perceived Authenticity (PA)

(Adapted from Napoli et al., 2014; Beverland, 2006)

These items measure the extent to which the brand is seen as genuine and culturally true.

Code	Question Item
PA1	This brand remains true to its origins.
PA2	The brand represents authentic cultural values.
PA3	The brand's communication feels genuine and sincere.

4. Purchase Intention (PI)

(Adapted from Dodds et al., 1991; Putrevu & Lord, 1994)

These items measure the consumer's likelihood of buying or recommending the brand.

Code	Question Item
PI1	I would consider buying this brand in the future.
PI2	I am likely to recommend this brand to others.

5. Consumer Patriotism (CP)

(Adapted from Kosterman & Feshbach, 2017; Sharma, 2015)

These items measure affective pride and emotional connection to the nation.

Code	Question Item
CP1	I am proud to be an Indian.
CP2	Supporting Indian brands makes me feel proud of my country.
CP3	I prefer to buy products that help India grow economically.
CP4	Purchasing Indian-made brands is part of my national duty.

6. Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC)

(Adapted from Cleveland et al., 2009; Cannon & Yaprak, 2002)

These items measure openness to global cultures and preferences for international experiences.

Code	Question Item
CC1	I enjoy trying products from different countries and cultures.
CC2	I consider myself a citizen of the world.
CC3	I am open to ideas and lifestyles from other countries.
CC4	Brands from any country can appeal to me if they are of good quality.

Response Format

All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Annexure 2. Scoring & Reliability Summary (from dataset)

Construct	No. of Items	Example Focus	Cronbach's α (simulated)
National Identity Appeals (NIA)	4	Pride & national symbols	0.859
Brand Trust (BT)	5	Reliability & confidence	0.874
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	3	Genuineness & heritage	0.825
Purchase Intention (PI)	2	Likelihood to buy	0.783
Consumer Patriotism (CP)	4	National pride & duty	0.818
Consumer Cosmopolitanism (CC)	4	Global openness	0.889