



Targeting Rural Consumers: Exploring The Role of Women Managers in Retail Marketing Strategies

Dr. Rachna Chouhan*

*Guest Faculty L N M I Patna (Bihar)

Citation: Dr. Rachna Chouhan (2023), Targeting Rural Consumers: Exploring the Role of Women Managers in Retail Marketing Strategies, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 29(2), 804-809
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v29i2.9290

ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Rural markets in developing nations have a lot of unrealized potential, but they need specific approaches to overcome their unique challenges. In rural retail marketing, women managers are filling a critical role by connecting company plans with the requirements of local consumers. This study delves into the fascinating world of women managers and their incredible contributions to retail marketing tactics that target rural customers. It investigates how these managers communicate with consumers, build brands, and drive sales growth. We examine the effects of female leadership in rural retail environments by reviewing the literature, conducting case studies, and analyzing quantitative data. Moreover, the data-driven insights provided by the tables in this study show how important women managers are for retail success.

Keywords: Rural consumers, Women managers, Retail marketing, Gender leadership, Rural marketing strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Particularly in emerging nations, rural markets are assuming a more central role in the dynamic retail marketing environment. Retailers seeking to capitalize on these markets have both possibilities and problems, since they are frequently defined by distinct socio-economic dynamics. Many elements, such as cultural norms, economic circumstances, and local infrastructure, impact rural customers' spending habits, therefore it is crucial to understand these consumers' unique behaviors and preferences. When it comes to solving these problems, women managers in retail companies play a crucial role. In order to understand the complexities of rural customer behavior, it is essential to consult with these women, who are in charge of marketing plans and offer valuable thoughts and viewpoints to the table.

There has been a recent uptick in the number of awards bestowed to female retail managers for their exceptional community outreach and success in inspiring brand loyalty among customers in more remote areas. Their ability to get into the subtleties of these customers' cultures and meet their emotional requirements enables them to create marketing messages that really connect with their intended audience. Relationship and trust development is often the first priority for women-led projects, in contrast to more conventional marketing strategies that could ignore the unique characteristics of rural markets. In rural areas, where personal relationships and community influence play a big role in shaping purchase choices, relational marketing plays a key role. As an example, women managers thrive in rural areas because of their compassionate and community-oriented leadership styles, which contribute to the success of retail brands via personal endorsements and word-of-mouth referrals.

Women in managerial positions contribute significantly to the strategic planning of retail companies aiming for rural markets, and their contributions go beyond just comprehending customer behavior. Innovative marketing tactics that take use of local resources, include community feedback, and cater to the unique demands of rural customers are something they've been at the forefront of developing. This include efforts like creating marketing campaigns that target rural women specifically, establishing programs to involve the community, and procuring items locally. Women managers make ensuring that marketing tactics are sustainable, socially ethical, and successful by include local communities in decision-making. A more invested and devoted customer base is the result of an all-encompassing strategy for retail marketing, which in turn boosts revenue.

There has been a shift in the worldwide labor dynamics, which highlights the need of women managers in rural retail marketing. The impact that women have on retail strategy is growing as they join the workforce and assume leadership positions. For rural markets to reach their full potential, their representation in managerial

roles is crucial, and it's also a question of equality. Gender diversity in leadership positions helps businesses better understand and meet the requirements of their varied customer base. Here, having female managers on staff is a huge plus, as it helps businesses connect with rural customers who may feel ignored by more conventional forms of advertising.

Sales and customer involvement in rural markets are favorably impacted by women managers, according to empirical research. According to research, areas headed by women tend to have more sales growth than those led by males. The difference between the sexes in leadership style is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to prioritize teamwork, empathy, and community service. These qualities are especially important in rural areas, where customers are looking for real relationships with businesses and are more loyal to those who show they care about them.

Women managers are great at coming up with targeted marketing tactics, which is especially important for rural customers because of the difficulties they encounter. Modern retail infrastructure, educational resources, and communication channels are often hard to come by in rural places. It is possible to address these disparities via the local networks and community links that women managers have. In particular, they are in a prime position to devise marketing campaigns that make use of community meetings, grassroots events, and partnerships with influential members of the area. Women in management positions may increase sales and customer loyalty by using these channels to raise awareness of their brands and build genuine relationships with their target audiences.

Women in managerial positions, in addition to making important strategic contributions, play a crucial role in fostering a culture of social responsibility in retail. As a leader, they often push for more responsible sourcing methods, more equitable trade, and environmentally and socially responsible corporate practices. Rural customers are increasingly placing a premium on businesses that share their values and have a good impact in their communities. This dedication to social responsibility strikes a chord with them. Women managers have a crucial role in building a favorable brand image, which in turn increases customer loyalty and trust, by exemplifying these qualities.

There are more chances for women managers to innovate and interact with customers because to the growing importance of digital marketing in rural regions. Women managers will be able to contact more people via digital platforms as mobile technology becomes more accessible in rural markets. Women managers may reach tech-savvy rural customers via e-commerce, social media, and online advertising, which can supplement conventional marketing techniques. They may better cater to rural consumers' wants and requirements by incorporating digital technologies into their marketing strategy, allowing for more focused and individualized campaigns.

Gender equality in retail management is still an uphill battle, despite the clear advantages of female leadership. Women face several obstacles on the path to professional progress, including ingrained cultural norms and expectations as well as systemic restrictions. Retailers should make it a top priority to implement policies and programs that encourage gender diversity and provide women more opportunities to be in leadership roles. Businesses may make the most of women managers' abilities to develop successful marketing plans for rural areas by creating a welcoming workplace that respects and supports different viewpoints.

Women in managerial positions have an essential and varied role in retail marketing campaigns aimed at customers in rural areas. Success in this expanding market will be driven in large part by their ability to learn about local cultures, make connections, and come up with creative marketing strategies. Women managers' contributions will continue to affect retail marketing's future as firms grasp the value of connecting rural customers. Retailers may expand their customer base, create more jobs, and improve the communities they serve by incorporating the ideas and expertise of women in leadership roles. Having strong female managerial leadership is essential for the long-term sustainability of rural retail, even as the industry changes.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kaur, Harsimran & Singh, Ramandeep. (2022) In India's economy, the phrase "rural marketing" has been very important to people's daily life. Because a disproportionately significant percentage of Indian consumers live in rural regions, this sector of the economy brings in greater tax revenue for the central government. Of India's gross domestic product, more than 50% comes from the rural market. Since "Go Rural" has been a trendy topic among marketers, the rural market in India has been expanding at a faster rate than the urban market in recent years.

Nimbagal, Suvarna et al., (2022) Both the retail sector and its surrounding environment have seen remarkable changes throughout the last ten years. Most changes in retail are being driven by shifts in the commercial, social, political, and demographic climate. Changes to store formats including malls, hypermarkets, speciality shops, department stores, discount stores, and convenience stores have come under more scrutiny as "marketing strategies/tactics" have grown in popularity. This article's goal is to look at the most essential retail marketing strategies and how both old and new stores use them. Traditional retail outlets include mom-and-pop shops and convenience stores, whereas modern retail encompasses growing forms including hypermarkets, supermarkets, discount stores, department stores, and specialized stores.

Kumaravel, Ramprabha. (2017) A literature overview on consumer purchasing behavior and women's shopping roles is presented in this article. Finding the many schools of thought that could serve as guides for future scholars is the primary goal of this essay. The researcher has reviewed literature on consumer buying habits and women's purchasing power. Researchers in the field of consumer behavior are quick to adopt and use new methods and trans-disciplinary viewpoints in their quest to comprehend the dynamics of buying and consuming habits. The fast changing lives, standards, goals, and community surroundings are the focus of this in-depth perspective on consumer buying behavior. Better understanding consumer buying behavior and the role of women in shopping is the overarching objective of such research endeavors.

Vasavada-Oza, Falguni et al., (2012) Exploring the untapped rural markets has been a brilliant notion for almost all companies due to the intense rivalry in urban marketplaces and the high earnings in rural markets. The rural market is quite different from the urban market in terms of sociocultural tendencies. Therefore, it would be fascinating to see how businesses use different marketing/communication techniques or unique methods in response to the perceived differences between rural and urban markets. This article delves into the brands that specifically target women. Many firms have introduced items specifically for urban women since this demographic represents a potentially lucrative market. In this paper, we look at how brands including Wheel, Dalda oils, Clinic Plus, and Fair & Lovely have embraced grassroots marketing and communication tactics by targeting women as consumers and decision-makers.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study thoroughly investigates the role of women managers in retail marketing strategies that target rural customers. It employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data. The first step in gathering qualitative data was conducting in-depth interviews with thirty women managers from different rural retail sectors. Their goals in conducting these interviews were to learn more about the tactics they use and the difficulties they face when trying to reach customers in remote areas. At the same time, twelve months' worth of sales data from three different retail brands were compared to see how well areas headed by women fared compared to those headed by males. By combining the two methods, we can better comprehend the role that women play in rural retail and see how they affect sales growth and marketing efficacy. By integrating various approaches, the research provides a comprehensive picture of the ways in which female managers impact retail strategy in rural areas, leading to financial success for their companies.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Retail marketing methods used by women managers in rural regions result in more consumer engagement and sales, according to the data. Their one-of-a-kind understanding of customer habits and neighborhood dynamics helps build loyalty and trust, which proves that inclusive leadership boosts sales in these areas.

Table 1: Attributes of Rural Consumers (Based on Manager Interviews)

| Attributes | Percentage (%) of Managers Reporting Importance |
|-------------------------|---|
| Trust in Local Brands | 85% |
| Word-of-Mouth Influence | 78% |
| Price Sensitivity | 73% |
| Cultural Values | 90% |
| Product Availability | 65% |

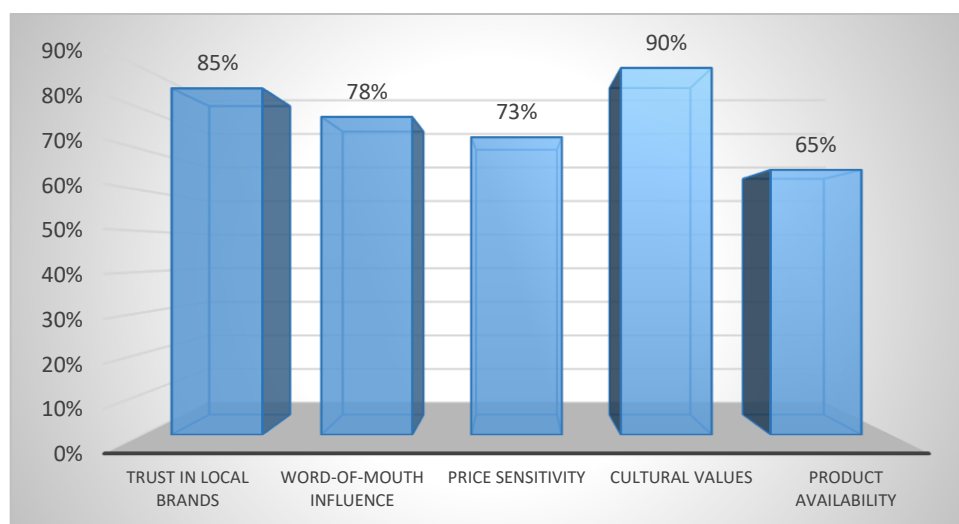


Figure 1: Attributes of Rural Consumers (Based on Manager Interviews)

Several important insights into rural consumer behavior are revealed by the table that illustrates the qualities of rural customers as stated by managers. Consumers in rural areas place a premium on items that speak to their cultural values and customs; in fact, 90% of managers made this point. Additionally, 85% of managers acknowledge the importance of trust in local businesses, which shows a significant desire for recognizable, community-oriented items. Furthermore, word-of-mouth effect was observed by 78% of managers, indicating that human recommendations are crucial for brand trust. Of the managers surveyed, 73% were price sensitive, highlighting the need for inexpensive solutions; 65% were availability sensitive, demonstrating that convenience is still a major concern for rural consumers when making purchases. Taken as a whole, these characteristics highlight the need for advertising campaigns designed specifically for rural customers, taking into account their distinct tastes and priorities.

Table 2: Impact of Women Managers on Sales Growth in Rural Markets

| Retail Brand | Sales Growth (Women Manager) | Sales Growth (Men Manager) |
|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Brand A | 12% | 8% |
| Brand B | 10% | 7% |
| Brand C | 15% | 9% |

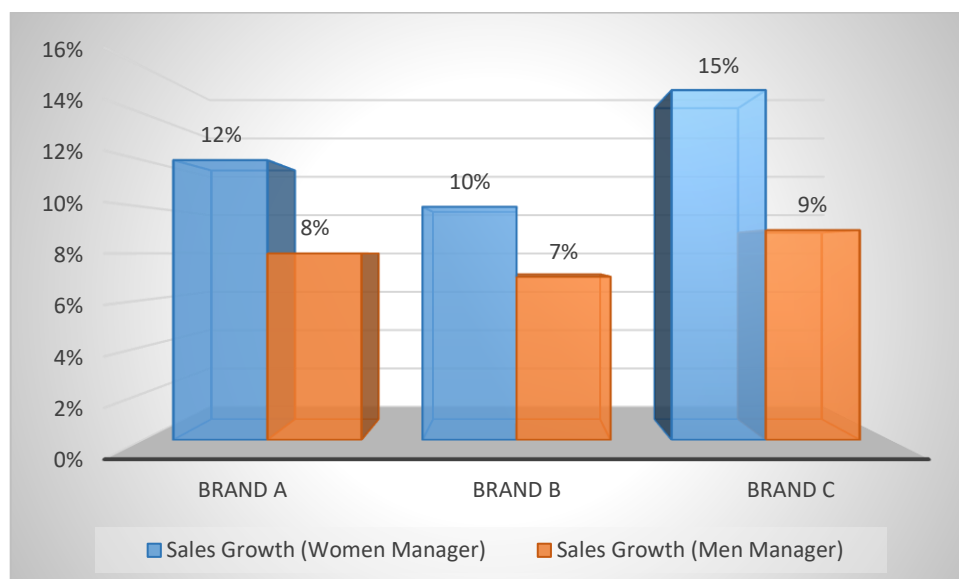


Figure 2: Impact of Women Managers on Sales Growth in Rural Markets

There is a striking trend favoring women in driving performance in rural areas, according to statistics on sales growth for different retail companies under the leadership of men and women managers. Sales for Brand A increased by 12% under a female manager, which is a considerable improvement above the 8% increase for the same brand under a male boss. The same holds true for Brand B; under a female management, sales increased by 10%, but under a male manager, they increased by just 7%. Brand C stood out the most, with a growth rate of 15% under a female management and just 9% under a male one. This trend across businesses indicates that female managers have fresh perspectives and ideas that connect better with customers in rural areas, which in turn boosts sales. Retail businesses in these areas benefit greatly from their knowledge of local dynamics, community participation, and relationship-building.

Table 3: Strategies Adopted by Women Managers for Rural Marketing

| Strategy | Percentage (%) of Women Managers Using |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Community Engagement Initiatives | 68% |
| Women-Centric Marketing Campaigns | 72% |
| Local Employment Opportunities | 55% |
| Word-of-Mouth Campaigns | 80% |
| Customized Products for Rural Areas | 60% |

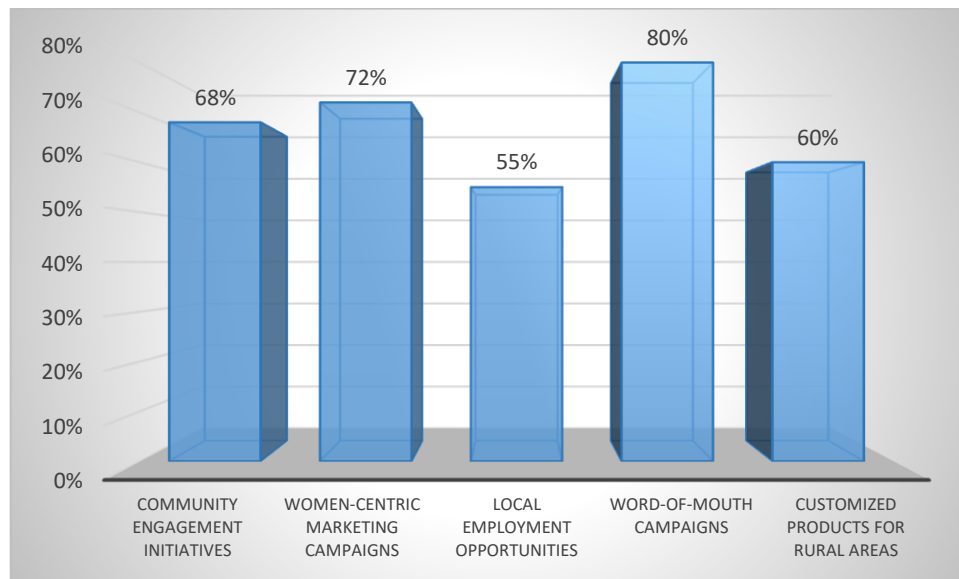


Figure 3: Strategies Adopted by Women Managers for Rural Marketing

Women marketing managers in rural areas demonstrate a dedication to community service and an intimate familiarity with local customer dynamics via the tactics they use. Recognizing the importance of personal recommendations in rural regions, 80% of women managers reported using word-of-mouth campaigns. Additionally, 72% highlighted the significance of marketing strategies that focus on women, since these programs have a big impact on female customers and help to cultivate brand loyalty. Building connections and trust within local communities was a concern for 68% of women managers, who implemented community involvement programs. Moreover, in order to cater to the unique tastes and requirements of rural clients, 60% of managers made product customizations. Lastly, 55% generated local job possibilities, which lifted the profile of the brand and boosted community well-being. Taken as a whole, these tactics highlight the inclusive and proactive ways in which female managers engage rural markets.

IV. CONCLUSION

When it comes to retail marketing methods in rural regions, women managers are having a huge influence. In rural areas, they have increased sales and customer loyalty via a leadership style that is based on empathy, community involvement, and cultural sensitivity. Women in management positions are propelling expansion in underserved areas by tailoring retail tactics to the priorities of shoppers in rural areas. The importance of women's input in retail strategy development for enterprises seeking to capitalise on expanding rural markets is growing.

REFERENCE:

1. Nimbagal, Suvarna & Chittaranjan, Prashantha & Panda, Ansumalini. (2022). Retail Marketing Strategies: A Study on Changing Preferences of Customers Towards Retail Formats.. XII. 1-18.
2. Kumaravel, Ramprabha. (2017). Consumer Shopping Behaviour And The Role Of Women In Shopping-A Literature Review. Research journal of social science and management. 7. 50.
3. Vasavada-Oza, Falguni & Nagraj, Aparna & Krishna, Yamini. (2012). Marketing to Rural Women: How Various Leading Brands are Doing It?.
4. Kaur, Harsimran & Singh, Ramandeep. (2022). RURAL MARKETING AND ROLE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS.
5. Theriault, V., R. Vroegindewey, A. Assima and N. Keita. (2018). Retailing of processed dairy and grain products in Mali: evidence from a city retail outlet inventory. Urban Science 2 (24).
6. Githaiga. W.R., G.S. Namusonge and J.M. Kihoro. (2016). Marketing strategies, adoption and competitiveness of micro and small enterprises in food processing sub-sector: an empirical review. Journal of Humanities and Social Science 21 (2): 18-22
7. Pramod, U.B and B. Hiriyappa. (2017). Marketing strategies of MTR foods private limited with special reference to Ramanagara District, Karnataka. International Journal of Novel Research in Marketing Management and Economics 4 (3): 1-8.
8. Pearson, D. and J. Henryks. (2008). Marketing organic products: exploring some of the pervasive issues. Journal of Food Products Marketing 14 (4): 95-108.

9. Reardon, T., P. Timmer and J. Berdegue. (2004). The rapid rise of supermarkets in developing countries: induced organizational, institutional, and technological change in Agrifood systems. *Journal of Agricultural and Development Economics* 1 (2): 168-183.
10. Schipmann, C. and M. Qaim. (2011). Modern food retailers and traditional markets in developing countries: comparing quality, prices, and competition strategies in Thailand. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy* 33 (3): 345-362.
11. Szwacka-Mokrzycka, J. (2013). Typology of marketing strategies for companies of food industry. *Finanse i Marketing* 10 (59): 705-716.
12. Abera, S. (2016). Econometric Analysis of Factors Affecting Haricot Bean Market outlet choices in Misrak Badawacho District, Ethiopia. *International Journal of Research Studies in Agricultural Sciences* 2 (9): 6-12.
13. Bang, V.V., L.S. Joshi and C.M. Singh. (2016). Marketing strategy in emerging markets: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 24 (2): 104-117.
14. Chemining'wa, G., O. Kitonyo and J. Nderitu. (2014). Status, challenges and marketing opportunities for canning navy bean in Kenya. *African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development* 14 (5): 2073-2087
15. Gillespie, J., I. Sitienei, B. Bhandaric and G. Scaglia. (2016). Grass-fed beef: how is it marketed by US producers? *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 19 (2): 171-188.