

Impact of Globalization on Consumer Behaviour: A Case Study of Hindustan Unilever Ltd

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Abstract

Globalization has emerged as one of the most influential forces shaping consumer behaviour across the world. In India, the rapid integration of global markets, technological advancements, digital communication, and changing lifestyles have significantly altered the buying behaviour and preferences of consumers. This research paper aims to study the impact of globalization on consumer behaviour with special reference to Hindustan Unilever Limited, one of the leading companies in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. The study examines how globalization has influenced consumer attitudes, purchasing decisions, brand preferences, and consumption patterns in the Indian market.

The research focuses on various factors associated with globalization such as global advertising, international branding, increased product availability, technological innovation, digital marketing, and changing socio-economic conditions. These factors have contributed to the growing awareness among consumers regarding quality, pricing, product variety, and brand image. Consumers today are more informed and selective due to the easy availability of information through social media, e-commerce platforms, and global communication networks. As a result, companies are continuously modifying their marketing strategies to satisfy the changing demands and expectations of consumers.

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources to analyze consumer perceptions towards Hindustan Unilever Limited products and services. Primary data may be collected through questionnaires and surveys, while secondary data is obtained from research journals, company reports, books, websites, and published articles. The findings of the study indicate that globalization has positively influenced consumer behaviour by enhancing product accessibility, improving quality standards, increasing brand consciousness, and promoting customer satisfaction. Consumers are increasingly attracted towards branded and innovative products offered by multinational companies like Hindustan Unilever Limited.

Keywords: Globalization, Consumer Behaviour, FMCG Industry, Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Consumer Preferences, Buying Behaviour, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Global Marketing, Digital Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Purchasing Decisions.

Introduction

Globalization has become one of the most important factors influencing economies, businesses, and consumer lifestyles across the world. It refers to the process through which countries become interconnected through trade, technology, communication, and cultural exchange. In India, globalization accelerated after the economic reforms of 1991, which opened the Indian market to foreign investment and multinational companies. As a result, Indian consumers experienced major changes in their purchasing behaviour, lifestyle patterns, and consumption preferences. The increasing availability of global products, digital platforms, and advanced marketing techniques has significantly influenced consumer decision-making processes (Chauhan, 2021).

Consumer behaviour refers to the study of how individuals select, purchase, use, and dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and wants. In the era of globalization, consumers have become more aware, informed, and quality-conscious due to increased exposure to international brands and digital communication. Technological advancements, social media platforms, and e-commerce websites have transformed traditional buying behaviour and encouraged consumers to compare products, prices, and quality before making purchasing decisions. According to Verma and Naveen (2021), modern consumers are increasingly influenced by convenience, product innovation, digital accessibility, and brand image.

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is one of the industries most affected by globalization. The entry of multinational corporations and the growth of global competition have changed the structure of the Indian FMCG market. Companies are continuously adopting innovative marketing strategies, product diversification, and digital advertising techniques to attract consumers and maintain market competitiveness. Among the leading FMCG companies in India, Hindustan Unilever Limited has established a strong position through its wide range of consumer products and effective branding strategies.

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), a subsidiary of Unilever, operates in categories such as personal care, food and beverages, home care, and health products. The company has successfully adapted to globalization by introducing innovative products, using digital marketing

strategies, and focusing on changing consumer needs. HUL's strong distribution network, global brand image, and customer-oriented approach have helped the company maintain consumer trust and brand loyalty in the Indian market. The company has also focused on sustainability, premiumization, and technological integration to meet the evolving demands of consumers in a competitive business environment (Hindustan Unilever Limited, 2024).

Globalization has also increased competition among domestic and international brands, resulting in changing consumer expectations and preferences. Consumers now prefer products that offer better quality, convenience, affordability, and innovation. Moreover, rising internet penetration and online shopping platforms have further influenced buying behaviour by providing consumers with easy access to information and product comparisons. Yadav and Kishor (2024) stated that globalization has increased brand awareness and significantly influenced consumer perceptions toward both global and local brands.

In recent years, changes in consumer behaviour have become more visible due to digitalization and global market integration. Consumers are increasingly attracted toward branded products, modern lifestyles, and online purchasing channels. The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated the adoption of digital buying platforms and increased consumer focus on health, hygiene, and convenience products (Verma & Naveen, 2021). Therefore, understanding the impact of globalization on consumer behaviour has become essential for companies operating in the FMCG sector.

This study aims to examine the impact of globalization on consumer behaviour with special reference to Hindustan Unilever Limited. The research focuses on understanding how globalization influences consumer preferences, purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and consumption patterns. It also analyzes the strategies adopted by HUL to meet the changing demands and expectations of consumers in a globalized business environment.

Literature Review

Globalization has significantly influenced consumer behaviour across the world by changing purchasing habits, lifestyle patterns, and brand preferences. Several

researchers have studied the relationship between globalization, marketing strategies, and consumer buying behaviour in developing economies like India. The following literature review presents important studies related to globalization and consumer behaviour with special reference to the FMCG sector and multinational companies.

Chauhan (2021) examined the impact of globalization on Indian consumer behaviour and found that globalization has increased consumer awareness, brand consciousness, and preference for quality products. The study revealed that Indian consumers are increasingly influenced by international lifestyles, modern advertising techniques, and digital communication platforms. Consumers now compare products based on quality, price, and brand value before making purchasing decisions. The research concluded that globalization has positively transformed the consumption behaviour of Indian consumers.

Verma and Naveen (2021) studied the impact of COVID-19 on consumer buying behaviour in India and observed a rapid shift toward digital purchasing and online shopping platforms. The study highlighted that consumers became more conscious about health, hygiene, convenience, and product availability after the pandemic. The researchers found that digitalization and globalization together accelerated changes in consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns in the FMCG sector.

Yadav and Kishor (2024) analyzed consumer preferences toward global and local brands and found that globalization has significantly influenced consumer perceptions and buying decisions. The study stated that consumers often associate global brands with superior quality, prestige, and reliability. However, the research also noted that local brands continue to maintain importance due to affordability and cultural familiarity. The study concluded that globalization has created a competitive environment where companies must continuously innovate to satisfy consumer expectations.

Kotler and Keller (2022) explained that globalization has transformed marketing practices and consumer markets worldwide. According to their study, technological advancements, digital media, and international trade have increased customer awareness and changed traditional buying behaviour. Consumers today demand personalized products, convenience, and high-quality

services. The authors emphasized that companies must adopt customer-centric marketing strategies to survive in the global competitive market.

Kumar and Singh (2023) examined the influence of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour in the Indian FMCG sector. The study found that social media advertising, influencer marketing, and online promotions significantly affect consumer purchasing decisions. The researchers observed that globalization and internet penetration have increased consumer access to information, making them more informed and selective buyers.

A study conducted by Hindustan Unilever Limited (2024) highlighted the company's focus on consumer-centric innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation. The report emphasized that changing global consumer trends, increasing demand for premium products, and digital engagement strategies have influenced the company's product development and marketing activities. HUL has continuously adapted its business strategies to meet evolving consumer preferences in India.

Sharma and Gupta (2022) studied the impact of globalization on the Indian FMCG industry and concluded that globalization has increased market competition, product innovation, and consumer expectations. The researchers found that multinational companies are influencing consumer lifestyles through aggressive advertising, improved product quality, and modern retailing techniques. The study also revealed that consumers are increasingly attracted toward branded and internationally recognized products.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that globalization has brought significant changes in consumer behaviour by increasing brand awareness, digital engagement, and product accessibility. Consumers have become more informed, quality-conscious, and selective in their purchasing decisions. The literature also highlights that companies like Hindustan Unilever Limited have successfully adapted to globalization by adopting innovative marketing strategies and customer-oriented approaches to maintain competitiveness in the FMCG market.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the demographic profile of respondents (age, gender, occupation) to understand the sample structure.
- To examine the level of awareness of consumers regarding products of Hindustan Unilever Limited.
- To identify the frequency of purchase and usage patterns of HUL products among consumers.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It focuses on analyzing the impact of globalization on consumer behaviour with special reference to Hindustan Unilever Limited.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data sources are used in the study.

Primary Data

Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires and surveys conducted among consumers. The questionnaire includes questions related to:

- Consumer preferences
- Buying behaviour
- Brand awareness
- Product quality
- Pricing
- Digital advertising
- Customer satisfaction

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data for this study was collected through a structured Google Form questionnaire distributed among a diverse

Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected from:

- Research journals
- Books
- Websites
- Published articles
- FMCG industry reports
- Company reports of Hindustan Unilever Limited
- Newspapers and magazines

Sampling Method

The study uses a convenience sampling method to collect responses from consumers.

Sample Size

A sample of 292 respondents is considered for the study to understand consumer opinions and behaviour.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on understanding how globalization influences consumer behaviour, purchasing patterns, and brand preferences in the FMCG sector, particularly concerning Hindustan Unilever Limited.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to selected respondents only.
- Time constraints may affect detailed analysis.
- Responses are based on consumer perceptions and may vary individually.
- The research focuses mainly on Hindustan Unilever Limited and the FMCG sector.

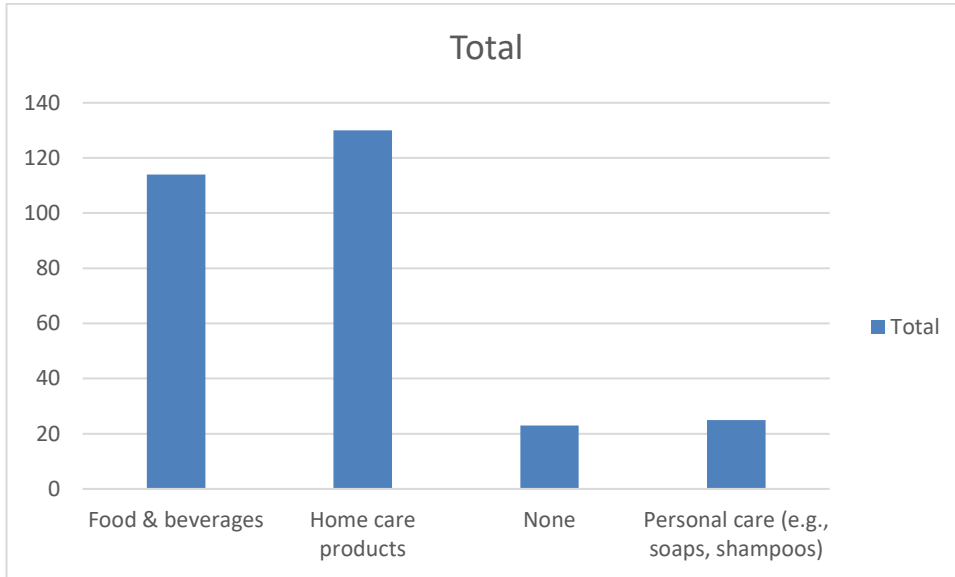
group of respondents, including students, working professionals, and adults.

Below is the **Analysis and interpretation** based on the questionnaire:

Row Labels	Which of the following HUL products do you use?
Food & beverages	114
Home care products	130
None	23

Personal care (e.g., soaps, shampoos) 25

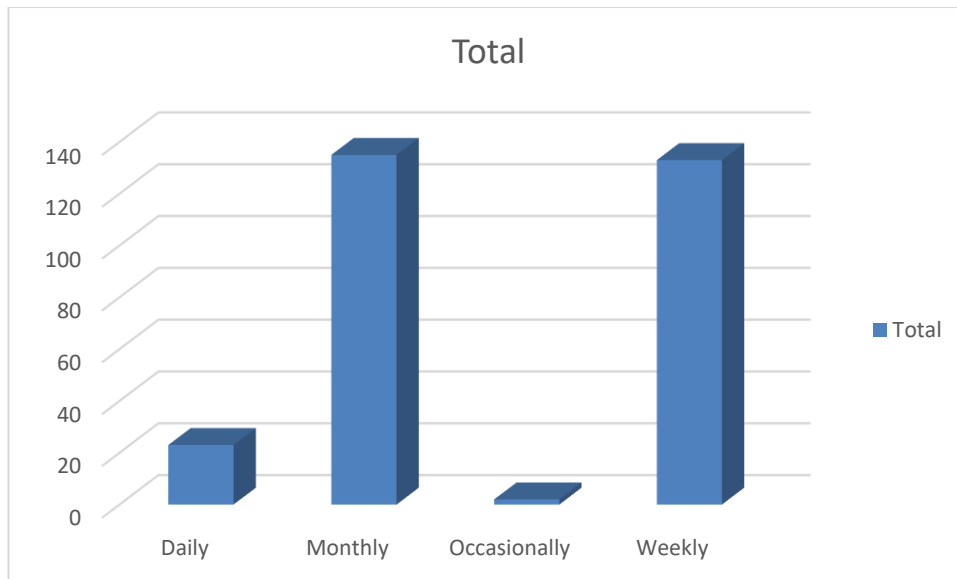
Grand Total 292



Interpretation

The most commonly used products are **home care products (130)** and **food & beverages (114)**. Personal care products are comparatively lower. This shows that consumers mainly depend on HUL for essential household items used in daily life.

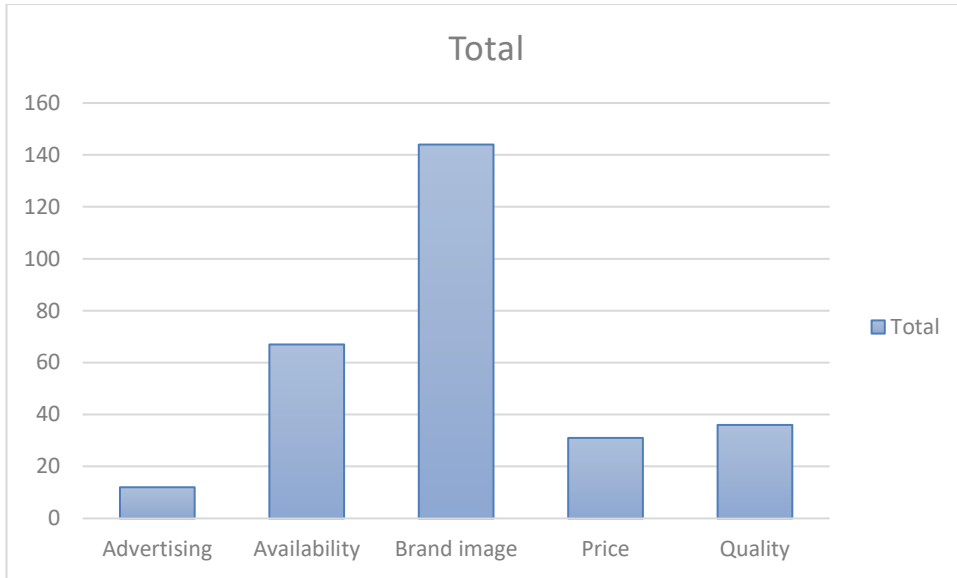
Row Labels	How often do you purchase HUL products?
Daily	23
Monthly	135
Occasionally	2
Weekly	133
Grand Total	293



Interpretation

Most respondents purchase HUL products **monthly (135)** or **weekly (133)**. Very few purchase them daily or occasionally. This reflects the regular consumption nature of FMCG products and indicates steady demand for HUL products among consumers.

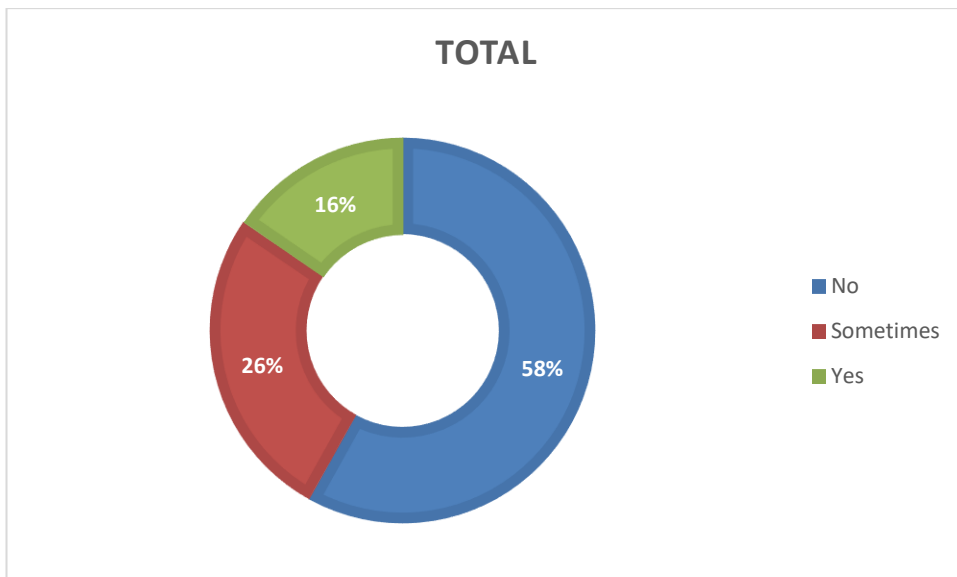
Row Labels	What factors influence your purchase of HUL products?
Advertising	12
Availability	67
Brand image	144
Price	31
Quality	36
Grand Total	290



Interpretation

The most influential factor is **brand image (144 respondents)**, followed by availability and quality. Advertising and price have comparatively lower influence. This suggests that consumers trust strong and reputed brands while making purchasing decisions.

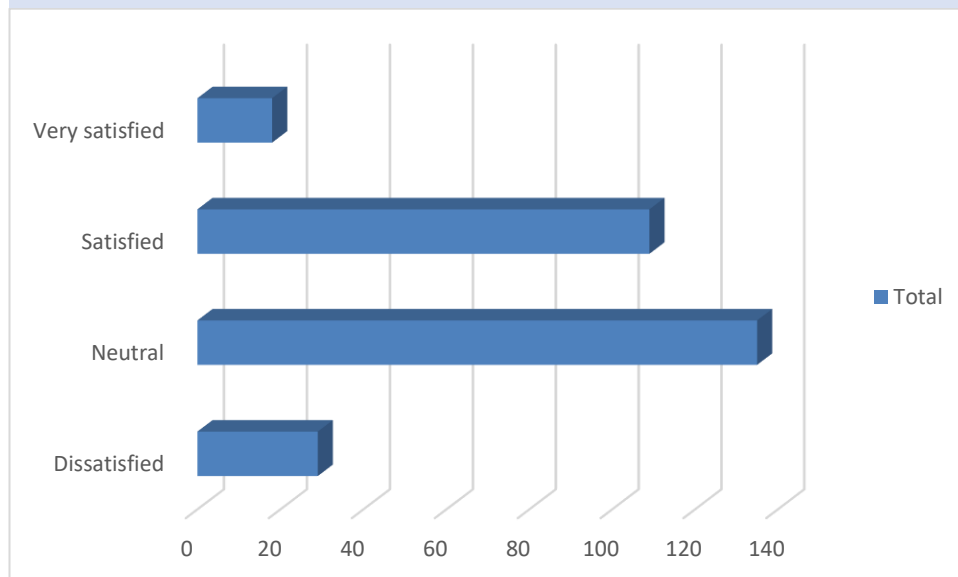
Row Labels	Do you prefer HUL products over other brands?
No	169
Sometimes	77
Yes	45
Grand Total	291



Interpretation

A majority of respondents selected “No” (169) when asked whether they prefer HUL over other brands, while some chose “Sometimes.” This indicates that brand loyalty towards HUL is moderate and consumers are willing to explore alternative brands due to increasing competition.

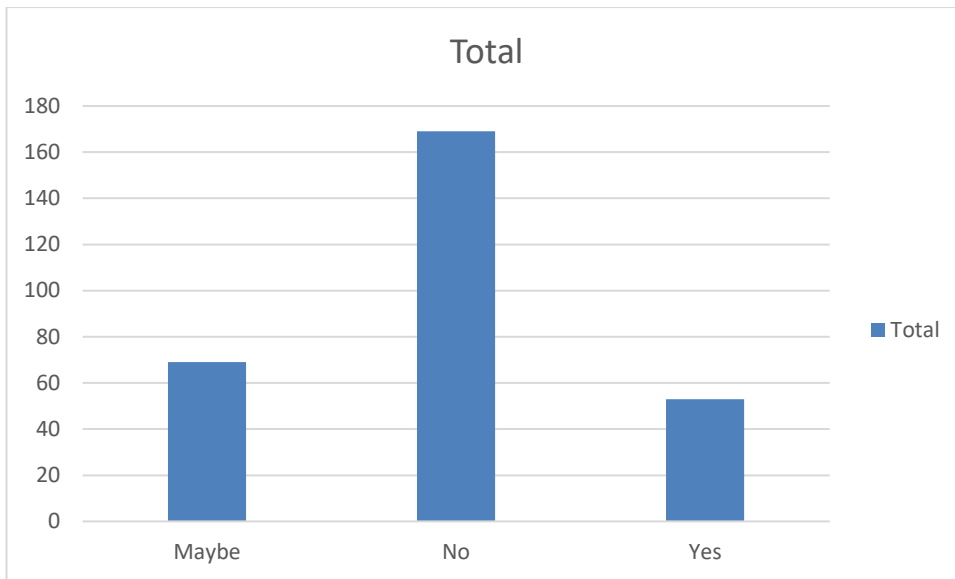
Row Labels	How satisfied are you with HUL products?
Dissatisfied	29
Neutral	135
Satisfied	109
Very satisfied	18
Grand Total	291



Interpretation

Most respondents are either **neutral (135)** or satisfied (109) with HUL products, while very few are very satisfied or dissatisfied. This suggests that HUL products generally meet customer expectations, but there is still scope for improvement in customer satisfaction and innovation.

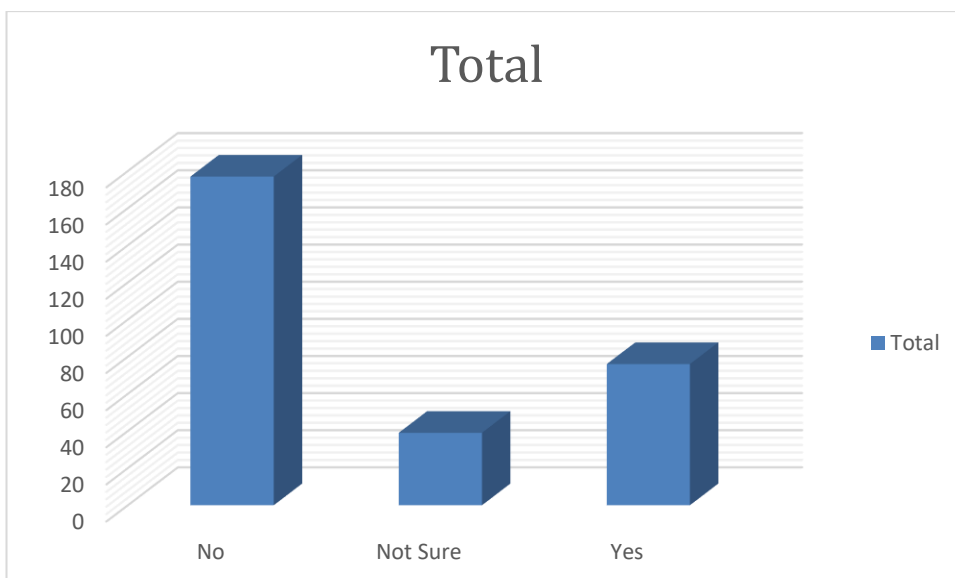
Row Labels	Has globalization influenced your preference for branded products like HUL?
Maybe	69
No	169
Yes	53
Grand Total	291



Interpretation

Most respondents selected “No”, while some answered “Maybe” or “Yes.” This suggests that although globalization has introduced global brands, it has not strongly influenced every consumer’s preference for branded products like HUL.

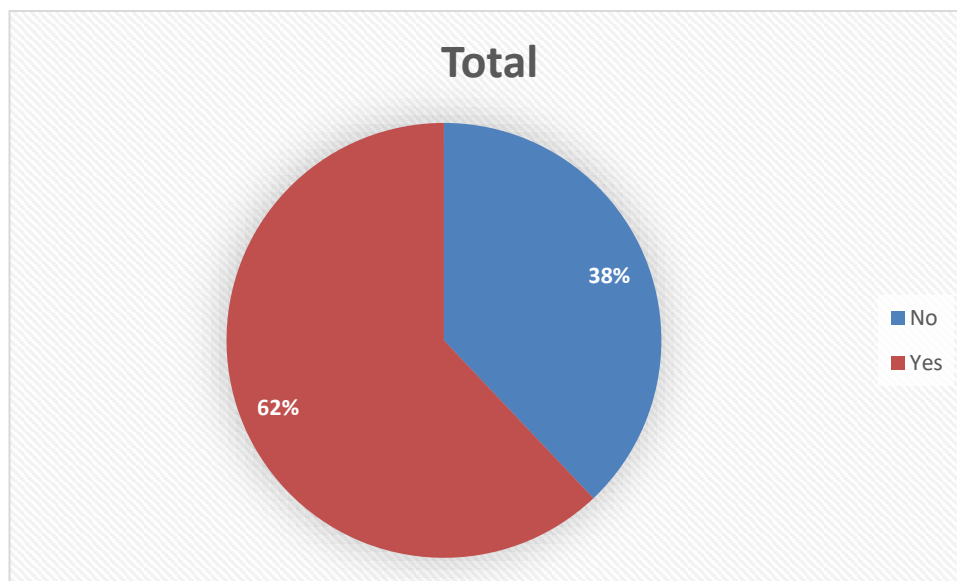
Row Labels	Do you think HUL products meet international quality standards?
No	177
Not Sure	39
Yes	76
Grand Total	292



Interpretation

A large number of respondents believe that HUL products do **not fully meet international quality standards**, while some are unsure. This indicates that consumers expect higher quality and compare HUL products with global alternatives.

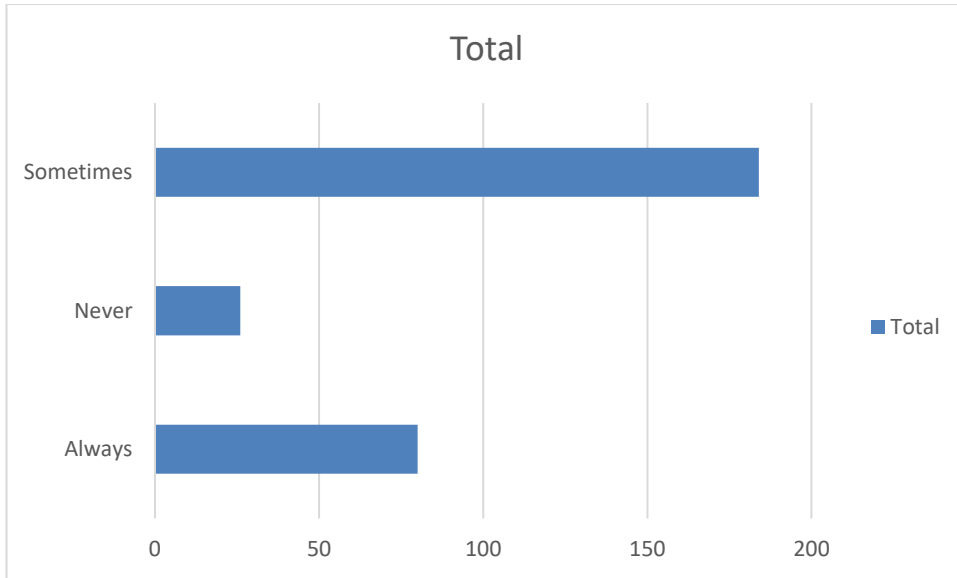
Row Labels	Have global trends (social media, foreign brands, etc.) influenced your buying decisions?
No	110
Yes	180
Grand Total	290



Interpretation

Most respondents (180) stated that global trends such as social media and foreign brands influence their buying decisions. This shows that globalization and digital exposure have significantly changed consumer behaviour and preferences.

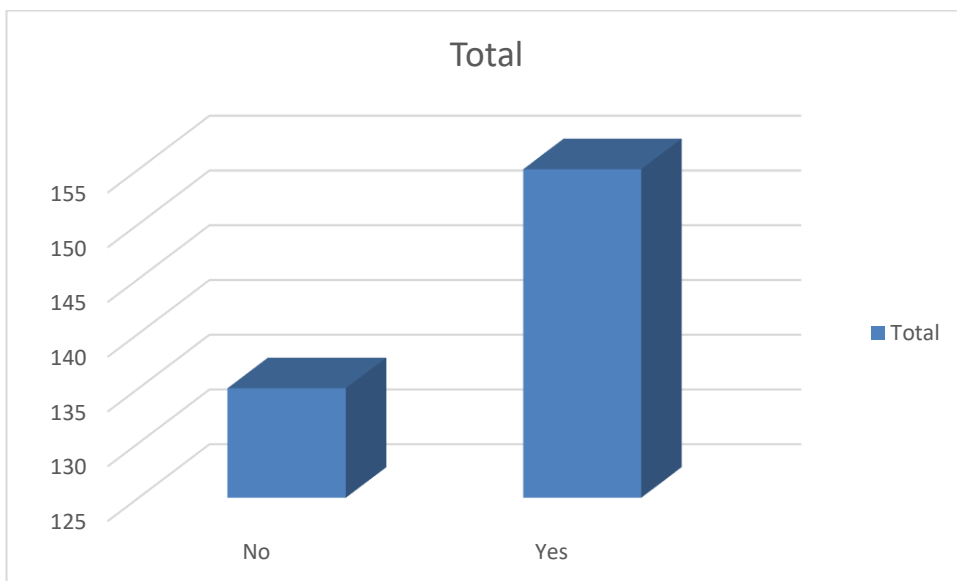
Row Labels	Do you compare HUL products with international brands before purchasing?
Always	80
Never	26
Sometimes	184
Grand Total	290



Interpretation

The majority of respondents selected “**Sometimes**” (184) when asked whether they compare HUL products with international brands. This indicates that consumers have become more aware and analytical before making purchase decisions.

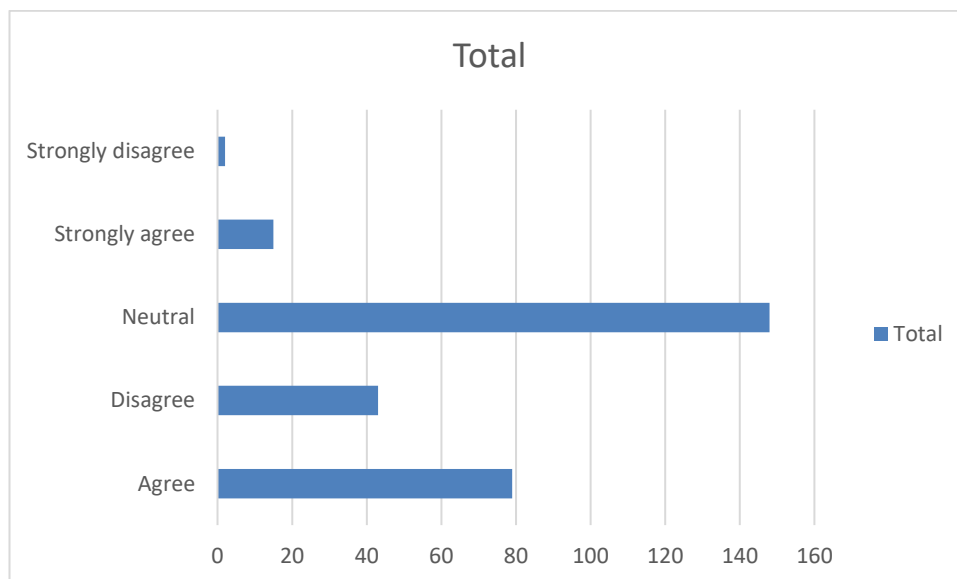
Row Labels	CDoes digital advertising influence your purchase of HUL products?
No	135
Yes	155
Grand Total	290



Interpretation

More respondents answered “Yes” than “No,” showing that digital advertising plays an important role in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Online promotions and advertisements are becoming increasingly effective in attracting customers.

Row Labels	Do you think globalization has increased competition for Hindustan Unilever Limited products?
Agree	79
Disagree	43
Neutral	148
Strongly agree	15
Strongly disagree	2
Grand Total	287



Interpretation

Most respondents selected “Neutral”, while many agreed that globalization has increased competition for HUL products. This suggests that consumers recognize rising competition from international brands, but opinions differ regarding its exact impact.

Findings of the Study

1. Dominance of Young Consumers

The data clearly shows that the majority of respondents belong to the 18–35 age group. This indicates that young

consumers are the primary users of Hindustan Unilever Limited products. Their exposure to digital platforms and global trends makes them more aware and selective in their purchasing behavior.

2. Strong Role of Females and Homemakers

A significant proportion of respondents are females and homemakers, highlighting their key role in household purchasing decisions. This reflects that FMCG buying is still largely influenced by those managing daily household needs.

3. High Brand Awareness of HUL

Most respondents are aware of HUL and its wide range of products. This shows that the company has successfully built a strong brand presence in the Indian market over time.

4. Popular Product Categories

The most commonly used products include food & beverages, home care, and personal care. This reflects HUL's strong portfolio and its ability to cater to everyday consumer needs.

5. Frequent Purchase Behavior

Consumers generally purchase HUL products on a weekly or monthly basis. This indicates consistent demand and the essential nature of these products in daily life.

Limitations of the Study

1. Limited Sample Size

The study is based on a relatively small number of respondents, which may not accurately represent the entire population of digital banking users. A larger sample could provide more reliable and generalizable results.

2. Age Group Bias

Most respondents belong to the younger age group (18–25 years), leading to limited insights into the behavior and preferences of middle-aged and older users who may have different levels of digital adoption.

3. Urban-Centric Data Collection

The majority of the data has been collected from urban areas where digital infrastructure is well-developed. This

limits the understanding of challenges faced by users in rural and semi-urban regions.

4. Dependence on Self-Reported Data

The study relies on responses provided by individuals, which may sometimes be biased or inaccurate due to personal opinions, misunderstandings, or lack of awareness.

5. Short Duration of Study

The research was conducted over a limited time period, making it difficult to analyze long-term trends and changes in digital banking behavior.

Conclusion

The study of Hindustan Unilever Limited clearly shows that the company enjoys strong brand recognition and a wide consumer base, especially among young individuals and household decision-makers. However, globalization has significantly transformed the market by increasing competition, expanding product availability, and influencing consumer preferences through digital platforms. While most consumers are satisfied with HUL products, brand loyalty has weakened due to the presence of international alternatives and changing expectations. Consumers today are more informed, price-conscious, and influenced by digital media, leading to more comparison-based purchasing decisions. Therefore, it is essential for HUL to focus on continuous innovation, maintain high-quality standards, strengthen its digital marketing strategies, and enhance customer engagement. By adapting to these changes and aligning with global trends, HUL can sustain its competitive position and achieve long-term growth in an increasingly dynamic and globalized market.

In conclusion, the study on digital banking clearly highlights the growing importance of technology in transforming the banking sector. The increasing adoption of digital banking services, especially among the younger population, shows a strong shift toward convenience, speed, and accessibility. Users today prefer mobile banking apps, online transactions, and digital wallets over traditional banking methods due to ease of use and time-saving benefits. This shift indicates that digital banking is

no longer an optional service but has become a necessity in modern financial systems.

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